

'Dutch knitting' or Shepherd's crochet

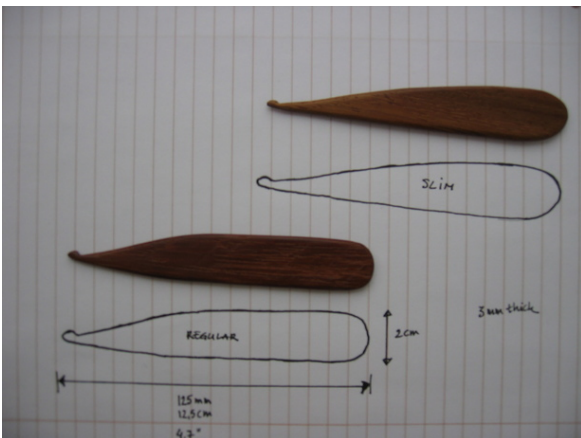
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<http://www.burdastyle.com/techniques/dutch-knitting-or-shepherd-s-crochet>



This is a technique which I learned from my mother who refers to it as 'knitting'. The technique does not actually use normal knitting needles, not does it use a conventional crochet hook, but a differently shaped, wooden one she calls a 'pen'. I've written this tutorial on request of many avid knitters and crocheters on BurdaStyle and elsewhere who want to learn this variation. A lively debate on the technique and its origins can be found on www.ravelry.com (search for 'Dutch Knitting Pen') where it was established that the technique is probably neither Dutch nor knitting. In honour of my mum I am going to be following our family tradition and continue to call this knitting in this tutorial. If you are a purist, look away now! For those less fussed about terminology, enjoy this tutorial, and do send me (links to) pictures of your projects if you take this up – my mum will be absolutely delighted!

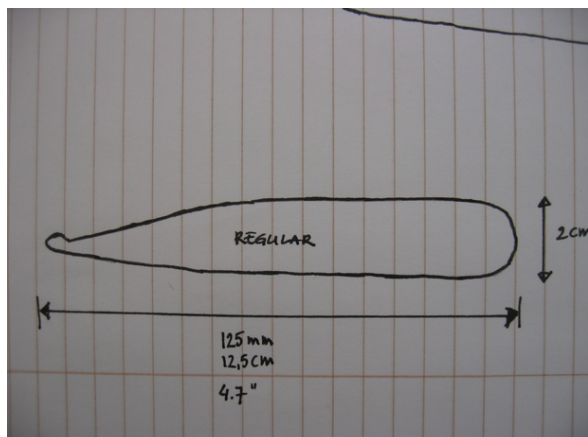
Step 1 — Make your pen



First, you will need to make your own pen (needle, hook...). For this you will need some good quality wood, a fretsaw, some sandpaper and a file - a diamond nail file does very well! My pens are made of different types of wood, including mahogany and walnut. Choose a wood that is strong but not too hard to work with and will become very smooth. The pen is ready to be used when it is comfortable in your hand and doesn't snag when knitting. It will become smoother the more you

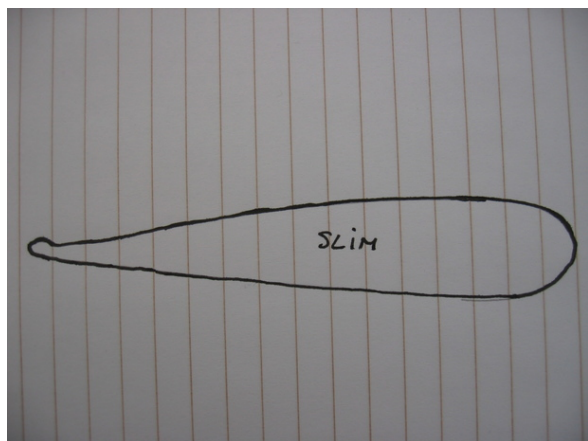
use it. Use the nail file to adjust the hook at the tip to your preference. The template has two variations of the pen: regular and a slim version. The slim version is very good for fine wools, silks etc and produces a fine knit.

