

# knitting 101

*with Shannon Okey of [knitgrrl.com](http://knitgrrl.com)  
for the*

**Craft:** PATTERN  
craftzine.com PODCAST

## knitgrrl 2



Excerpted from *Knitgrrl 2: Learn to Knit with 16 All-New Patterns* by Shannon Okey.

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### About the author

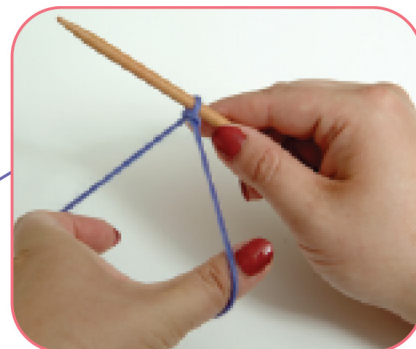
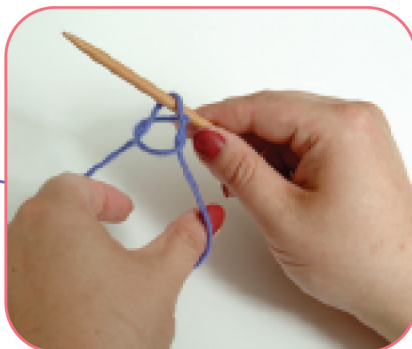
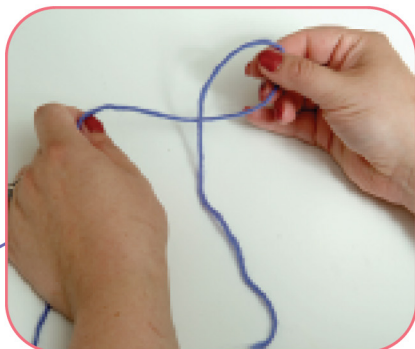
Shannon Okey ([knitgrrl.com](http://knitgrrl.com)) is the author, co-author or editor of many crafty books, including the Knitgrrl series, *Spin to Knit*, *Felt Frenzy*, *Just Socks*, *Just Gifts*, *AlterNation*, *The Pillow Book*, *How to Knit in the Woods* and *Alt Fiber*. She is a columnist for *knit.I* magazine, has appeared on *Knitty Gritty*, *Uncommon Threads* and other television shows, teaches all over the US and Canada and is a co-owner of *Stitch Cleveland* ([stitchcleveland.com](http://stitchcleveland.com)).

Signed copies of her books are available: email [admin@knitgrrl.com](mailto:admin@knitgrrl.com)

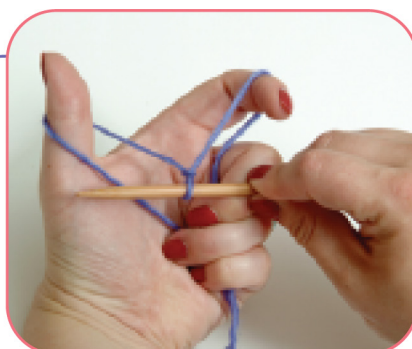
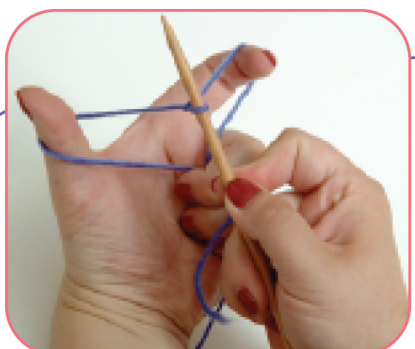


# CASTING ON

Putting the first row of knitting on your needle is called **casting on**. There are many ways to cast on—here we'll show you the most common one, the long-tail cast-on. Later in the book, on page 41, you'll learn the cable cast-on, which is used to add stitches in the middle of a row (or to form a very firm edge).

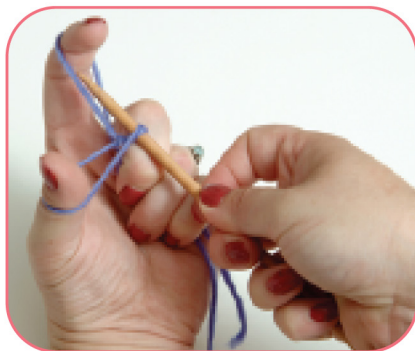


**1** Start by making a slipknot, as shown, and tighten it slightly around the needle.



**2** Hold the needle in your right hand. Grasp the two tails of yarn in your left hand. Wrap one tail around your left thumb and one around your left index finger, as shown. Use your other three fingers to hold the yarn in place.

