



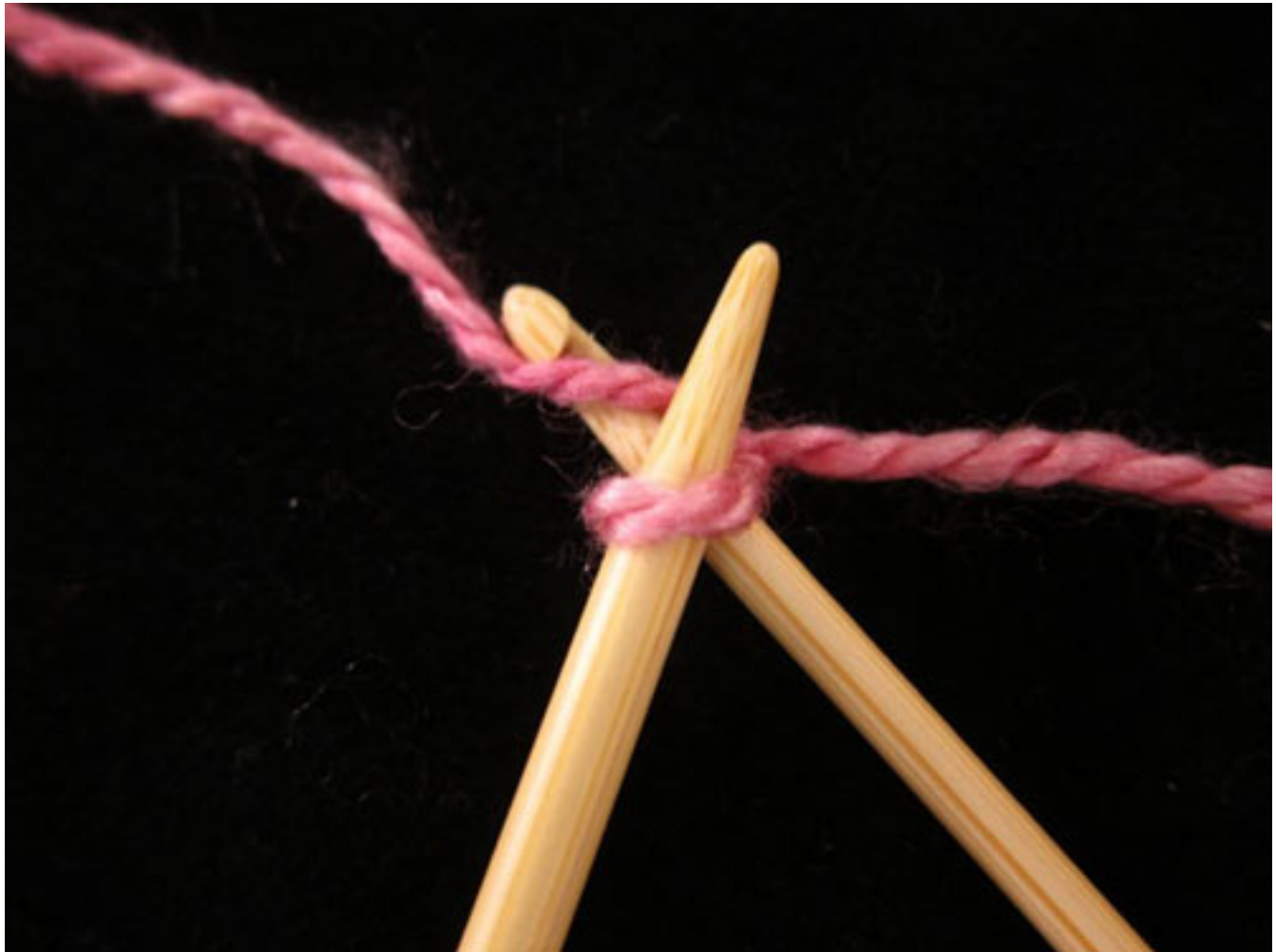
Kerry Milani is the talented designer who brought us [Nymphaeum](#), a gorgeous shawl with a delicate looped edging. This edging is created using an unconventional cast-on method, which Kerry takes us through, step-by-step, in the following post. Keep up with Kerry on Ravelry [here](#).

