Does the word “knitting” make you think of Grandma sitting in a rocking chair? Perhaps you can picture a cozy slipper or a colorful sock in her lap and a kitten playing with a ball of yarn at her feet.

Knitting is enjoyed by men and women, boys and girls. Some form of it can be found in every country of the world!

Knitting is creative and fun. It is easy to learn, and you can use it to produce warm clothing and other useful items. Don’t worry if you make mistakes at first. You will! Making mistakes is part of learning. Just keep practicing.

Use the goals on the next few pages to help you decide if you are a beginning, intermediate, or advanced knitter. Complete most of the goals before going to the next level. It’s OK to take a project level more than once—just select new goals.

Study fair or roundup premium listings for ideas on what to exhibit. The listings are updated every year. It’s also good to make several items to sharpen your skills before you start making your exhibit.

You can do it! There are many ways to knit, purl, cast on, and bind off stitches—even if you’re left-handed. Your leader can help you learn and locate resources to find the way that’s best for you.
What You’ll Need
- Knitting needles of correct size
- Good-quality yarn
- Small scissors
- Six-inch ruler or gauge or “knit check”
- Tapestry needle or bodkin
- Crochet hook (to correct mistakes—size G or 6 for 4-ply yarn)
- Point protectors (to protect needles and prevent dropped stitches)
- Emery board or nail file (to keep rough fingernails from snagging yarn)
- Container to hold equipment and knitting

To Complete Your Project
1. Select your skill level with your leader’s help.
2. Complete at least half the goals listed in your level.
3. Knit one or more articles or garments that will help you complete your goals.
4. Give a presentation at a club meeting.
5. Exhibit a knitted garment or article.
6. Complete your 4-H record.

Here is what you’ll learn!

A little ditty to help you learn to knit:
In through the front door
Once around the back,
Peek through the window,
And off jumps Jack.
(Hansen, 1990)

To help you purl:
Sneaking in the back door
A lasso overhead
Go back to check the garden
and off to bed!
**Beginner**

**Skills**
1. Learn to cast on and bind off stitches.
2. Create a garter stitch pattern with knit stitches.
3. Create a garter stitch pattern with purl stitches.
4. Create a stockinette (stocking).
5. Make a ribbing.
6. Increase and decrease stitches.
7. Check and adjust gauge.
8. Create colorful stripes.
9. Make a pompon and a tassel.
10. Fold a sweater and store knitted items.
11. Practice cleanliness skills.
12. Read dye lot numbers and other label information.
13. Wind a ball of yarn.

**Goals**
Knit two of the following articles:
- Slippers
- Headband
- Turtleneck dickey
- Leg warmers
- Bell pin
- Scarf
- Simple hat
- Simple shell
- Simple toy
- Pillow

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**Intermediate**

**Skills**
1. Read directions.
2. Create two or three special stitch patterns (such as moss, cable, diamond, block, or popcorn stitch).
3. Work with circular needles, jumper, and/or double pointed needles.
4. Learn at least one method of joining seams.
5. Make a buttonhole.
6. Use markers and stitch holders.
7. Pick up stitches.
8. Solve common knitting problems (such as skipped stitches, holes, and twisted stitches). Rip out a section of knitting and replace knitting on needles.
9. Hand wash and block a knitted article.
10. Visit a dry cleaner. Find out about available services and common cleaning problems.
11. Recognize the woolmark and other laundry symbols.
12. Wind yarn into a ball.

**Goals**
Knit one or more of the following articles:
- Mittens
- Headhugger or neck warmer
- Socks
- Stuffed animal
- Cardigan sweater
- Sweater (two colors, with or without buttonholes)
- Accessory (hat, etc.)
- Afghan
- Toy
- Wall hanging
- Baby clothes
- Vest

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**Advanced**

**Skills**
1. Learn two or three additional creative stitches.
2. Use a contrasting stitch to make a conventional design (animal, landscape, etc.).
4. Combine knit with other needlework (such as embroidery).
5. Mend a knitted garment.
6. Reclaim yarn or remake a knitted garment.
7. Use a knitting machine.
8. Create a knitted garment from start to finish: shearing, carding, spinning, dyeing, and knitting.
9. Share your knitting skills with another person.

**Goals**
- Article or garment using multiple colors and/or stitches
- Article or garment using a contrasting stitch
- Article or garment combining knit and woven fabric
- Article or garment combining other needlework or beadwork
- Article or garment made on a knitting machine
- Article or garment from start to finish (Goal 8)
- Notebook of samples and pictures for sharing skills
- Remade knitted garment
**Abbreviations**

Abbreviations are letters or symbols that make reading directions simpler. For example, “knit one, purl one” is often abbreviated “K1, P1.”

