CROCHET MAGIC RING: BEAUTIFUL CLOSED CENTER IN 7 SIMPLE STEPS

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WHAT IS A MAGIC RING

A magic ring, also called a magic circle or an adjustable loop, is a way to begin crocheting in the round. You crochet over an adjustable loop of yarn and then pull the loop tight, so the center of your starting round closes completely, with no hole at all. That closed center is the whole point of the technique: it is what keeps stuffing from showing through an amigurumi toy and keeps the top of a hat free of a drafty gap.

WHAT IT IS FOR

Use a magic ring for anything worked in the round where the center must disappear: amigurumi toys, granny squares and hexagons, doilies, rugs, hats worked top down, mandalas, and coasters. It is the standard start for amigurumi, where every head, body, ear, and limb begins as a small circle that must pull shut.

SKILL LEVEL

Beginner. You need a chain, a single crochet, and a slip stitch. The ring itself is only a loop of yarn and a pull of the tail, and it takes a few attempts to master. Once you have the feel of it, you will not go back to the old chain start.

TIME

The source guides give no exact time. The practice rounds below take only a few minutes once the moves are learned, and most crocheters have the ring working well after a few practice tries. That time is an estimate, not a source fact.

MATERIALS FOR PRACTICE

- Smooth yarn in a light color, any weight. The source guides name no specific yarn or hook for the demonstration. A smooth light yarn is suggested here for practice only, so the loops stay easy to see while you learn. Avoid fluffy or dark yarn for your first attempts.
- A crochet hook to match the yarn you choose. The source guides name no hook size.
- Stitch marker, helpful once the rounds begin, because amigurumi is usually worked in a continuous spiral with no join to mark the end of a round.
- Tapestry needle, for weaving in the tail.
- Scissors.

ABBREVIATIONS (US terms)

ch: chain. dc: double crochet. hdc: half double crochet. mr: magic ring. sc: single crochet. sl st: slip stitch. st(s): stitch(es).

NOTES

This guide is written in US crochet terms. The magic ring is only the loop of yarn. It holds no crocheted stitches of its own. Work all the stitches of Round 1 into the ring, over the loop and the yarn tail together, and pull the ring tightly closed at the end of Round 1, not before. The chain 1 that secures the ring does NOT count as a stitch when Round 1 is worked in single crochet. For taller stitches, chain 2 for half double crochet or chain 3 for double crochet instead of the chain 1, and that chain DOES count as the first stitch of Round 1. Work in a continuous spiral unless your pattern says to join the rounds. For joined rounds, slip stitch into the first stitch at the end of Round 1, then chain 1 to begin Round 2.

THE RING: STANDARD METHOD

This is the main method in the guide, shown right-handed. Left-handed crocheters mirror it: hold the loop between the right thumb and forefinger, with the starting yarn tail on the right and hanging down.

Step 1: Make a loop a few inches from the end of your yarn. Grasp the join of the loop, where the 2 strands of yarn overlap, between your left thumb and forefinger. The starting yarn tail hangs down on the left.

Step 2: Insert the hook into the loop from front to back. Draw up a loop.

Step 3: Chain 1, or as many as your pattern states. This does NOT count as a stitch when the first round is worked in single crochet.

Step 4: Insert the hook into the loop, so you are crocheting over the loop and the yarn tail together. Draw up a loop to begin your first single crochet of Round 1.

Step 5: Complete the single crochet. Keep crocheting over the loop and the yarn tail until you have the required number of single crochet stitches for your first round (6 single crochet in the practice rounds below).

Step 6: Grab the yarn tail and pull to draw the center of the ring tightly closed.

Step 7: Begin your second round by crocheting into the first stitch of the first round.

THE RING: TWO MORE WAYS

Hands work differently, so here are two more ways to form the same ring. All three end in the same place: a loop, a securing chain, a first round of stitches, and a pull of the tail that closes the center.

Method 2: The X Method. This is often the easiest method for beginners because the tension is easier to control.

Step 1: Place the short end of the yarn under your left index and middle finger. Hold the yarn in place with your thumb. Work the long end of the yarn around your fingers once.

