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QuickStart Learn-To-Knit Guide: Beginner Scarf



By Liat Gat of

KNIT *Freedom*

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So you want to learn how to knit? **I think that's a fabulous idea!** I'm Liat Gat, your video knitting instructor and guide through the land of knitting. I'm so glad you downloaded this free guide! You already have, perhaps without knowing it, started down the path of awesomeness.

This free guide will let you hit the ground running and learn about knitting as you create your very first project - a beginner scarf, with fringe, for **less than \$20!**

Step 1: Shopping for materials - fast

There are many beautiful yarns out there, but this is not the time to buy them. Try knitting with an inexpensive yarn first - that way, your first project will whet your appetite without putting a huge dent in your wallet. Also, if you mess up, drop it in a puddle, or your dog finds it and decides he likes it - no big deal.

As you know, it is very fun to drive a Lamborghini, but there is nothing wrong with learning on an older car. Same goes for knitting. As your skill increases, so can your knitting budget. Oh - by the way, learning to knit is a lot easier than learning to drive a car, but it is a new skill, so **be patient with yourself** as you ask your hands to learn this new task!

You can find inexpensive, machine washable yarn at Michael's, Joann Fabrics, and Wal-Mart, or even some grocery stores. For this project, buy **two balls of Lion Brand Wool-Ease Thick & Quick** yarn in your favorite color (buy three balls if you want a long scarf and/or fringe).



While you're at the store, buy a pair of Clover bamboo **knitting needles in size 13** (that's SIZE 13, not 13 mm. I don't know why they put millimeters on American needles - it just confuses people. So just ignore it). If the store doesn't have any bamboo needles, you can buy a pair of Boye aluminum knitting needles, which are a little less fun to knit with, but just fine for starting out.



Extras

You'll also need a blunt, large-eyed sewing needle called a **tapestry needle** - these are usually right next to the knitting needles. Also, if you are going to add fringe, buying a **crochet hook** (size I or J) will make this job go quickly.

So, in a short list, you'll need:

300 yds super-bulky-weight yarn

Size 13 needles

Tapestry needle

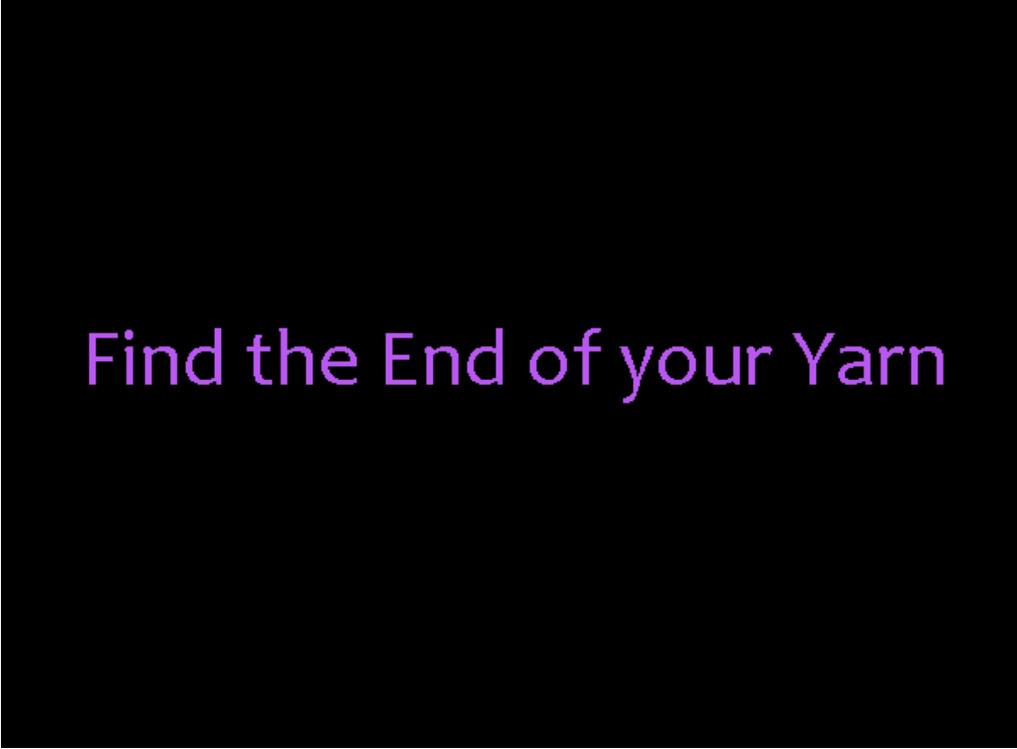
Optional: crochet hook, size J, for fringe