I have a confession to make. Casting on makes me tight -- tight like you can't get your needle through the loops you just made, tight. Sometimes this is a good thing, like when I'm making a shoulder seam and don't want it to droop to my elbow, but when it comes to making lacy shawls, it just doesn't work. After many attempts at relaxing my cast-on, I stumbled across a cast-off in my handy Knitter's Handbook that gave me an idea: if I knit into a crochet chain, I could effectively create a stretchy edge without worrying about tight stitches! Only one problem, since my crochet is as tight as my cast-on, I could easily crochet chain mail out of cashmere. But what if I knit into every *other* crochet chain, or every third, or fourth, or fifth? AHA! Success! Kind of. I had trouble knitting into my chain of steel, not to mention keeping count of a thousand plus chain stitches. I wondered if it was possible to wrap the knitting needle *while* making my crochet chain.

The Eyelet Cast-on is the result of my ponderings. Let's walk through it!



Place slip knot on knitting needle.



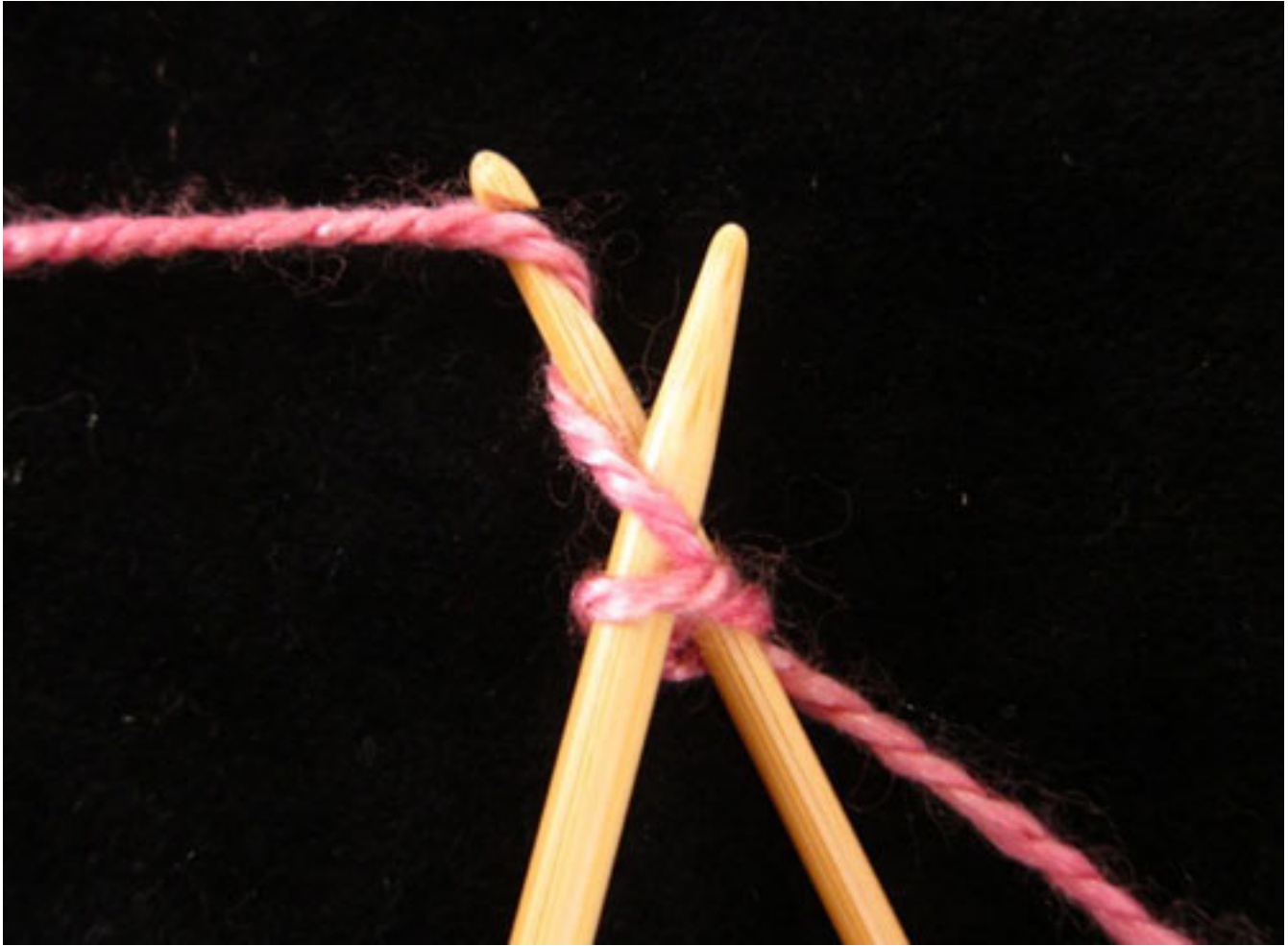
Insert crochet hook as if to knit into the stitch, wrap the yarn around your hook.



