

Free Floating Chains

By Judith Helms

On the following pages I have illustrated how to make these chains. As the “free floating chain” moves between background stitches to form shapes, they do not disturb the original stitch count. These chains lie on top of the background stitches. They are also adjustable, as each diamond is begun with one strand of yarn, picked up in the middle, thus leaving 2 ends to work in either direction. This allows you to tighten up any loose loops you may find later. You might think of this as “crocheting” with a knitting needle. These loops ride on the needle, ready for you to move them in any direction you choose. Once you learn the concept, you will be able to draw up your own designs using these little beauties

I suggest that you read the tutorial through first, then try the pattern swatch on the last page. It takes a bit of practice, but once you have the idea, you will be able to make these chains with ease.



Illustration Key

RN = right needle

LN = left needle

Working yarn = background yarn of heavier weight.

CCR = cable chain right

CCL = cable chain left

Free Floating Chains

Fig. #1

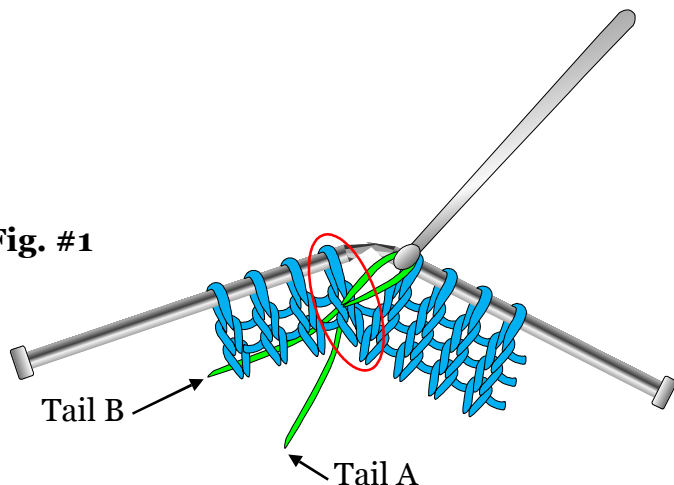


Fig. #2

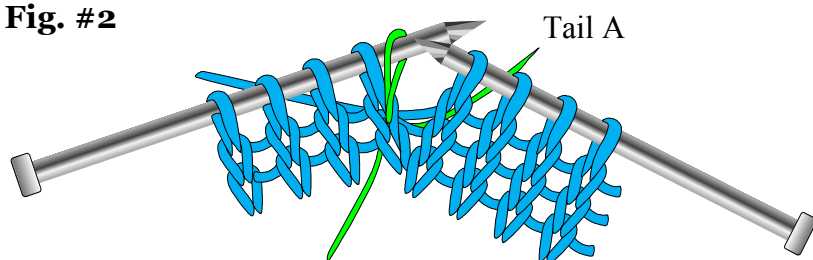


Fig. #3

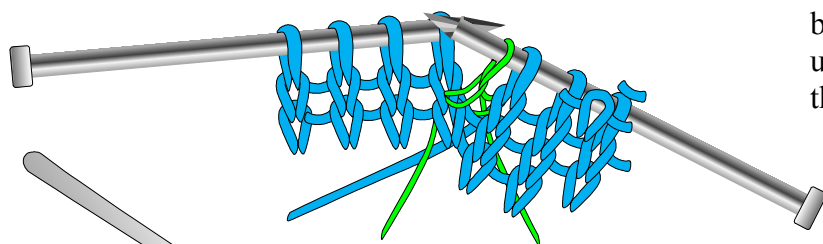


Fig. #4

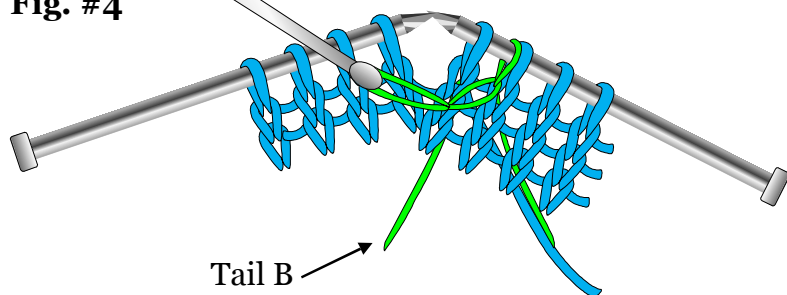
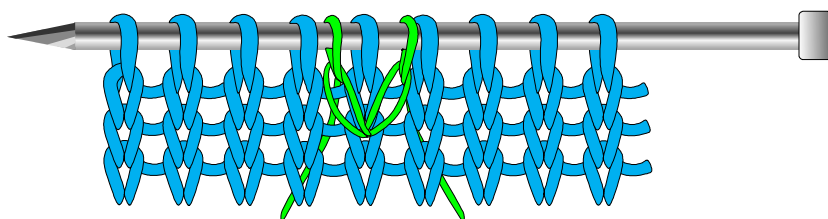