A note about your [local yarn store](#): The absolute best place to buy yarn and knitting needles - these specialty shops filled with the latest and greatest yarns and are staffed by experts who love knitting. It's the difference between Nordstrom and, well, Wal-Mart or the grocery store. Expect to be delighted! You'll definitely want to check out your local store for future projects, if not this one.

That's it! Let's start knitting.

Step 2: Get your yarn ready.

When you come home, fish around in the inside of the ball of yarn, to find the end. Pulling the yarn from the middle of the ball will prevent the ball of yarn from rolling all around the floor as you knit (to the great disappointment of your cat).



Find the End of your Yarn

If you pull out a ton of yarn, wrap the extra around the ball of yarn for now. If you remove the yarn label, keep it! You can put it in a special folder or Ziploc for yarn labels, or even store the information digitally on [Ravelry](#) (the site that you really should know about anyway). This just ensures that you'll know what you bought in case you want more, and is a habit that will save you from grief for years.

Optional: Prepare your fringe. If you'd like to add fringe to your scarf, make sure to cut it ahead of time. Cut 30 strands of yarn, each two feet long, and set them aside for later.

Step 3: Learn to cast on.

Knitted items are built out of stitches, in the same way that a brick wall is made out of bricks: by stacking them up in rows. However, a knitted “wall” is incredibly simple: each brick, or stitch, is stacked directly on top of the previous one. You must start your scarf by laying a foundation of stitches, which is called “casting on.”

Here’s the easiest way to cast on - it’s called a **backwards-loop cast-on**. Grab your yarn and one needle, and practice casting on along with the video.



When you’ve got the hang of it, begin your scarf by casting on 12 stitches (this includes the slipknot that you started with). In order to get you used to the language of knitting instructions, here’s how you would abbreviate that: **CO 12 sts** (the word “stitch” is abbreviated “**st**”). Pretty simple, no?

Step 4: Learn how to tension your yarn

You'll be holding both needles as well as manipulating a strand of yarn (called **tensioning**) - here's how to do this comfortably and correctly.

Tensioning the Yarn

Step 5: Learn the knit stitch

The knit stitch is the only stitch you will be using during this project. It's the simplest way to "stack" one stitch on top of another. Ready? Here's how to do it!



Learn the Knit Stitch

The knit stitch has four parts that must be repeated over and over. Here's a rhyme you can say to yourself as you practice the parts so you don't forget any of them:

- 1) In the front door,
- 2) Around the back,
- 3) Out the window,
- 4) And off jumps Jack!

Row 2: Tips and Tricks

Here are some more tips for getting comfortable and knitting correctly. As you work across your second row, watch this video!



More Tips - Row 2

Step 6: Knit until you run out of yarn

Each time you knit across all the stitches on your needle, that counts as one **row**. Once you finish your first row, **turn your work**, or switch the needles in your hands, so that the needle with the stitches on it is in your left and, and you hold an empty needle in your right. Making sure the yarn is **behind** your knitting, and the knots are facing down, begin again!

Knit all the way across the second row. Then, do it again! In pattern-speak, this is abbreviated “**K,**” as in “**K every row**” or “**K every st**” or even “**K all sts.**” As you practice, watch out for the common mistakes that I demonstrate below.

Troubleshooting

The most common thing that happens on your first scarf is that you mess up on the first stitch - there are two things that could cause you to make an extra loop, which will make your scarf grow gradually wider as you go! Not good.

Here’s how to catch both kinds of mistakes.



