

11: Square Scrambling

Square Scrambling is a more formal and manageable variation of spontaneous fabric-making: you just work in straight horizontal and vertical lines all the time (well, *nearly* all the time! ...)

This technique is best when you use as many different yarns of roughly the same thickness as you can lay your hands on - even if you restrict the color range. You make up the fabric as you go along, enlarging your first piece, so long as you can still control it comfortably, and starting a new one when you want

You begin by making a rectangle or square and build this up by working onto one or more edges - sometimes not working to the end of a row (or to the next corner!), so as to make 'L'-shapes, etc. After a while and especially when several separate pieces have been made, zig-zags can be introduced. (These may be used to link up previously separate pieces.)

Keep the stitches very simple - this example consists mainly of rows of double crochet, but sometimes there are blocks of single crochet, worked into the back loop only, and occasionally the double crochets are 'raised' (worked 'round the post') for ribbed effects.

Golden 'Rules'

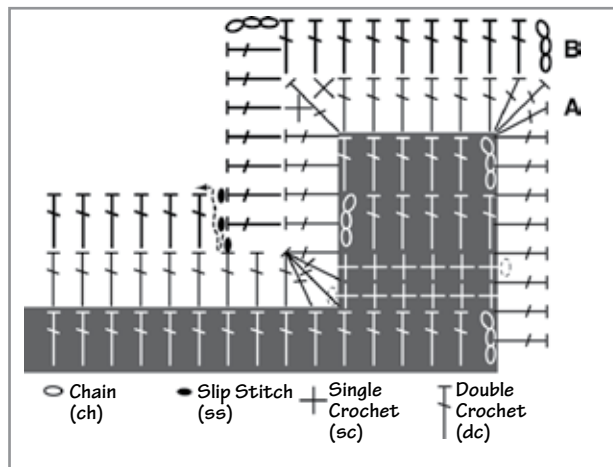
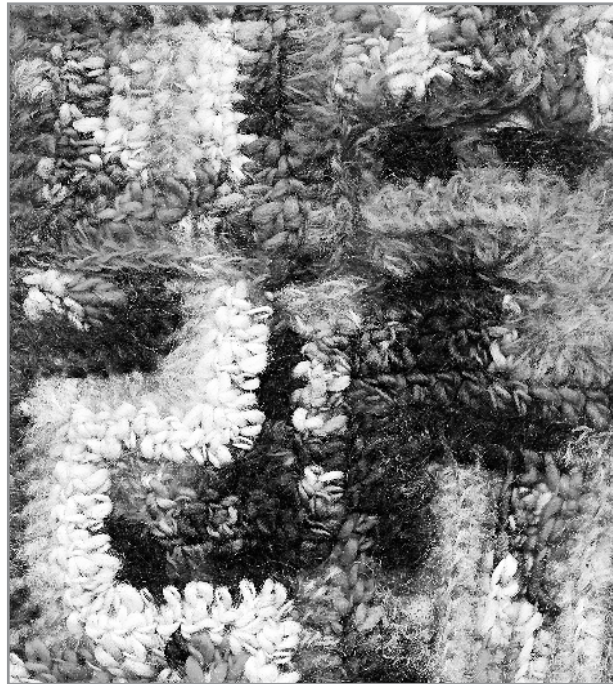
The basic guidelines for keeping the fabric both flat and squared up are:

- When working in normal rows, work 1 stitch into each stitch, and when working along an edge of row ends, ie into chains or stitch stems, 'invent' a place to insert the hook (try to pick up 2 threads each time) and space the stitches evenly thus: 2 sts per dc row end - 1 st per sc row end.

- When you want to go around an 'outside' corner (see diag):

A - work 5 dc all into the tip of the corner, or, to make a less bulky corner, work 1 dc, then (1 sc into mid-stem of dc just made, 1 dc into same place as last dc) twice = 5 stitches altogether.

B - or work up to the corner as usual, then ch 3 (or ch 1 if you're



going to work in sc next) as edge stitch of next row segment) rotate the fabric and continue down side

- When you want to go around an 'inside' corner (see diag):

A - work a cluster of 5 dc (or 3 sc) over the 5 (or 3) stitches which straddle the corner (If you are working over row ends, you must 'invent' places for these stitches). Note: To avoid confusion the 'corner' stitches need to be identified well before you arrive at the corner!

B - or work up to corner as usual, then ss into 2nd stitch of next row segment (first stitch, if you've been working sc), ss back into top of previous stitch twice (once only, if you're going to work in sc next), rotate fabric and continue up side.

- These 'rules' will let you down eventually! Keep checking how things are really working out by laying the fabric flat. (Don't try and kid yourself for too long by pulling it around!)

- Admit it when it has gone out of square before it's too late and then 'repair' it by adding one or two 'wedge-shaped' rows (ie one or two slip stitches, followed by sc, then hdc and dc - or vice versa) as required to any out-of-true edge to 'square' it

Other good 'rules' are:

- Change yarn very often
- Hardly ever work more than 2 or 3 rows at a time over exactly the same 'route'. Start/stop in odd places!
- Avoid conventional 'seam' lines - let the growing fabric flow past them!
- Try your own variations, but, to give a fabric its own special and

consistent character, you need to keep to a few similar stitch 'routines', which you keep applying in different ways so as to avoid both complete anarchy and exact repetition and to create endless interest and variety.

Fitting a Shape: Draw the outline shape your fabric is to fit on some stable material, strong enough to allow you to safety-pin your crochet pieces to it and use it as a template. With this template resting on a flat surface test frequently by laying the piece (or pieces) you are making roughly in place without overlapping each other

or your outlines. Pin them in place when you are satisfied you know exactly how you want them to fit. Join them by sewing along touching edges and/or working extended zig-zag, etc, rows of crochet to link them. Crochet extra fabric directly onto appropriate edges in blocks or wedges to fill gaps between the pieces or between fabric and outlines.