Fig. #5



1. To begin the bottom of the free floating chain diamond, knit across to the stitch where you want it to start. **In the illustration I have it circled the stitch I have chosen in red. This will be the “center” stitch of your diamond.**

Plan an uneven number of stitches in between, ie; 5, 7, etc.

2. Using a crochet hook, stick through the stitch below the **center** stitch that is on the left needle(Fig. #1), and pull up a loop of your contrasting yarn that has been pick up in the middle.

3. Place this loop on the left needle with the left leg of the stitch on the top. (fig. #2)

4. Lay your working yarn to the left and bring tail A of your contrast yarn from underneath and knit the chain (green) through the back loop. (Fig. #3)

5. Pick up working yarn(blue) and knit the next stitch. Bring tail **B** over the top of the **working yarn** and hold it in your left hand. Using your crochet hook, stick into the same center stitch again and pull through a second loop. (Fig. 4) Place it on the left needle, making sure the front leg is on the top of the needle. Now grab tail **B** of the **chain yarn** and knit the loop through the back leg.

When you have completed the steps above it should look like Fig. #5

When you finish setting up all the diamonds you want, knit to the end and turn. You will always slip these loops on the purl rows.

Fig. #6

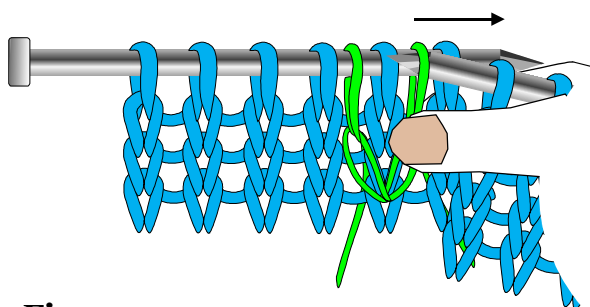


Fig. #7

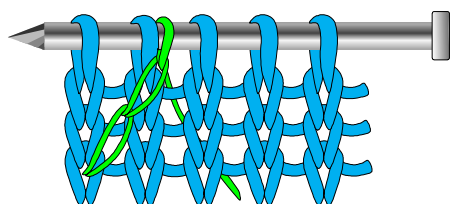


Fig. #8

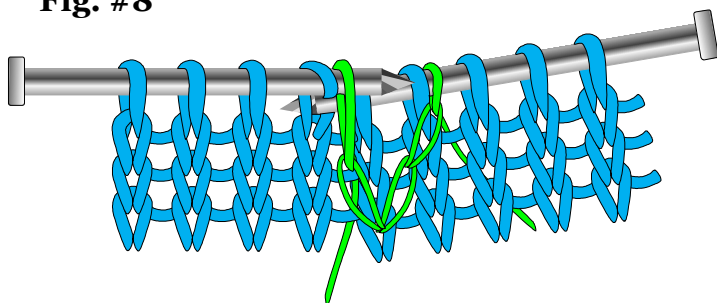


Fig. #9

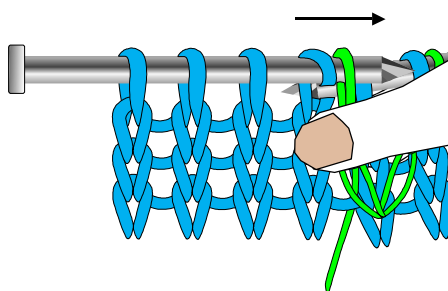
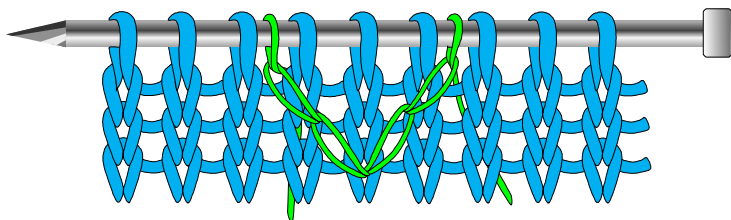


Fig. #10



6. After completing the purl row, you are ready to start enlarging your diamond.

Knit to 1 stitch before the first chain. Reach across in front of the stitch with your RN, and stick the point of the needle into the front leg of the chain loop (**Fig. #6**). Pinch the chain and the stitch to its right together with your right thumb and index finger. Gently pull both stitches off the needle to the right.