**3** Point the needle down toward the base of your thumb and pick up the loop there.

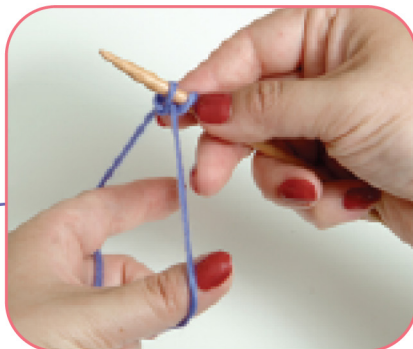


**4** Bring the loop up and around, then place the needle tip over and through the loop that's running around your index finger.



**5** Bring the right loop through the center loop.

**tip** Stop and count the stitches on your needle every once in a while to make sure you are casting on the right number.

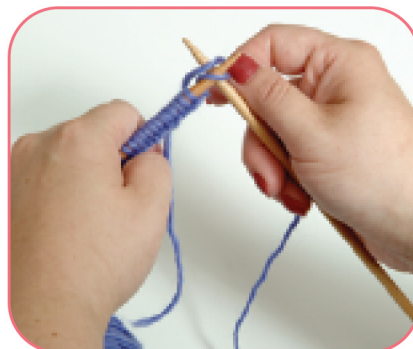


**6** Release your thumb and index finger and pull down on the strands to tighten the first loop onto the needle



**7** Repeat steps 2-6 to cast on more stitches. Your pattern will tell you how many. Your needle will move in a sort of sideways figure-8 as it rotates through the loops.

**tip** If you find you are casting on too tightly, use the next higher needle size. Then, once you've finished casting on your first row, slip the stitches back onto the correct size needle.



**8** When you are ready to start your first stitch, you will put the right-hand needle into the first loop on the left-hand needle.





# HOW to KNIT

**N**ow that you have your first row cast onto the needle, you're ready to start knitting. As we said earlier, all knitting is made up of just two stitches—the knit stitch and the purl stitch. Let's take a close look at how each stitch is made.

## The Knit Stitch



**1** Put the needle through the stitch from front to back. (This photo shows a row already in progress. If you were starting a row, you would start with the first stitch on your needle.)



**2** Wrap the yarn around the tip of the needle you pushed through from back to front.



3

Pull the needle with the new yarn wrapped around it through to the front.



4

Slide the needle with the new stitch off to the right.

*tip*

Some patterns will refer to your "working yarn." This is the long strand of yarn that extends from the ball or skein you are using to your needle.

## holding your needles and yarn

In this book, all of the photos show the "English," or "American," style of knitting. In this style, you hold the needles close to their tips and use your dominant hand (the one you write with) to wrap the yarn around the needle. (Some people prefer the "Continental" style, which we won't go into.) As you begin to knit, remember that it takes time to get used to balancing needles and yarn. Don't grip the needles too tightly or your hands will get tired almost immediately!

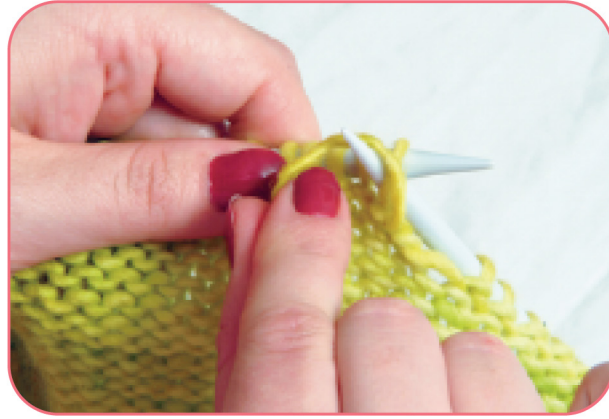




# The Purl Stitch



**1** Put the needle through the stitch from back to front.



**2** Wrap the yarn around the needle you pushed through from front to back.



**3** Push the needle with the new yarn wrapped around it through to the back.



**4** Slide the needle with the new stitch off to the right.

## BINDING OFF

**O**kay, so you've finally finished your project—congratulations!—and it's time to get the knitting off of your needles. This is called **binding off**.

Knit the first 2 stitches of your last row. Make your stitches very loose and sloppy. (Trust me—the tighter they are, the tougher it will be.) If you are using circular needles, as in these photos, start at the beginning of the last round.



**1** Using the tip of your left-hand needle, lift the first stitch (the one on the right) over the second stitch. Think of it as leapfrogging over the second stitch.



**2** Drop the stitch off in the middle.

Knit another stitch, then repeat steps 1-2 with those 2 stitches. Keep repeating these steps until there is only 1 stitch left on the left-hand needle. Cut your yarn, leaving a tail 6-8 inches long. Insert the tail through the last stitch and pull to tighten.

