

# Facing our fears, helping us grow

Checking in from Colorado! I've been crocheting for 20 years and finally, in 2021, I decided to push myself and learn to read patterns.



Rachel Courtney

I started with this great Project Linus Crochet Along blanket. It's one where you get one clue a week — which was great because it was only one page, the pattern was repetitive and it didn't overwhelm me. Plus, there were videos for each stitch AND a Facebook group where we were all creating the same thing.

My second project was this ridiculous wine bottle cover which my brother requested for his wife for Christmas. They saw it out and about somewhere, so I went to Etsy to find the pattern. Looking at the pattern was very intimidating — the single sheet has patterns for a “fifth or large pop bottle, tissue cover, cleanser can, fingernail

polish bottle and soap cover.” Each pattern is in one block of text, no returns.

Typically, I crochet to relax, so I basically NEVER count stitches. That changed on this project. It definitely required me to pay attention to where I was and not just flip the project when I got to the end of a row.

My third project was this Bulbasaur (it's a Pokémon character) which I also found on Etsy. It was considered a challenging pattern, but I downloaded it anyway. This one was organized on 8 pages — a section for each body part. It even included patterns for 12 toenails. (I skipped that and embroidered them on instead.)



I decided to give it a shot and not let the pattern call the shots. I figured if I got the head done and it was ugly, I could just move on.

But guess what?

It was cute! So then, I tried to make the body — not bad either! I was pleasantly surprised at how it was turning out. I even posted each little success on social media to keep myself going. For this project, I purchased stitch markers, which, it turns out, are quite useful.

Since finishing that project (two weeks into January, I gifted Bulbasaur to my husband for Christmas), I have printed many patterns that I had downloaded years ago. I, of course, bought more patterns as well as a book of patterns so I can create more things.

I have been reinvigorated in the world of crochet.

I wasn't tired of making blankets, but I am really excited to use some of my prettier yarn (Red Heart Unforgettable in Gossamer) for things like this wrap (*facing page*).

I finished piece one and am making myself finish a baby blanket for a friend before I work on piece two. Also, this pattern looks like you'll have to count and pay attention, but it's repetitive. Once you do the first 8 rows, it's just a repeat and you don't have to count anymore (unless you really want to.)



After learning to read crochet patterns last year, Rachel has made fanciful creatures in Amigurumi such as the purple poodle wine bottle cover and the green Pokéman. Above is her Linus Blanket (*More info on page 23*) and on the facing page is her wrap.

Photos by Rachel Courtney

