Basic Lesson 2: Crochet Chain Stitch
by Sandy Marie and Mom’s Crochet

The Chain Stitch is where most crochet projects begin. For that simple reason, learning how to make a nice even chain is very important. If this foundation is too tight it will pull your project out of shape, and be hard to work with. If it is too loose you'll end up with threads that could snag, and a start that doesn't look nice. The ONLY way to get the hang of this is to practice.

My Mother taught me to crochet back in 1966 (I was 10). She told me I had to practice this A LOT. I grabbed everything I could find in the house and proceeded to make chains out of it. By the time I was finished I had a ball of chain stitches about the size of large soft ball. Now, I'm not saying that all of you should do this, but you really do need to practice this until it feels comfortable to you.

However, before you even start making a crochet chain you need to figure out how to hold your yarn and crochet hook. Honestly, everyone does it a little different. The goal of holding your yarn is to create good tension (for even stitches) yet allow it to flow. Try my way, use it for awhile and understand that you'll find what's right for you. Contrary to what many books say there is no RIGHT or WRONG way, so long as your end result comes out correct, even, and is comfortable for you. Watch several videos, read several books. That's the only way to find your perfect way.

2 Easy Ways To Hold Yarn
1. For about 3 decades (yes, that's 30 years, lol) this is the way I held my yarn. I still do this when working with crochet thread. The yarn wrapped over / under my fingers gives me most of the tension control. My index finger controls tension up close, per stitch.
2. Shortly after I was diagnosed with M.S. (and having aging hands) I had to find a new way to hold my yarn. I made one tiny change that made all the difference in the world. My hand no longer cramped, and my stitches became even again. I also discovered the level of tension control became much more even with all my fingers involved (and I sure don't drop my yarn anymore).
## Working The Chain Stitch

This is the way most books tell you to hook your yarn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Holding the 'tail' of the slip knot with your thumb and finger, hook the yarn around the crochet hook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Pull the hooked yarn through the loop that is the slip knot. (I took my right hand out so I could get a better picture.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>And pull the loop through - making the next loop.</td>
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*slip knot*
Here is an alternate way to make the chain stitch. This works particularly well for people who have difficulty with their hands, wrists, and arms. With most yarn it accomplishes the same result, only easier on the hands.

<table>
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<tr>
<th><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></th>
<th>Holding the 'tail' of the slip knot with your thumb and finger, hook the yarn from behind the crochet hook.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Pull the hooked yarn through the loop that is the slip knot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>And pull the loop through - making the next loop, or crochet chain stitch.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Try both ways of pulling the thread through loops and see which way makes the best and most even chain for you. I actually suggest practicing both methods as you may want to use one or the other depending on the yarn you pick for your project. I personally find that, with thicker fiber, I like to pull through from the front - however when working with very fine thread fiber I like to hook it around (for security).
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