P2PU Facilitator Guide

Learn to Knit

This guide is designed to be run with a group of 10-15 people across **four 90-minute meetings**. Each module follows a consistent format: group Check-in, Read & Watch, Activity, and closing Reflection.

Course Description:
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Knitting is an activity enjoyed by many people around the world and numerous studies have shown that knitting also has a number of positive physical and mental benefits, including lowering stress levels, helping individuals with depression and improving cognition in older adults. Plus, it's a fun activity that can be enjoyed by people of all ages!

This is a hands-on course intended for those with little to no knitting experience. Although this course could be run virtually, it is designed to be done in person. Learners will learn everything they need to start their own knitting project including choosing supplies, learning how to begin and end a knitting project, how to do basic knit and purl stitches to make knitted fabric, and how to read a knit pattern. A combination of readings, videos from Studio Knit's YouTube channel's "Absolute Beginner Knitting Series," as well as other knitting-focused videos from other content creators, along with hands-on practice are used to put these skills into action. I also included a list of recommended books and resources to further help learners on their knitting journey.

I created this course because it can be hard to find quality online knitting courses that are also free. Knitting courses can be pricey and I wanted to make this craft accessible to as many people as possible, even those with financial barriers. I've been knitting for over 20 years and wanted to share my knowledge of a craft that has such a long and rich tradition.

Although this learning circle can be facilitated by someone with no knitting experience, the hands-on nature of the course may create some challenges. It is highly recommended that this learning circle have a co-facilitator with knitting experience who is able to answer questions and provide assistance to learners with the hands-on portions of the material. This could be a fellow colleague or an outside facilitator.

Over the course of the four weeks, the following topics will be covered:

Week 1 - Introduction to knitting: history, materials for knitting, making a slip knot and casting on stitches

Week 2 - Knitting terminology and slang, styles of knitting, tensioning yarn, learning the knit stitch

Week 3 – Common beginner mistakes and how to fix them, joining a new ball of yarn, learning the purl stitch

Week 4 – Switching between knit and purl stitch in the same row, stitch patterns, overview of knitting patterns, knitting a gauge swatch, binding off and weaving in ends of a piece of knitting, ideas for beginner knitting projects along with tips and local resources

Supplies needed:

Knitting needles - size US 8 or 9 preferable

Variety pack of acrylic yarn in size 4/worsted weight

Scissors

Ruler (optional)

Yarn/Tapestry Needle

Learning Goals/Expectations

1. This course is intended for individuals that are completely new to knitting or have very limited knitting experience.
2. Participant expectations - learners will expect to be provided demonstrations on how to knit from start to finish and will have many questions along the way. Knitting involves developing muscle memory, so they will expect detailed, slow demonstrations of techniques. Some videos may need to be paused and replayed to get these concepts.
3. Some learners may want to make sure they are doing a particular activity "correctly." A designated assistant with knitting knowledge should be made available to correct any confusion on how to perform the hands-on activities.
4. Learners are encouraged to practice new skills learned between classes but it is not required.
5. Everyone learns at a different speed, some people pick up things quickly, while others it takes much longer. Time should be worked into the class to allow for learners learning at different paces.
6. Attending every session is crucial, as the lessons build on each other. If a class is missed it will be difficult for a learner to be able to pick up at the next class if they are completely new to knitting. It is also recommended to close registration once the first class is held, since the format of this class would create a disruption trying to teach late registrants enough to get them caught up.
7. By the end of the course, learners should be able to complete a simple knitting project such as a scarf, potholder, dishcloth, etc. For this course, learners will knit a few basic swatches utilizing the different techniques learned in the course (cast-on, knit stitch, purl stitch, and bind-off).

Week 1

1. Check-in (20 min)

Introduction to the learning circle

- Facilitator introduction
- Intro to Learning Circle Format: Learning circles are study groups for people who want to take online classes together and in-person.
- Learner introductions
- Icebreaker:
    - What do you hope to learn in this course?
    - What other hobbies do you have?
- Overview of what we will learn in the class
- What we will learn in Week 1

Group Expectations

- **Class will last approximately 90 minutes, and will meet weekly at the same time for four weeks.** Please try to be on time, but it is okay if you are a few minutes late.
- **Be respectful.** Don't interrupt others, keep comments and criticism constructive and give everyone a chance to speak/participate.
- **Be willing to participate.** This is a hands-on course teaching a new skill. Unlike a traditional course with readings and quizzes, this will largely involve practicing a new technique. This can be scary, but it's the only way to learn!
- **Embrace mistakes.** Learning a new craft takes time and may be frustrating at first. Your first initial attempts won't look perfect (or maybe they will, if you're lucky). That's okay! If you are getting really frustrated though, it is okay to take a few minutes, step back and try again.
- **Supplies are for in-class use only:** Although we would LOVE to be able to let everyone take home the knitting supplies to keep, we want to be able to run

this class again and want to be able to reuse these! There is a folder with your name on it that I've provided, please leave them in the classroom with your name on it and return to me at the end of each class. You will be able to keep your yarn samples at the end of the 4 weeks, but the knitting needles and other supplies will have to be returned for the library's future use. If you'd like to practice at home, I have included a list of recommended resources for where to buy knitting needles, yarn and other supplies.

