

Start Smart – Picking a Pattern You'll Actually Wear

Welcome to the Yarn to Wardrobe Summit Challenge

Over the next few days, we're not just talking about wearables. We're getting you moving.

This challenge is here to help you stop circling the idea of making a garment and actually start one. Not someday. Not "when I feel ready." Now.

Garments are where most knitters and crocheters get intimidated. Hats feel safe. Shawls feel manageable. Blankets feel forgiving.

Sweaters? Cardigans? Tops?

That's where the doubts kick in.

"What if it doesn't fit?"

"What if I waste good yarn?"

"What if I pick the wrong size?"

"What if I mess it up halfway through?"

So instead of jumping straight into stitching and hoping for the best, we're going to follow a clear, structured plan.

Because garments don't fail due to lack of talent.

They fail because of skipped steps.

During this challenge, you'll work through the same foundational process I use every time I start a new wearable. And yes, we're focusing on garments because that's where the fear tends to live.

But if you'd rather apply this to a hat, shawl, or even socks, you absolutely can. The principles are the same. Fit, gauge, yarn choice, pattern selection, planning... they apply across the board.

By the end of these sessions, you won't just "know more."

You'll have:

- A pattern chosen intentionally
- A size selected with confidence
- A swatch started (or finished)
- And a clear next step

You'll be set up to cast on or chain with clarity instead of crossing your fingers.

This isn't about finishing a sweater in a week.

It's about removing the hesitation that's been keeping you from starting one.

Now let's get into Day 1.

DAY 1 Introduction

Today we're going to talk about picking the right pattern for you!

We'll cover:

- What makes a pattern beginner-friendly
- Construction styles that work well for first garments
- Pick Something You'll Actually Wear
- Common red flags that lead to frustration later

Don't forget to grab your Bingo Card: <https://programs.knittingwithchopsticks.com/YtwsBingo>

The Replay will be available on the Replay page asap:

<https://programs.knittingwithchopsticks.com/YtWSReplay>

Why Starting with the Right Pattern Matters

When you're making your very first garment, the pattern you choose makes a big difference. Not all patterns are created equal — and starting with something approachable and reliable helps you succeed.

I've seen so many knitter and crocheters dive into their first garment with a pattern that's either too advanced, unclear, or simply not suited to their style — and the result is often frustration, wasted time, and a project that never gets worn. That's why we're starting here today: picking the right pattern is one of the simplest ways to set yourself up for success.

The goal today isn't just to pick any pattern. It's to pick one you're actually going to finish, enjoy, and wear.

What Makes a Pattern Beginner-Friendly

Here's what to look for to set yourself up for success:

Choose patterns from trusted sources.

Knitting and especially crochet patterns vary a lot in how they're written, and writing styles can differ greatly from designer to designer. Picking a pattern from someone whose work you've already tried and enjoyed means you'll be familiar with how they explain things, which makes following the pattern much easier.

Unfortunately, not all patterns are equal. For your first garment, stick to a designer or source you know and trust. Established designers usually have patterns that have been tech edited and/or tested, so you're less likely to run into confusing instructions.

→ *Share your favorite designers in the chat / Facebook group for others to get inspired*

Look for clear skill level indicators.

Patterns often follow four general skill levels (Yarn Craft Council level):

- **Beginner** – Projects using basic stitches with minimal shaping.
- **Easy** – Projects using basic stitches in repetitive patterns, with simple color changes and shaping.
- **Intermediate** – Projects using a variety of stitches or techniques, with mid-level shaping and finishing.
- **Experienced** – Projects featuring intricate stitch patterns, multi-color techniques, and detailed shaping.

Beginner and easy are not the same thing.

If you're confident in knitting/crochet but new to garments, an 'easy' pattern might suit you just fine.

If you're still learning to knit/crochet overall, stick with beginner-level.

Not all designers label their patterns explicitly, but it's worth looking for these indicators where possible.

Keep it simple.

Don't overwhelm yourself by trying to learn too many things at once. Let the fact that this is your first garment be the only 'new' thing. Choose a pattern that uses stitches and techniques you're already comfortable with.

Construction Styles that Work Well for First Garments

The way a garment is built (its construction) can make it easier or harder for a beginner.

Basic shapes

Especially in crochet, you'll find plenty of tops, sweaters, shrugs, ponchos, and oversized cardigans that are built entirely from **rectangles (or other basic shapes as squares and hexagons)**. These simple shapes make the construction process much more approachable because you don't have to deal with shaping, complicated increases / decreases etc.

Even though they're made from rectangles, these projects still count as garments — they're wearable and can give you the experience of making clothes without the pressure of precise shaping or fit adjustments.

If you're looking for something relaxed, cozy, and beginner-friendly, these types of patterns are a fantastic place to start.

Panels (front, back, sleeves separate):

These are very beginner-friendly. They break the project down into manageable pieces and make adjustments easier. If something doesn't fit quite right, you can often fix it before sewing things together.

Top-Down & Seamless

These can look more complicated at first but are great because you can try them on as you go. That way, you can spot and fix fit issues early.

Neither option is 'better' — it's about picking what fits your comfort level:

Do you prefer clear steps and separate pieces, or the ability to try it on as you go?

→ *Which approach resonates the most with you*

Pick Something You'll Actually Wear

Your goal isn't just to finish — it's to finish something you'll love and wear. Look at your current wardrobe. What do you reach for most days?

Ask yourself:

- What kind of necklines do you prefer?
- Do you like your tops loose or more fitted?
- What kind of length do you like — waist, hip, longer?

Stick close to your own style, especially for your first garment. That way, you're building something you'll want to wear again and again, not something that's pretty on a hanger but not your style.

→ *What comes to mind immediately for you?*

Common Red Flags to Avoid

If you spot these, think twice before diving in:

- No clear sizing information
- Vague abbreviations or unexplained techniques
- Confusing formatting or inconsistent instructions
- Overly trendy shapes that aren't your style (deep v-necks, oversized, cropped)
- A long list of new stitches or techniques when you're already tackling your first garment

Wrap-Up & What's Next

The right pattern is the foundation of a successful first garment.

You want to take the time to pick a quality pattern that is at your level, but also fits your life and style.

Keep it simple. Keep it realistic. Pick something that fits you.

Homework

Choose your pattern using everything we covered during the training. Then, head to the Day 1 homework thread in the Facebook Group

(<https://programs.knittingwithchopsticks.com/YtWSFacebook>) and share it with us there.

We'll be cheering you on and giving feedback if you're stuck deciding. Plus, it will help you win prizes as we go.

Want to Dive Deeper?

If you'd like to keep building on what we talked about today, you're welcome to start your free 14-days inside the **Chopsticks Stitching Squad** — my membership designed to support you as you grow your skills.

Inside the Squad, you'll find full-length workshops like:

- *Fit Fundamentals* (all about understanding garment fit) and
- *Ravelry Secrets Revealed* (a practical guide to navigating Ravelry and finding the best patterns for you).

These go hand-in-hand with today's session and can help you feel even more confident in your pattern choices.

You also get to download **two patterns of your choice** as part of your membership — so if the pattern you've picked is one of mine, this is a great way to grab the ad-free PDF version.

Grab your 14 days inside the Squad here:

<https://programs.knittingwithchopsticks.com/14DaySquadTrial>

Q&A

Tomorrow, we'll look at how to choose the right size for you and make sure your finished piece turns out just the way you want it.