Step 2: Work the yarn back to the tops of your fingers so that the yarn creates an X. Keep the yarn in place by holding it with your ring finger and pinky.

Step 3: Insert your crochet hook under the bottom string and catch the top string with your hook. Pull the yarn through.

Step 4: Bring the hook back to its upright position so that the yarn twists once.

Step 5: Catch the yarn you are holding with your ring finger and pinky and pull the yarn through the loop.

Step 6: Your magic ring is ready. Chain 1, work the stitches of your first round into the ring, then pull the tail to close it.

Method 3: The Tabletop Method. If holding the yarn and the hook at the same time is the hard part, use a flat surface to help.

Step 1: Place the yarn on the table and make a loop with the short end of the yarn on the bottom.

Step 2: Insert your crochet hook in the loop and pull the long end of the yarn through the loop.

Step 3: Chain 1 by wrapping the yarn around your hook and pulling it through the little loop on your hook.

Step 4: You have made a magic ring.

Step 5: Work the required number of single crochet stitches into the ring.

Step 6: Close the ring by pulling on the short end of the yarn to gather the single crochet stitches into a circle. If you want or need to, finish the round with a slip stitch in the first stitch.

Note: a fourth way, the finger wrap, is the close cousin of the standard method above. Wrap the yarn around your index finger twice, form the loop, draw the yarn through the loop with your hook, chain 1, work the stitches of the first round into the ring, then pull the short end to close it.

PRACTICE ROUNDS

This is the demonstration piece from the main source guide. Work it to prove the ring closes, then follow your own pattern from here.

Make a magic ring, ch 1.

Rnd 1: 6 sc in magic ring. (6 st)

Rnd 2: 2 sc in each st around. (12 st)

Fasten off, or keep going as your pattern directs. If you keep the stitch count the same in the rounds after this, you start building a tube, which is how amigurumi legs and arms grow. If you repeat the increase pattern, you keep growing a flat circle.

AFTER THE RING

- Replacing a chain start: you can use a magic ring in any amigurumi pattern. If a pattern starts with a chain, replace the starting "Ch 2, X sc in 2nd ch from hook" with "Make a magic ring, ch 1, X sc in magic ring", then work the rest of the pattern as written.

- Joined rounds: to work in joined rounds instead of a spiral, slip stitch into the first stitch at the end of Round 1, then chain 1 to begin the next round.
- Taller stitches: for half double crochet, chain 2 instead of chain 1; for double crochet, chain 3; for even taller stitches, chain more. With taller stitches, the chain counts as the first stitch of Round 1, so slip stitch into the top of the chain before beginning Round 2.
- Double ring: if your ring needs extra strength or security, a double ring is the more secure option. The main source names it and points to its own double ring tutorial. No double ring steps are given in this guide.
- Securing the tail: the source guides say only to pull the tail to close the ring. Weaving the tail in with a tapestry needle so the center cannot work open again is standard finishing practice, not a source instruction.

TROUBLESHOOTING

- The ring will not close: you probably did not work over the yarn tail. When you crochet into the ring, make sure you are working over both the ring itself and the yarn tail. If you do not crochet over the tail, the ring cannot pull shut.
- A hole is still showing in the center: pull the tail firmly at the end of Round 1, after all the first round stitches are worked into the ring. Pulling it before the round is finished leaves the stitches loose.
- The stitches keep sliding off the ring: keep the loop and the tail together on your hook for every stitch of Round 1, and hold the join of the loop pinched between thumb and forefinger until the ring is secured with the chain 1.
- It still feels awkward: it takes a few attempts to master the magic ring. Try each method in this guide and keep the one your hands like best. If the ring is still not acting like a friend today, a chain start will do for practice, and you can come back to the ring tomorrow.

CARE

No care instructions apply to this guide, because it teaches a technique, not a finished item. The source guides give no care instructions.

Guide adapted from the free guide by June Gilbank at PlanetJune: How to Crochet a Magic Ring, https://www.planetjune.com/blog/amigurumi-help/how-to-crochet-a-magic-ring/

With the two extra methods from Hobbii: Master the Magic Ring: 3 Ways to Start Your Crochet Circle, https://hobbii.com/blogs/news/magic-ring-three-techniques

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