As a group, note anything that you'd like to add or remove for the list. How do you want to address any conflicts that arise in light of these expectations? (You can return to this list throughout the learning circle).

2. Watch (30 min)

1. **History of Knitting**
    a. Watch the video "History of knitting" (We are Knitters YouTube) https://youtu.be/cCQK6odf9b0 (5 minutes)
2. **Knitting Tools/Supplies**
    a. Watch the video "Tools to start knitting" (Studio Knit YouTube) https://youtu.be/3rO78wz8bzI (3 minutes)
    b. Go over other useful tools that are great for beginners (I made a PowerPoint slide based off the info on this website: https://www.allfreeknitting.com/Tips-for-Knitting/Beginning-Knitting-Supplies)
3. **Choosing Yarn**
    a. Watch the video "How to choose knitting yarn" (Studio Knit YouTube) https://youtu.be/7b5SXNKCiNU (5 minutes)
    b. Reading a yarn label – Go over how to read a yarn label. I made a PowerPoint slide based off this blog post. https://sarahmaker.com/read-yarn-labels/
4. **Choosing Knitting Needles**

   a. Watch the video “Selecting your knitting needles” (Studio Knit YouTube) https://youtu.be/zyeItxSMG0U (5 minutes)
   b. Watch the video “Why you need a tapestry needle to knit” (Studio Knit YouTube) https://youtu.be/SePtOAjt-Bo (4 minutes)
5. **Discussion/Questions -** Are there any additional questions about the material covered so far? Does anything need to be clarified?
6. **Resources/Handouts** (print out the charts on these websites to handout to learners for reference)
   a. Knitting needle sizes conversion charts - https://sheepandstitch.com/library/knitting-needle-sizes-conversion-chart/
   b. Yarn weight chart - https://www.craftyarncouncil.com/standards/yarn-weight-system
   c. Types of yarn/fiber types - https://knittingknowledge.com/knitting-guides/yarn-types/
   d. How much yarn do you need? https://centreknittersguild.com/2018/06/29/how-much-yarn-do-you-need/
   e. Optional: Resource guide to stores that sell yarn/ knitting supplies. I created a document of online and local stores where to buy local knitting supplies. Facilitators may want to create a similar document to hand out in the first class for learners who want to buy their own supplies.

3. Activity (45 min breakout)

1. **How to make a slip knot**
   a. Watch video: “How to make a slip knot” (Sheep & Stitch YouTube) https://youtu.be/oj21JDDSrgM (3 minutes)

   b. Allow a few minutes for practice until everyone has one slip knot on their needles, which will be needed for the next section (casting on)

2. **How to cast on for knitting**
   a. Watch the video "How to cast on knitting for total beginners" (Sheep & Stitch YouTube) https://youtu.be/1vm6oaYzHyA (8 minutes)
   b. Practice doing a cast on (facilitator may need to pause/replay videos during this part)
   c. There are step-by-step instructions at this blog that can be printed out/referenced for those that need them: https://sarahmaker.com/how-to-cast-on/ (I printed out copies so learners had written instructions to refer to while practicing)
   d. Continue practicing making a slip knot and casting on - try to cast on about 20 stitches for next week when we learn the knit and purl stitches.

*Note: *Learners had the most difficult time learning the cast-on. This will be where having an assistant with knitting experience will be extremely helpful.*

4. Reflect (5 min)

Plus/Delta - What did you like about today's class? What are things you would like to be done differently in future sessions?

Week 2

1. Check-in (5 min)

- Week 1 Recap
- Icebreaker - What is something interesting you learned this week?
- What we will learn in Week 2
- Questions before we get started?

