

Knitting was introduced to the West during the Dark Ages by Lord Spiro Knitt as therapy for veterans of the Crusades. The craft of the early knitters had been handed down from generation to generation until the advent of the commercial knitting machine when it became, like snoodmaking, one of the lost arts.

During World War II most of knitting's great artisans were driven to insanity making argyle sox for the Red Cross. But Washington

D.C. and other Golden Age communities still harbor a few grandmothers and maiden aunts who carry on the traditions of their craft. Unfortunately, most have been brainwashed and can only produce covers for extra toilet paper rolls and other fetish items.

Now, from the roots of révolution and economic upheaval, like a fantastic energy streaking across the skies of metropolis comes . . . is it a bird? is it a plane? . . . IT'S NEWKNIT!

Newknit for Non-knitters

by Uhshur P. Quietstone

Forget about patterns and instructions and fashion. Make it as you go along.

Make a scarf, a sweater, a coat, gloves. Use any color or texture wool, any size needles.

Mix knitting, crocheting and weaving. Don't worry about dropped stitches, mistakes or irregular edges. Just jump in and start clicking away. You can start anywhere, even in the middle.

Do what ever part you know how to, and figure out the rest when you get to it.

This is Newknit. An abstract expressionist painting that you can wear. An opportunity to invent a new definition for the word clothes. Everybody is a star, no two alike, for next to no money. . . . Make something for yourself or a friend that can't be found in stores. Carry your work wherever you go. Work at it every chance you get, pretty soon you'll be able to do it without looking.

Why don't you do it in the road? Now when you sit down at the piano to knit no one will laugh. Newknit can turn a 98 lb. weakling with sand in his face into a 98 lb. weakling in a Captain Marvel suit. Crochet away unsightly hair. Newknit yourself an alternate lifestyle.

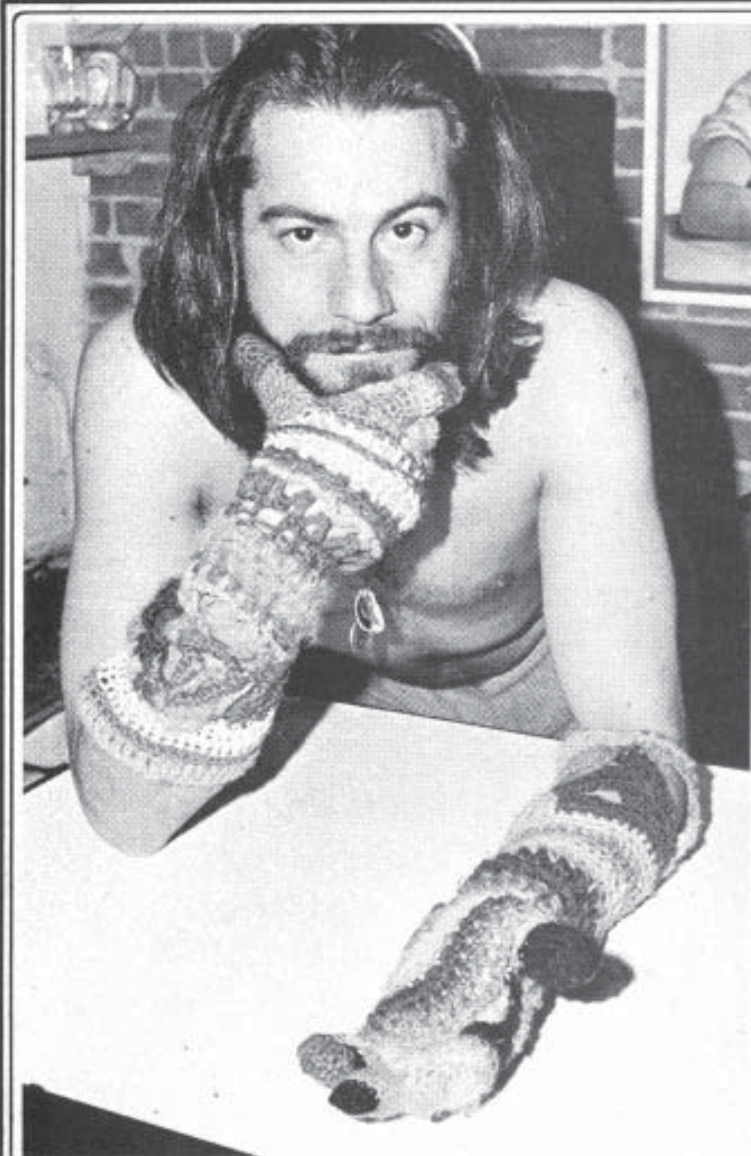
IF YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO IT, a little help from a friend who can knit or crochet is all you need. You only need to learn the two basic stitches, knit and perl (which is just a backward version of the knit stitch). Learn from a person rather than a book. It's not as complicated as it looks but a book is not bad; the library has them for free, the dime store has some cheapo "how to" books as a last resort.

GETTING IT TOGETHER the old way is to buy all the materials you'll need all at once. That's expensive and supposes that you know what you're going to do before you do it. The Newknit way leaves all those boring, impossible decisions to chance. The best way to get stuff is

to scrounge . . . ask people for the scraps and leftovers they might have around. Don't pass up anything . . . a ball of wool the size of a quarter is enough to make a thin stripe across a sweater, to edge an armhole, or to make the finger of a glove. The more colors and textures you have the more challenging the work will be.