Troubleshooting

Step 7: Switch to your second ball of yarn.

Continue knitting every row until you have almost run out of yarn from the first ball. You'll want to leave six inches of the yarn hanging so you can secure the end later, and you'll want to switch to the new ball of yarn while you are at one side of the scarf. So, at the end of a row, and with at least six inches of yarn left (this is called the **tail**), grab your second ball of yarn. Fish out the end from inside the ball, as before, and, leaving a six-inch tail, **join** the new yarn by simply using it to knit instead of the old ball.

Here's a video showing how to do that.



If the ends seems a bit loose, you can tie them in a square knot to keep them snug for now. Once you're done knitting, you'll come back and **weave the ends in** so that they don't go anywhere.

Keep on knitting until you run out of yarn, again. You should be getting very comfortable with knitting by now! There are so many cool things you can learn to make, now that you can do this very basic stitch. So let's finish this scarf! This time, stop knitting at the end of a row and leave a foot and a half of tail. It's time to do the last row, called a **bind-off**, which will secure the stitches and get them off your needle so you can wear the scarf.

Step 8: Bind Off

Here's how to bind off your scarf.



To practice a bit more **pattern-reading**, here's what I have demonstrated in the video, written in knitting abbreviations: "K2, pass 2nd st over 1st stitch, *(K1, pass 2nd st over 1st st), rep from * to end of row. Cut yarn, leaving a six-inch tail, pull tail through last st. Pull yarn tight." Or simply, "**BO.**"

Step 9: Weave in your ends

You will have 4 tails of yarn hanging off your scarf - one from your cast-on, two where you switched balls of yarn, and one, where you bound off. Using your tapestry needle, follow along the video to disguise your tails invisibly and securely.



Question: Can't I just tie a knot and cut the ends?

Answer: No.

Oh, you want more than that? Okay, yarn can be slippery. Knots come undone - weaving doesn't. If you don't want your scarf to unravel in the wash or after years of wearing, just weave in your ends!

Step 10: Optional - Add fringe

If you are going to add fringe, it's time. Fold your strands of fringe in half, and, using your crochet hook or just your fingers, pull the fold through a stitch at the edge of your scarf, then tuck the ends through the loop and pull. Attach 15 strands evenly along each of the short edges of your scarf.

Here's a video, of course.



When you are done, trim the fringe so the edges are even.

You're all done!

Extra Credit: Practice your pattern-reading

You've done a great job, and I'm so proud that you've knitted your first scarf! While it's fresh in your mind, please read over the pattern on the next page: it describes what you've just done, in knitting abbreviations. Since all knitting instructions are written using abbreviations, it behooves you to learn to master them, right from the beginning.

Beginner Scarf

Finished Measurements: 5 inches wide x 5–6 feet long

Materials:

Yarn: 300 yds super-bulky-weight yarn

Needles: One pair straight needles US size #13

Notions: tapestry needle, crochet hook (optional)

Instructions:

Optional: cut 30 2-foot strands of yarn for fringe. Set aside.

CO 12 sts.

K every row until you run out of yarn.

BO.

Finishing

Weave in ends.

Add fringe, if desired.

It's that simple! You can see that a lot of information is communicated in that very simple pattern, which is why, if you know how to read them, you really have a leg up on your knitting journey.

Where do I go from here?

Why not get better?! You could do another few scarves just like this one, but I think you're ready for the next step.

The best way to advance your skills and start making cooler stuff is to work through the second video ebook in the Knitting Superstar series: "Intermediate Scarves and Stitches," currently in the studio, being filmed! In it, you will learn how to pick yarn for your next project, a new way of casting on, and three different stitch patterns. You'll also practice reading a more complicated knitting pattern, and learn how to make great scarves for men! Since you're already on the KNITFreedom mailing list, you'll be the first to know when it's ready.

I'd also like to introduce you to the [KNITFreedom forum on Ravelry](#), a wonderful place where the KNITFreedom moderators and I are trolling the threads all day long, answering questions and providing encouragement! I invite you to come here and ask any knitting questions you may have.

Again, congratulations!