2. Watch & Discuss (40 min)

1. **Knitting Terminology**
    a. Go over some of the common knitting terms. This blog post is a good resource for definitions: https://knittinggritty.com/knitting-terms-for-beginners/
    b. Go over some common knitting slang, usually used in online spaces. This article is a good resource for knitting slang https://www.thelittlewoolcompany.com/yarn-specifications-and-gauges-clone/
2. **Styles of Knitting - English vs. Continental**
    a. Go over two main styles of knitting; Continental and English style. This website has a good overview of the differences: https://knittingknowledge.com/knitting-guides/continental-vs-english-knitting/#continental-pros-and-cons
    b. Included a PowerPoint slide on other knitting styles but didn't go into detail about them – there is a link in the resources/handouts for reference
3. **Tensioning yarn when knitting**
    a. Watch the video "Tension knit with ease" (Studio Knit YouTube) https://youtu.be/5kpEji02QbQ (5 minutes)
4. **Resources/Handouts**

   a. For more knitting terms, go to https://www.allfreeknitting.com/Tips-for-Knitting/Knitting-Terms-Explained
   b. More information on alternate knitting styles https://sewhomey.com/5-styles-to-speed-up-your-knitting-continental-not-included/
5. **Discussion/Questions -** Are there any additional questions about the material covered so far? Does anything need to be clarified?

3. Activity (45 min breakout)

1. **Knit Stitch - English/American Style**
   a. Watch the video "The knit stitch for total beginners" (Sheep & Stitch YouTube) https://youtu.be/Egp4NRhlMDg (8 minutes)
   b. There are step-by-step instructions at this blog that can be referenced/printed out for those that need them: https://sarahmaker.com/knit-stitch/
   c. Practice the knit stitch
2. **Knit Stitch - Continental Style**
   a. Watch the video "Purl stitch Continental style" (Berroco Yarn YouTube) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OdcXGBr9zu4 (2 minutes)
   b. There are step-by-step instructions at this website that can be referenced/printed out for those that need them: https://www.dummies.com/article/home-auto-hobbies/crafts/knitting-crocheting/how-to-knit-continental-style-206605/
   c. Those that want to practice the knit stitch Continental style, can practice or learners can continue to practice using English style if they prefer. (*Something to note: the Continental Method may be easier for those learners who are left handed or are used to crocheting*)

4. Reflect (5 min)

Plus/Delta - What did you like about today's class? What are things you would like to be done differently in future sessions?

Week 3

1. Check-in (5 min)

- Week 2 Recap
- Icebreaker - What is something interesting you learned this week?
- What we will learn in Week 3
- Questions before we get started?

2. Watch & Discuss (50 min)

1. **Improving Your Knitting and Fixing Mistakes**
    a. Watch the video "What to do when knitting is hard as a beginner" (Knit With Hannah YouTube) https://youtu.be/48kWPPPk-Hk (14 minutes)
    b. Watch the video "Why is my knitting too tight?" (Knit with Hannah YouTube) https://youtu.be/Y2E2xxVZaOw (8 minutes)
    c. Watch the video "Why is my knitting getting wider?" (Knit with Hannah YouTube) https://youtu.be/zjGLDvFxEbQ (12 minutes)
    d. Watch the video "How to 'tink' or 'unknit' to fix mistakes (The Chilly Dog YouTube) https://youtu.be/WI5icwpCTlc (7 minutes)
2. **How to join a new ball of yarn**
    a. Watch the video "How to join a new ball of yarn" (Sheep & Stitch YouTube) https://youtu.be/I_cHO6R_MBc (7 minutes)

3. **Discussion/Questions -** Are there any additional questions about the material covered so far? Does anything need to be clarified?

3. Activity (35 min breakout)

1. **Purl Stitch - English/American Style**
    a. Watch the video “How to purl stitch for total beginners” (Sheep & Stitch YouTube) https://youtu.be/7ePhLqw6HDM (8 minutes)
    b. Practice
2. **Purl Stitch - Continental Style**
    a. Watch the video “How to knit & purl – Continental for crocheters (Designs by Phanessa YouTube) https://youtu.be/zCRoSYwA1dY *Start video at time marker 4:50* (5 minutes)
    b. Practice

4. Reflect (5 min)

Plus/Delta - What did you like about today’s class? What are things you would like to be done differently in future sessions?

Week 4

1. Check-in (5 min)

- Week 3 Recap
- Icebreaker - What is something interesting you learned this week?
- What we will learn in Week 4
- Learning Circle Wrap-Up (next steps, resources for further study)
- Questions before we get started?