While still holding the stitches tight, tip the needle toward you (so you can see) and pick up the stitch you released with the chain onto your LN, then pick up the chain loop through its back loop onto the LN. The stitches are now reversed and the chain has been “cabled” over to the **right**, one stitch. *You will see this move referred to in my patterns as **CCR** (or cable chain right).* You can now release the stitches you have been holding.

7. Knit the CC by bringing the chain yarn up from underneath the working yarn and knit the CC through the back leg. Be sure to check your CC to see that it is laying flat against the surface of the work. Drop the CC yarn.

Once knitted it should look like **Fig #7**.

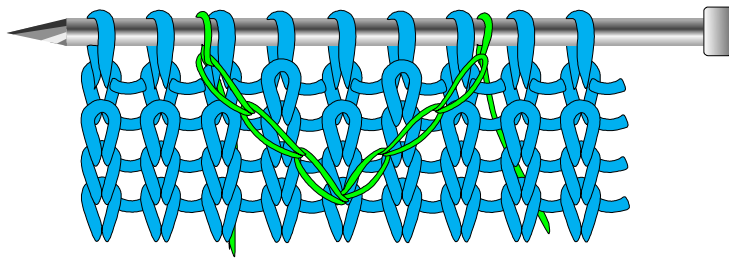
8. With working yarn only, knit the next two stitches. You now have the next chain immediately to your left. This time we will be moving this chain one stitch to the left (or **CCL**- cable chain left).

9. With your RN, reach around back of the LN to the stitch immediately to the left of the chain loop. Stick the tip of the needle into the stitch as if to knit (**Fig. #8**). Pinch the two stitches together as before and slid them off the needle to the right (**Fig. 9**). While still holding the stitches firmly between your thumb and index finger, pick up the chain loop with the LN. Immediately **knit** the stitch you just slipped onto the RN. *(I use my LN tip to lift the front leg of the stitch over the top of the RN.)*

10. Bring the chain yarn up from underneath the working yarn, knit the chain through the back leg, (checking first to see if it is lying open). Your diamond should now look like **Fig. #10**

Drop the chain yarn, and with the working yarn proceed to the next diamond, repeating steps **6-10**.

Now turn your work and purl across, slipping all chains.



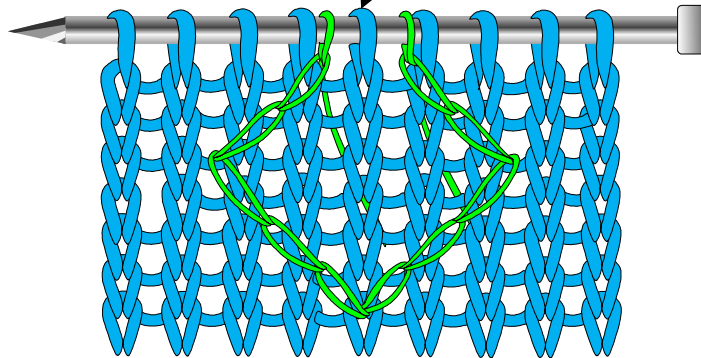
In Fig#11, the chains have been worked until there are 5 stitches in between. Now it is time to change directions.

After purling the last row, and slipping the chains, we will begin the process of reversing the direction the chains move.

11. Knit to the first chain. Now, CCL, Knit the background stitch, then knit the chain through the back loop, as before. (see steps 8-9). Knit 3 background stitches. CCR with the next chain loop. Knit chain, through back loop. Knit 3 background stitches. Repeat the process. Across. Turn.

Purl across as before, slipping all chains.

One BG sts between chains



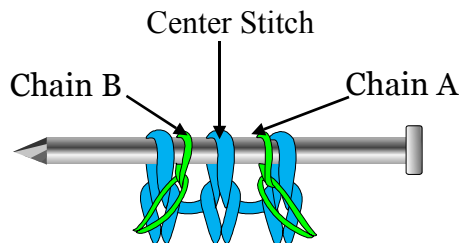
12. Next row, repeat the process in step 11. You will now have one background stitch between the chains.

Work purl row as before, slipping all chain loops.

** This next row is where we **cross** the 3 stitches in the center, closing one diamond and starting another.

I have identified the stitches we will be working with in **Fig. 13**.

On the following page I will walk you step by step through the moves. It might seem a bit tricky at first, but with a little practice, you will soon be going through it like a breeze.