Sometimes an asterisk (*) or brackets ([ ]) are used to let you know to do something in a series. For example, directions that say (K1, P2) four times mean that you need to do the knit 1 and purl 2 stitches four times. An asterisk means to go back to the part of the directions that are starred and repeat as the directions say.

Here are some other common knitting abbreviations. Ask your leader to show you what they mean. Practice reading directions and refer to this list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beg</td>
<td>beginning</td>
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<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>contrasting color</td>
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<tr>
<td>dec(s)</td>
<td>decrease(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>dp</td>
<td>double pointed needles</td>
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<tr>
<td>gr</td>
<td>grams</td>
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<td>inch(es)</td>
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<td>inc(s)</td>
<td>increase(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>knit</td>
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<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>main color</td>
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<td>oz(s)</td>
<td>ounces</td>
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<td>pat</td>
<td>pattern</td>
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<td>psssl</td>
<td>pass slip stitch over</td>
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<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>purl</td>
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<tr>
<td>rep</td>
<td>repeat</td>
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<tr>
<td>rnds</td>
<td>round(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SKP</td>
<td>slip 1 stitch, knit 1, stitch, purl 1 stitch</td>
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<tr>
<td>sk</td>
<td>skip</td>
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<td>sl st</td>
<td>slip stitch</td>
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<td>sl</td>
<td>slip</td>
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<td>st(s)</td>
<td>stitches</td>
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<tr>
<td>tog</td>
<td>together</td>
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<tr>
<td>yo</td>
<td>yarn over</td>
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**Choosing Yarn**

Yarns differ from one another in many ways. They have various twists, sizes, and textures. They may be made of one fiber (such as wool or acrylic) or may be a blend of two or more fibers. The type recommended in the directions will best suit the item you plan to make.

Yarn can’t always be matched. Buy all the yarn you need at one time. Check the dye lot numbers to see that all the yarn is the same color.

Find the following information on the yarn label:

- Manufacturer’s name and address
- Type of yarn (hand knitting, rug, baby, etc.)
- Fiber content (wool, acrylic, nylon, etc.)
- Word “virgin” or “reprocessed”
- Number of plies (strands in the yarn)
- Amount of yarn (by weight)
- Color name and number
- Dye lot number
- Care instructions

**Reclaining Yarn**

Virgin yarn means the yarn is new. You may want to “reclaim” yarn by unraveling it from an old sweater or other article that can no longer be used.

Cut one stitch on the edge of the garment. Pull the yarn gently and wind on a back of a chair to prevent tangles. Tie the skein in four places. Dip it into warm soapy water. Rinse well in warm water and hang to dry where the air will circulate through it. After yarn is dry, rewind into a ball.
The Stretch Test
Choose quality yarns. Try the stretch test! Pull 10 inches of yarn, gently. It should reach from 1 1/2 to 3 inches. Release it and it should return back to close to the same length.

Needles
If you are starting out, select straight knitting needles in the size recommended for your pattern. Choose plastic, wooden, or aluminum needles in a color different from your yarn so that you can see your stitches.

As you advance, you will use circular and double-pointed needles. You may also want to try straight needles made from wood, bamboo, or steel.

Checking the Gauge
With the yarn and needles you plan to use for your project, cast on 25 stitches. Work for 3 inches, using the stitch given in the pattern. Bind off the stitches and block. Count the number of stitches per inch.

If your gauge has more stitches per inch than given in the directions, try the next larger size of needle. Make a new gauge. If your stitch gauge is less, try the next smaller needle. Make a new gauge. Gauge is important to the size and fit of the finished product!

Correcting Mistakes
Everyone makes mistakes. The trick is to see them and correct them early. Common mistakes are dropped stitches, holes, and twisted or split stitches. Your leader or a reference sheet can help you make corrections. A crochet hook is a useful tool to make corrections.

Seam Finishes
There are many types of seam finishes. Some common ones are woven, backstitched, and crocheted seams. You may choose one or more seam finishes. For example, in a sweater, the backstitched seam might be used in the raglan area and a woven or crocheted seam used in the side and sleeve seams.
**Cleaning, Mending, and Storing**

Follow the laundry and care instructions found on most yarn labels.

**Hand Washing**

1. Draw an outline of the garment or article on an old sheet or heavy paper first so you can block the garment later.

2. In lukewarm water and mild detergent, saturate the garment. Work solution through garment. Soak for 2 minutes. Work solution through again, being careful not to twist or wring.

3. Fill another basin or washtub with cool water. Press water through garment, releasing suds. You may have to use several basins of water to do this. Again, be careful not to wring or twist the garment.