2. Watch & Discuss (25 min)

1. **Switching between knits and purls in the same row**

a. Watch the video “How to knit and purl in the same row” (JoAnn Fabric YouTube) https://youtu.be/4K6eDHo8ccE (1 minute) *This video demonstrates how to do this English style*
b. Watch the video “How to switch between knit and purl stitches” (NobleKnits YouTube) https://youtu.be/-jOnOs-PgY4 (1 minute) *This video demonstrates how to do this Continental style*

2. **Basic Stitch Patterns**
   a. Go over basic stitch patterns: garter, stockinette, 1X1 rib, 2X2 rib and seed stitch (I put together a power point with photos and the directions for making each stitch). Information on beginner stitch patterns with photos can be found at this website: https://www.studioknitsf.com/stitch-patterns-beginner/
   b. Go over how to read a knitting stitch pattern: This article is a good resource on how to read both knitting stitch patterns and knitting project patterns - https://knitfarious.com/how-to-read-knitting-stitch-patterns-knitters-guide/
   c. Provide a brief overview of what information is in a knitting project pattern and how to read them. This should be very generalized – just the different parts that are in a knitting pattern like gauge, difficulty level, materials needed, instructions, etc. A good resource for this can be found at this website: https://blog.tincanknits.com/2020/10/08/how-to-read-a-knitting-pattern/
   d. About abbreviations - this webpage is a great reference for knitting abbreviations: https://www.craftyarncouncil.com/standards/knitting-abbreviations (link can be emailed to learners after class, so they can reference)
3. **Making a Gauge Swatch**
   a. Watch the video “Knit: gauge swatch” (Yarnspirations YouTube) https://youtu.be/8cSSDB_VmYo (4 minutes)

4. **Discussion/Questions -** Are there any additional questions about the material covered so far? Does anything need to be clarified?

3. Activity (45 min breakout)

1. **Binding Off**
    a. Watch the video "How to bind off knitting for total beginners" (Sheep & Stitch YouTube) https://youtu.be/VSwjIUiQZlM (5 minutes)
    b. Practice binding off swatch from previous class sessions
2. **Weaving in Ends**
    a. Watch the video "How to weave in ends knitting technique" (Studio Knit YouTube) https://youtu.be/-104GQziH08 (5 minutes)
    b. Practice weaving in the ends of swatch that was bound off

4. Wrap-up & Reflect (15 min)

1. **Beginner Project Ideas**
    a. Go to www.ravelry.com and explore the advanced pattern search tool to find beginner patterns (you will need to create an account to use the website)
    b. This blog article "25 Free and Easy Knitting Patterns for Beginners" has some good patterns and advice for new knitters. https://sarahmaker.com/easy-knitting-patterns/
    c. Check the library (or bookstore) for beginner knitting books that have patterns
    d. Knitting Magazines (sometimes they have beginner-friendly patterns)
    e. Etsy
    f. Yarn company websites (Lion Brand, Knit Picks, Berroco, etc.)
    g. Independent knitting designers' websites
2. **Next Steps - I can knit. What Now?**

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a. Experiment with stitch patterns! Don't feel like you have to work off a written pattern
b. If you DO want to try to knit from a pattern, go for it!
c. Find other knitters, there are a lot of online knitting groups from Ravelry to Facebook to Reddit, they are great resources for making friends and learning.
d. If you get stuck - YouTube, Google and a Librarian (who can help you find answers to your questions) are all great resources.
e. Finally, when you're ready to take your skills to the next level, try learning these Intermediate techniques: Increasing & Decreasing, Knitting in the round, Knitting Cables or Lace, Knitting Socks or even sweaters!

Note: I included a handout of local knitting meetup groups and organizations that taught knitting classes for learners that wanted to learn more. If there is a local knitting guild in your area, check their website, it's usually full of great information!

Plus/Delta - What did you like most about the learning circle? What would you have changed? How do you plan to use the skills gained in this course going forward?

Additional Resources:

1. **Tips for New Knitters**
    a. Watch the video "11 Essential Knitting Tips for New Knitters" (Sheep & Stitch YouTube) https://youtu.be/wwDN5qt-Bvs (11 minutes)
    b. Read the blog post "Five Tips for Beginner Knitters" https://www.10rowsaday.com/beginner-tips
2. **My personal knitting tips for beginners** (feel free to share and/or use):
    a. Keep practicing! Even a few minutes a day can make such a difference. The more you practice, the better you will get.

b. Join knitting groups (either online or in-person). More experienced knitters can help if you get stuck and it's more fun when you're knitting with others.
c. Start easy – if you are still struggling with casting on, practice that until you can do it in your sleep. Trying to do something too advanced too soon will only frustrate you and make you want to quit.
d. Lastly – if you do get frustrated, put down the needles. Take a break, have a cup of tea and come back to it when you are in a calmer state of mind. The more frustrated you are the more prone you are to keep making mistakes.

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