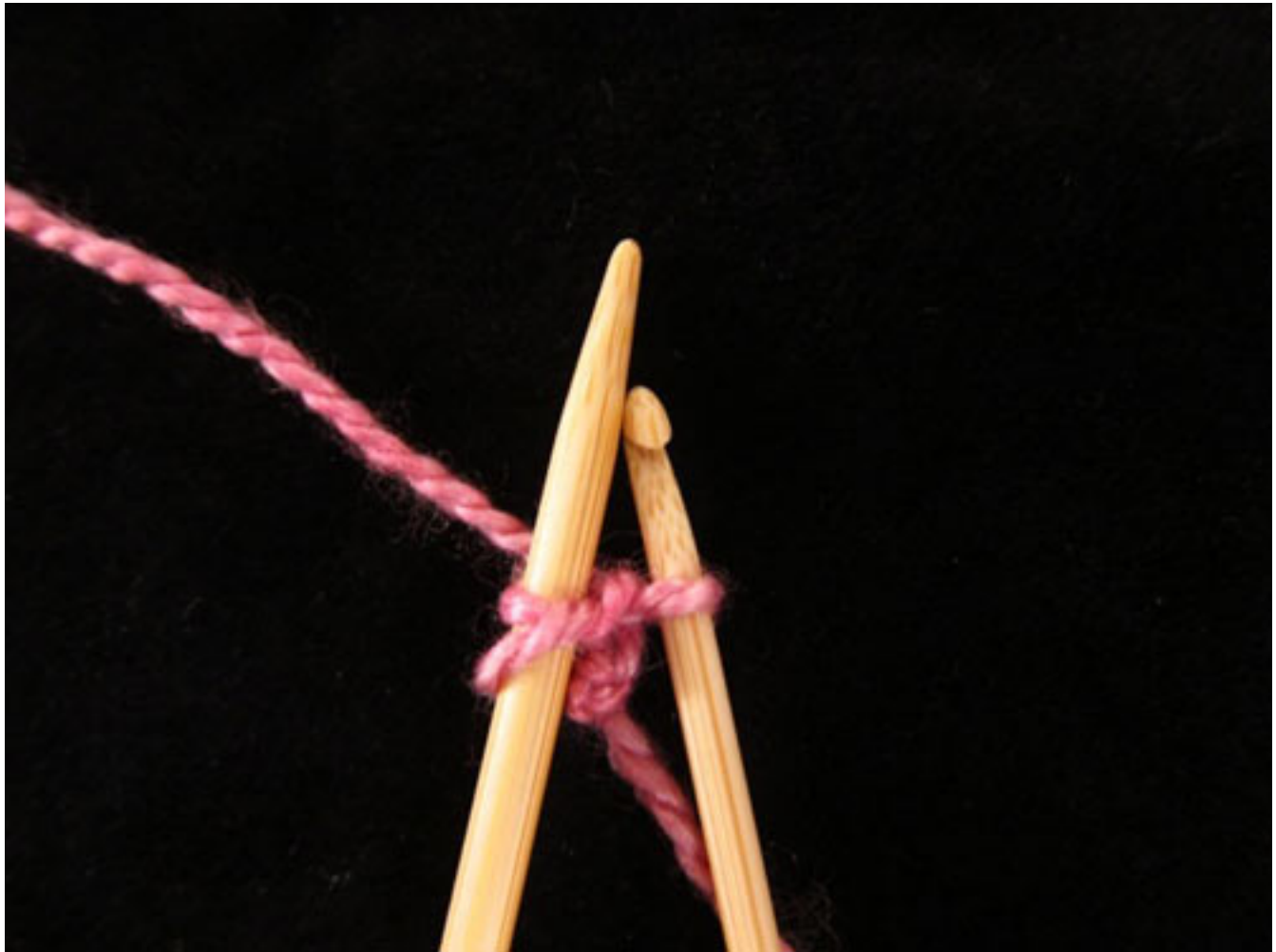
Pull through the slip stitch. The yarn is in back, behind both needle and hook. The slip knot is on the knitting needle, and there is one working chain stitch on the crochet hook.