The Cross

Fig. #1

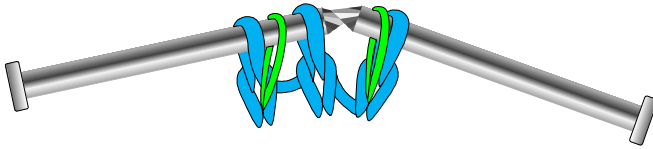


Fig. #2

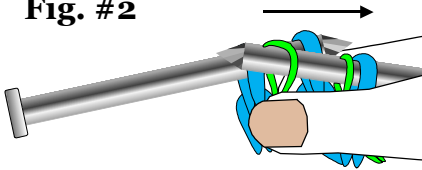


Fig. #3

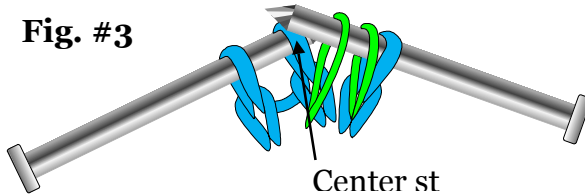


Fig. #4

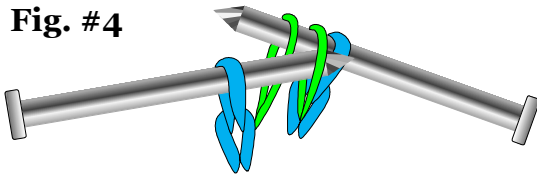


Fig. #5

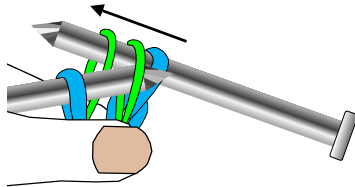


Fig. #6



Fig. #7

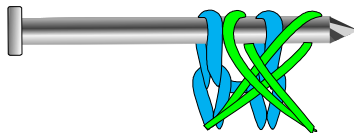
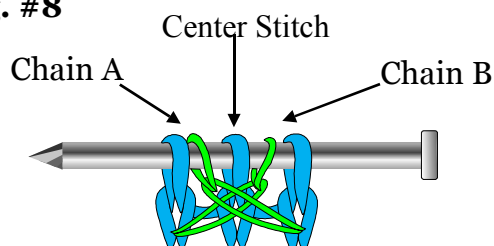