MAKE A START by casting on (as many stitches as you feel like). You don't have to count the stitches, the finished piece will be a bit bigger than it looks on the needle.

KEEP ON EXPERIMENTING with variations of the two stitches and by bringing in new colors. You can work with two colors at once, using one or the other or both. While you work with one the other gets carried over on the backside. New colors are tied in with a small knot on the back; you can let the ends dangle or knit them in. Keep on going till you have a nice-sized piece and hold it up against your body. Where ever it fits it can go. Maybe by sewing two ends together you'll have part of a



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sleeve or legging, so work from there, making it bigger or smaller by increasing or decreasing the number of stitches.

Who knows what new numbers you can invent? How about a hood with attached gloves, a one armed cape, a poncho with finger holes, leggings with pockets? If the stitches are loose the work will stretch and compensate for most fitting difficulties.

If you want to plan something out in advance then start at the points of the body that will hold the garment up, for instance a neckband. If the neckband or neckhole is made first then the whole piece can hang from that. Or start at the shoulders or sleeves or armholes. There are no rules. The start is what's important. After that, you just hang on and get through, like anything else in life.

WAYS & MEANS

HOLES sometimes happen by accident but you can do them on purpose. To do this, go back to your teacher or book and find out about **BINDING OFF**, which means attaching a stitch to the next one instead of knitting it. To make a hole bind off a stitch, and in the next line bind off two when you get to the same spot, and so on till the hole is as wide as you meant. To start making the hole smaller, increase (make two stitches from one) in the same pattern you did the binding off. Holes that have to be made smaller or filled in are easy . . . simply take a new color and crochet around the edge.

RIBBING is good to do while rapping. It's automatic. Ribbing adds stretch and clings to the body. It makes a finished edge, if that's what you want, at collars, cuffs and waistbands. Ribbing is simple, you just alternate a knit and a perl or two knits and two perls. When you finish one row and go back the other way, just reverse the order.

Above: Newknit gloves made up of separate crocheted "rings" and "bracelets." Below: Nine feet of muffler Newknitted on big needles in two days. Only one stitch was used. The designs evolved themselves as new colors were knotted in and the ends were simply left dangling.



Newknit

If you run out of wool before you've scrounged the next color try ordinary STRING—any kind that is soft. If you don't like the colors of wool available, DYE whatever you can get. Multicolored wools make their own designs with just the simplest knitting patterns. Change the pattern and the design changes. If no multicolors come your way, wind your wool around a piece of cardboard and dip each end in a different color dye.

COLLAGE pieces of old sweaters. They can be worked right into what you're making, or used as the basis of another piece. Carefully rip off the old wool till you have a row of unworked stitches and put your needle through. Then tie in a new piece of wool, and Newknit in the missing parts. Leather works in well. Cut a shape out of scrap leather and punch holes along the edge, then crochet into the holes. Pieces of macrame (knotting), antique fabrics, anything you can get a crochet hook through can become part of what you're making.

EMBROIDER—get a needle with a big eye and make designs on top of the knitting.

When you get uptight with knitting, bind off a row and **CROCHET** for a while. It's simpler and you can carry it around more easily. Use crochet for round and crescent shapes, for outlining or edging a knitted piece, or for attaching knitted pieces. Put the inside of knitted pieces together and crochet right through the two bound-off edges. Embroider chains of crochet over mistakes that don't turn you on.

CROCHET (pronounced crow-shay) is the really easy way. It's only a matter of pulling loops of wool through each other. The first holds the second in place, and so on till you've made a chain of stitches.

Crocheting was an innovation of a simple-minded descendant of Lord Knitt, one Capt. Hooke, H.M.N. Ret. Capt. Hooke lost his needles while trying to harpoon flying fish in the Boring Straights. This one-hook version of knitting became very popular among the poor people of Paris during the French Revolution, who sat around the guillotine and yelled CROCHE each time the blade fell. "Crochie" can be translated roughly

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as "Right on." These revolutionaries were therefore called "les Crochettes" and from that word comes the term we use today.

When you've made a chain of loops you work back, putting the hook through the loops to add a second row. If you attach the end of a short chain to its other end, making a little circle, you can work around and around till you have made a cap in an hour. To accommodate bumps on your head, add stitches by putting your hook through the same loop twice. To make a cap fit snugly around the edges decrease the number of stitches by skipping loops as you work the last few lines.

Crocheting really lends itself to making lots of little pieces which can be assembled later. For instance, to make sleeves the easy way, make a series of bracelets which get bigger as they go up your arm. Make them in different colors and then attach them to each other with the same color.

Or make a helmet from eight squares. Four go around the head, one on the top and the other three cover the ears and the back of the neck—an example of how easy it is to make up your own patterns and designs the Newknit-Easy-Crow-shay way! 🐣



Above: Artist Paul Eden was working as a bouncer when he started knitting to pass the time. "I was making a slip-cover for the Empire State Building but I needed a sweater, so I knitted a hole for my head and continued till the front was as long as the back." Below: Six squares intended for a serious afghan get salvaged and become a Mongolian Shepherd Hat.