4. Lay the article flat between two towels and pat dry or roll up the towels. Lay down several dry, flat towels with outline of shape on top. Pat to the proper shape and air dry away from direct heat. If fabric is resilient, you can use rust-proof pins to attach the garment to the sheet or paper.

**Mending and Patching**

A tear or worn spot in a knitted garment can be mended with a duplicate stitch or by grafting a new piece of yarn in place. Patches can be knit and woven over a hole using a kitchener stitch or duplicate stitch. Pull snags to the wrong side of the garment with a small crochet hook or a special mending tool. Never cut snags, because a hole will result when the yarn ends work loose.

**Storage**

Knitted garments should be folded for storage. Hanging causes them to pull out of shape. After wearing, air before folding and store in a drawer. Plastic containers can hold moisture that may damage the yarn or cause mold to develop. Clean the garments before long-term or seasonal storage. This will prevent insect damage and set-in stains.
Instructions for Several Beginner Projects

Bell
Make bells for the Christmas tree or to decorate wedding, shower, or baby gifts.

Skills:
- Casting on
- Casting off
- Knit stitch
- Purl stitch
- Sewing up a seam

Materials:
- One ball (50-gram) Sayelle yarn (makes 7 to 8 bells)
- One pair size 4 needles
- Other: bodkin or tapestry needle
- 1 small jingle bell
- 14-inch narrow ribbon

Approximate time to make:
- 1 1/2 hours

Directions:
- Cast on 14 stitches, leaving a 4-inch tail of yarn.
- Row 1: Knit 10, purl 4
- Row 2: Knit 14
- Repeat rows 1 and 2 until you have done 36 rows (count 18 ridges). End with a knit 14 row.

Cast off.
- Leave an end of yarn 12 inches long.

To finish:
Thread yarn end into the bodkin or needle and do a running stitch through every other stitch along the top, pulling up tightly. Fasten off by doing three stitches in the same spot. Use the same yarn to sew up side seam of bell, using a crochet or back stitch. Weave in yarn ends along seam.

To attach metal jingle bell:
Cut a piece of narrow ribbon or yarn 14 inches long. Thread the jingle bell onto it, positioning bell in the center of the ribbon. Poke ribbon ends through top hole of yarn bell (you may have to thread them into a large-eyed needle to do this). Pull ribbon ends up through hole until jingle bell just shows below bottom of yarn bell. Tie ribbon ends in a bow on top of the yarn bell.

Neckwarmer
A ribbed band to wear like a turtleneck scarf.

Skills:
- Casting on
- Casting off
- Knit stitch
- Purl stitch
- Joining yarn
- Weaving in ends

Materials:
- Two balls (50 grams each)
- Shetland chunky yarn
- One #6 circular needle, 24 inches long
- Bodkin
- Circular needle

Approximate time to make:
- 4 hours

Directions:
- Cast on 80 stitches.
- Row 1: K1, P1 to end of row (ribbing)
- Row 2: Same as row 1.
- Repeat until neck warmer measures about 10 inches or desired length.

Cast off:
- Leave a 20" length of yarn to stitch seam.

Weave in yarn ends and trim.
Project goals I completed this year

Care I gave to my knit articles
Number of articles washed
Number of articles repaired

What I shared with others (presentations, helping other members, community service projects)

My presentation title was

Project story
Use this space to write about your project. What did you do? What did you enjoy doing most? Least? Tell about the materials you selected. Include a picture or draw a sketch of your final project.

Tell about any knitting books you read, the resource people who helped you, and the activities at your club meeting.
Knitty Gritty Project Record

Name ____________________________

Address __________________________

Age as of January 1 _______________

Club ______________________________

Project level (beginner, etc.) __________

Number of years in this project __________

Leader’s signature ___________________

What I made for my project and what it cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTICLE OR GARMENT</th>
<th>COST</th>
<th>ESTIMATED VALUE</th>
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Project goals I completed this year

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Sharing What You've Learned
Demonstrate one or more of the skills listed in this project for your skill level.

Resources and References
Ask your leader about resources and references for this project. Many are available on PENpages, at your county extension office. Don’t forget to look through craft and knitting magazines at libraries, bookstores, and department stores. The magazines are packed with ideas and skills to help you.

Exhibits and Fashion Revue
Check current roundup or fair premium listings to learn what you can enter as an exhibit. Each item should have a label printed with your name, age, club, and county. You may model knitted garments and accessories at the fashion revue. Check county, regional, and state guidelines before entering.

Taking the Project Again
You can take a project over again by choosing new goals and practicing the skills you’ve already learned. Complete most goals before moving to the next level.

Name: Kelly Torre
Age: 16
4-H club: Snippet
County: Snippet

Prepared by Jan Scholl, associate professor of agricultural and extension education.


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