I like to keep my crochet hook behind the knitting needle.



The first yarn over is the trickiest as the slip knot tends to want to twirl on the knitting needle. Bring the yarn forward between the crochet hook and knitting needle, then wrap to the back of the knitting needle (it is reminiscent of a yarn over and is so called). Next wrap around the crochet hook.

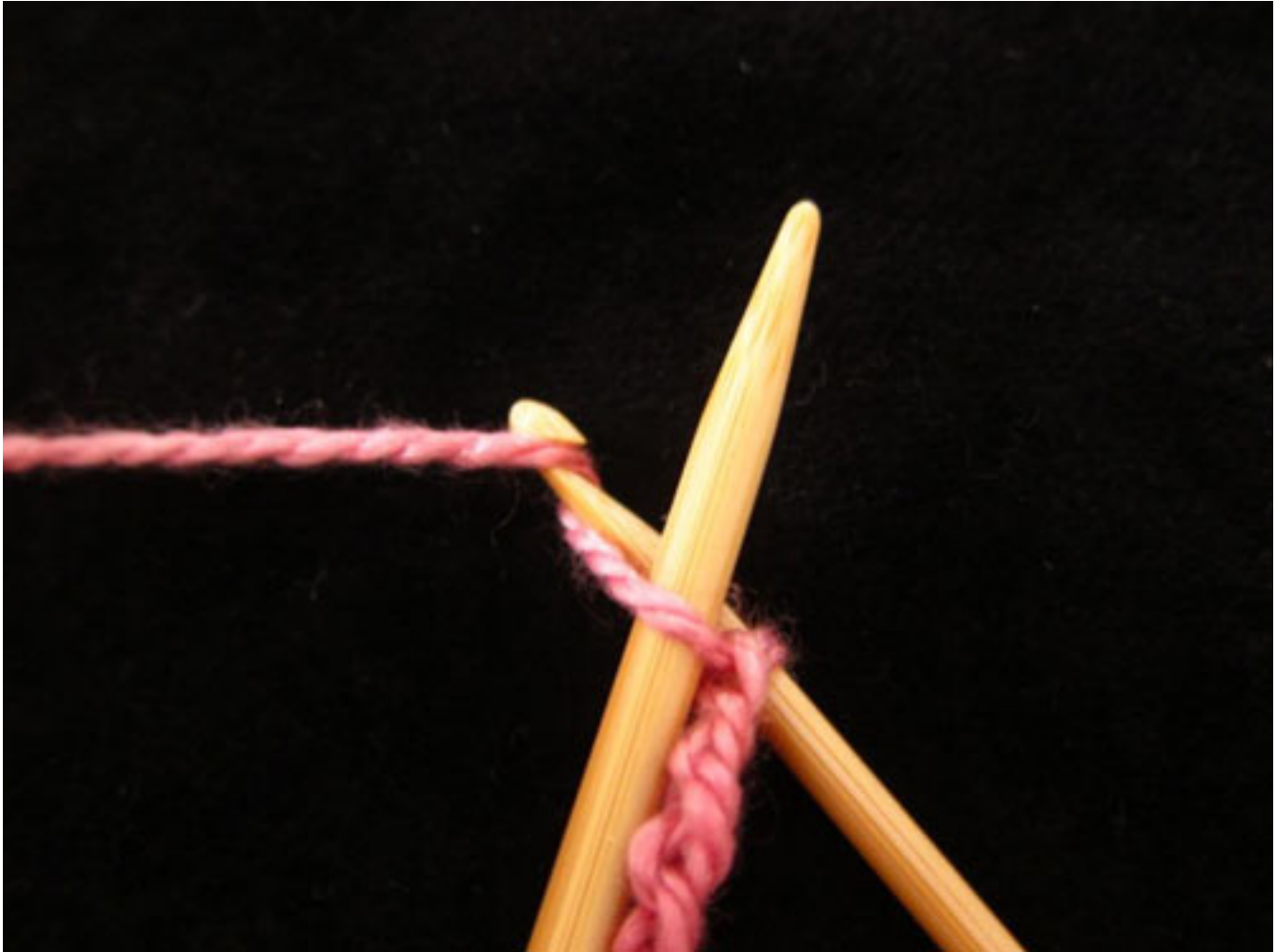


And make a stitch. Note that there are now two loops on the knitting needle and one working chain on the crochet hook.



Now chain as many stitches as the pattern directs. The first chain was made in the previous step. In this example I have six chain stitches. I like to keep my working yarn and crochet hook behind the knitting needle.





To make a yarn over, bring the yarn forward, in front of the knitting needle.



Then make the next chain stitch from behind the knitting needle.



Here is how I hold my hands. I am making a yarn over in this photo. I tension my yarn with my left hand (in a non-traditional, funky style!) while also holding the knitting needle between my thumb and ring fingers. I work my crochet hook with my right hand.

*Note: Hang a removable marker from every ch4 space as directed in the Nymphaeum shawl instructions (you can see mine in a photo below); keeping track of your Eyelet Cast-on will be much easier! Also, place a needle tip protector on the non-working end of the circular knitting needle to keep yarn over loops from slipping off the other end. When I chain, I keep the loops from slipping off the knitting needle by holding the chain along with my knitting needle, my pinky helps, too.*



When it is time to finish the Eyelet Cast-on, work the last yarn over as before, chain one stitch (shown just completed).



And slip the stitch from the crochet hook onto the knitting needle. Voila!



The knitting needle now looks something like this -- spaghetti and loops.



When knitting into the cast-on loops, they will present themselves with the leading loop to the back. Knit into the front loop. The stitch will twist. The crochet chain will try to turn. Yes, this is on purpose! (Note the marker hanging from the ch4 space in this photo and the next.)



When you get to the last two stitches of Row 1, the slip knot and first yarn over from the cast-on, will try to meld into one stitch. Separate them before knitting.





When working Row 2 of the Eyelet Cast-on instructions, make sure to twist the yarn overs from Row 1 by purling through the back loop. This helps create the illusion of a decorative crochet chain edging.



See how the finished edge is pretty and not the least bit tight? Note that the twists create a scalloped movement in the edging. Without the twist it would create a smoother, less defined edge, that doesn't hold a scallop shape.

Happy Knitting!