Step 2 — Regular



This is the regular size

Step 3 — Slim



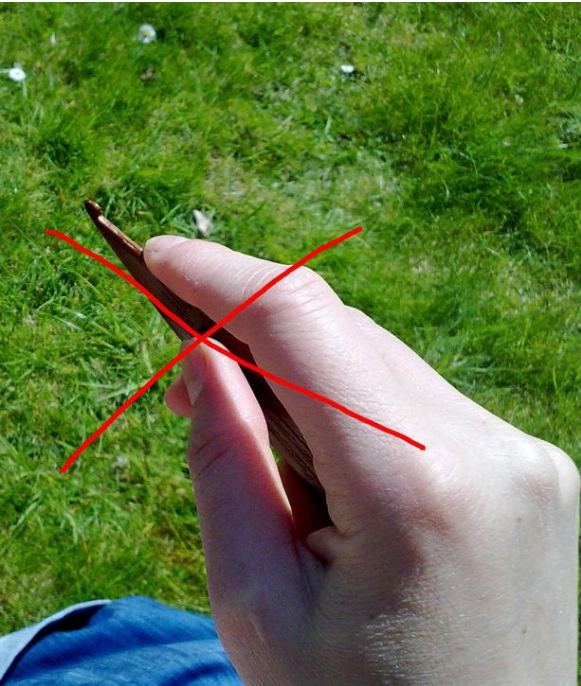
and this is the slim version.

Step 4 — Getting to grips



This is how you hold the pen

Step 5 — getting to grips - 2



but not like this!

Step 6 — Getting started



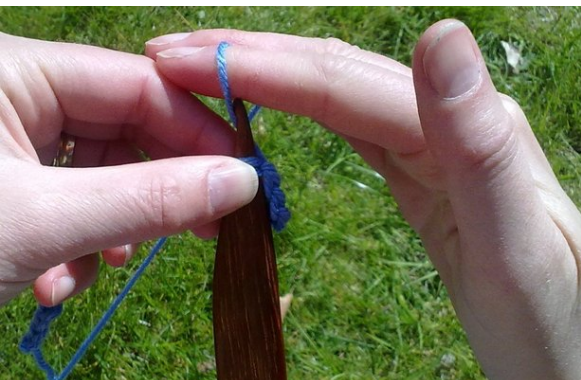
Start with making a chain. Yes, much like crochet... For this tutorial I am making a little hat for the Innocent Big Knit, <http://www.innocentdrinks.co.uk/thebigknit/> If you'll forgive the cheeky plug... it's a very good cause!

Step 7 — Double back



When your chain is long enough for your project, you will start doubling back, like this. Insert the pen at almost a right angle into the chain, working your way back towards the start of the chain. Hold the pen flat against your work.

Step 8 — Loop over...



Hold your work with your left hand and put your left thumb over both loops to keep the pen in place while you loop the yarn over the pen.

Step 9 — ...pull through



Then pull the yarn through using your left thumb to slide the loops off the pen.

Step 10 — repeat!



repeat steps 7 and 8 - here's another detailed picture.

Step 11 — close the loop



When you've come to the beginning of your chain, you need to close the loop. Now you need to be careful not to twist your work, so make sure you are connecting the ends correctly.

Step 12 — repeat steps 7-8...



using the top loops, carry on knitting as described in steps 7 and 8. Some more pictures to help get the hang of it.

Step 13 — and repeat...



go on, another one. It was a nice sunny day...

Step 14 — Attention! Change loops



Now comes a change of stitch. When you have gone round a few times, you will switch to another loop to produce a different stitch. I always like to do this when I am back at the beginning for a neat look. See the end dangling there? Instead of inserting the pen into the top loop, take the one below, and apply steps 7 and 8. This is the loop I mean:

Step 15 — Swap top loop for bottom loop...



Here is a close-up.

Step 16 — loop around...



step 7 again...

Step 17 — pull through



... and step 8. Same step, different loop. Easy!

Step 18 — after a while...



carry on for a couple of rounds. Your work will look like this:

Step 19 — decreasing



The hat is coming along very nicely and we need to start decreasing stitches to finish it. This couldn't be easier: pick up two loops at a time instead of one, then pull through the yarn. It looks like this (spot the finger on the lens...):

Step 20 — decrease and decrease...



I have found that the tidiest way to decrease on this little hat (I have made hundreds of them) is to decrease one stitch, then knit a single loop the next stitch, then decrease another one, and so on. If you decrease at every stitch, you might get unintended lace, i.e., you can see some holes. It also changes the shape of your work. Of course this may be exactly the desired effect, so experiment to see what looks best for your own project. This is what the hat looks like after a few rounds of decreasing:

Step 21 — Et voila!



Now we're running out of stitches and loops, and the hat is almost finished!

Step 22 — Done!



Cut the yarn and pull the end through the last loop. I use a thick carpet needle to work the ends into the inside of the hat. Cute, isn't it? And all that in 20 minutes...

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