Fig. #8



1. Knit to the first chain of the 3 center stitches. Slip Chain A, onto the RN, knitwise.
Fig.#1

2. CCL chain B. **Fig. #2**

3. Slip the center stitch onto the LN. Leave chain B on the RN. Both chains are now on the RN. **Fig. 3**

4. Stick the point of the LN, into the front leg of chain A. **Fig. #4**

5. Pinch the two chain stitches together and pull off the RN. **Fig. #5**

6. Slip chain B onto the RN. **Fig. #6**

7. CCL chain A, slipping the center stitch on the RN. Slip all three stitches back to the LN. See **Fig. #7**

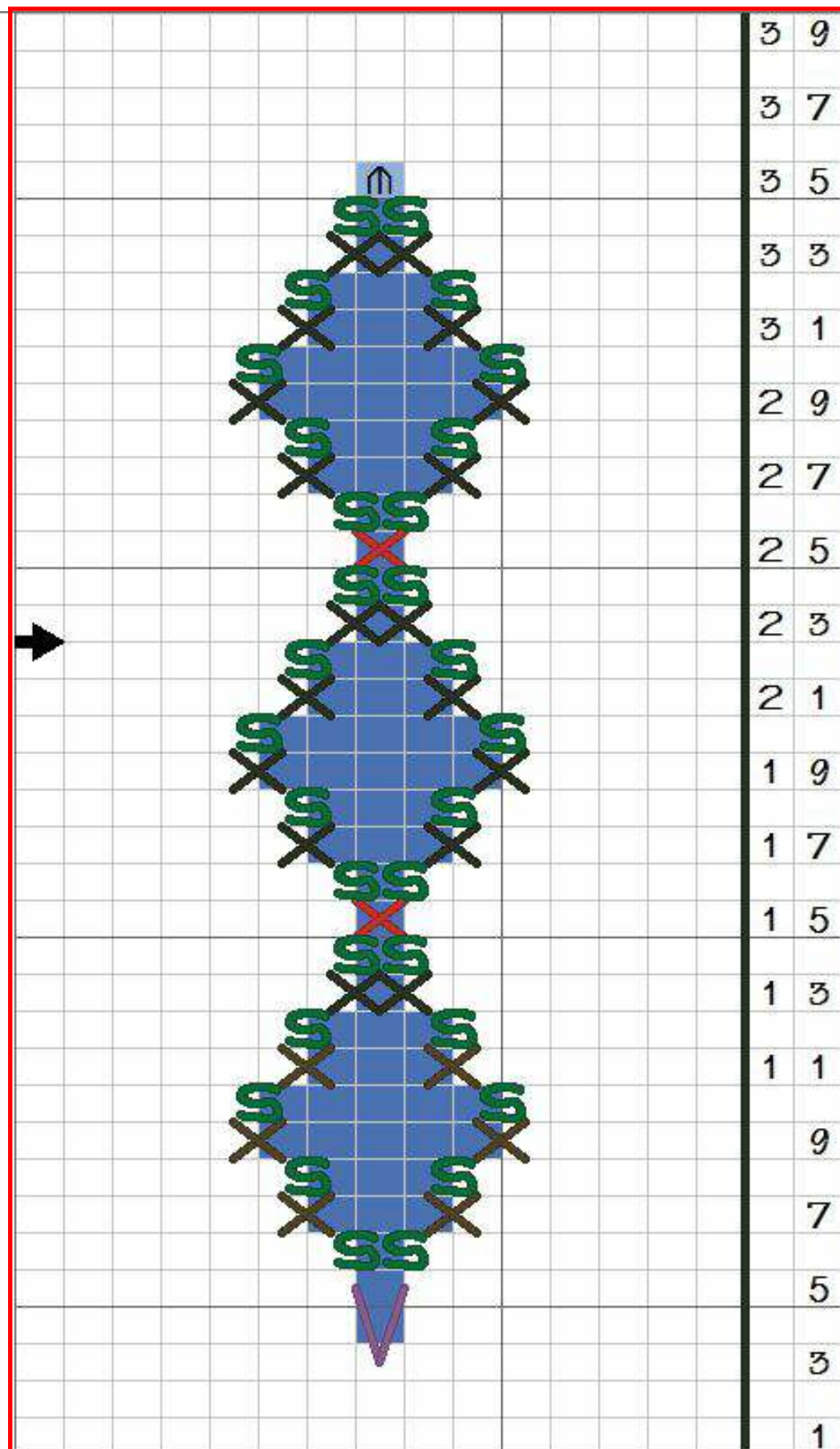
8. Using chain B's tail,(which will be the one to the left of the center stitch), knit chain B through the back loop.

9. Knit center stitch with working yarn.

10. Using chain A's tail,(the one to the right of the center stitch, knit chain A through the back loop.

When finished your **Cross** should look like **Fig. # 8.**

Floating Chains Practice Swatch



Knitting Key

CCL - cable chain left (pg. #2, 8-9)

CCR - cable chain right (pg #2, 6-7)

LN = left needle

RN = Right needle

Floating Chain Practice

The chart previous page was drawn up to help you get a sense of how the chains move. It is a picture of the following written instructions.

Use two weight of yarn for this swatch.

1. With your heavier yarn cast on 15 stitches. This row is #1 on the chart.

Row 2- purl across

Row 3 - knit across

Row 4 - purl across

Row 5 - knit 7; (st 8 is your center st); set up your diamond as described on page 2 of this tutorial with a long strand of your lighter weight yarn. Don't forget to pick the strand up in the middle.

Row 6 - Purl across, slipping the chain loops.

Row 7 - Knit 6, CCR, knit 3, CCL, knit 6.

Row 8 - Repeat row 6.

Row 9 - knit 5; CCR, knit 5, CCL, knit 5.

Row 10 - Repeat row 6.

Row 11 - Knit 5; CCL, knit 1, knit CC, knit 3, CCR, knit 6.

Row 12 - Repeat row 6.

Row 13 - Knit 6, CCL, knit 1, knit CC, knit 1, CCR, knit 7.

Row 14 - Repeat row 6.

Row 15 - Knit to the first CC. Work "the Cross" as described on page #4. Knit across the rest of the row.

Row 16 - Repeat row 6.

Row 17 - 26 Repeat rows 7-16, twice.

Row 35 - To end the diamond, knit to the first CC. Slip it to the RN, knitwise. Knit the second CC and the center stitch together with the working yarn. Slip the first CC over the new stitch. Knit the rest of the row with the working yarn. Turn.

Row 36 - Purl across.

Row 37 - Knit across.

Row 38 - Purl across.

Row 39 - Cast off sts.