A BONUS FROM THE CROCHET PORTRAIT KIT

Finishing & Framing



How to assemble the piece, keep the back clean, and turn it into a frame, a pillow, a hanging, or a gift.

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AFTER THE LAST ROW

How to use this guide

The last row is not the end of the piece. The way you weave the ends, block the fabric, and choose a finish will decide whether the portrait looks like a sample or like something ready to hang or to give.

Work through assembly and the clean back first, then block, then add a border if you want one, and only then choose a frame, a pillow, a hanging, or a decorative finish. The portrait itself is worked in US single crochet; the stitches around the edge can be single or half double crochet, as noted in each section.

If you are still mid-portrait, the *Step-by-Step Photo Guide* covers reading the pattern and changing color. Come back here when you are ready to take the work off the hook for good.

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CHAPTER 1

Assembly and a clean back

Assembly, for a piece worked in one rectangle, is mostly about the ends, the carried yarn, and the decision to add a border or a backing. There is usually no seam in the portrait itself.

Before you call the stitching done

- Count the last row and look at the piece from a few feet away, in daylight if you can.
- Check that no color change was missed in the last few rows, where it is still easy to unpick.
- Fasten off, leaving a tail long enough to weave (about six inches).
- Do not wash or block yet if you still have a handful of long, loose tails on the back — weave or trim the ones that would snag, then block.

Weaving in ends

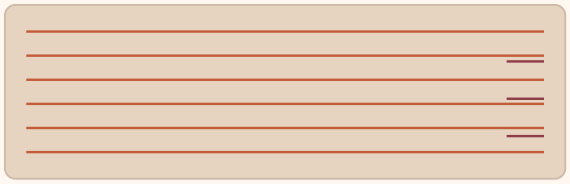
Thread a tapestry needle with one tail at a time. On the wrong side, follow the path of stitches of the **same color** for an inch or two, then change direction for a short second pass so the tail is less likely to work free. Split the plies of the yarn for the last few stitches if the yarn is slick. Trim close after the tail is locked, not before.

Do not weave a dark tail under a light area; it will shadow through. Do not stack every tail along the same column, which makes a ridge. If you worked over a tail during stitching and it feels firm, you can trim it after blocking, once the fabric has settled.

A clean back

A CLEAN BACK VS A RUSHED BACK

Clean back



Carries run level. Tails are woven in and trimmed.

Rushed back



Loose floats, long tails, and snags waiting to happen.

A clean back has carries that run level with the rows, no long floats ready to catch a finger or a pillow form, and tails that have been woven and trimmed. This matters even if you plan to hide the back inside a frame or a pillow: loose loops shift the front, and they snag while you are sewing a backing on.

If a carry is bunched, ease it with the blunt tip of the needle until the front of the row lies flat. If a float is too long (more than a short run of stitches) and the piece will be handled a lot, catch it down with a few small stitches in the same color, or accept that a bobbin would have been the better choice and neaten what you can.

Optional fabric backing

A piece that will be handled — a pillow, a blanket edge, a hanging in a busy hallway — can take a light fabric backing after blocking. Use a cotton or a tightly woven fabric slightly smaller than the blocked work, turn the raw edges under, and slip-stitch or ladder-stitch it to the wrong side, just inside the border. Leave a little ease so the crochet, not the fabric, is the structure. For a frame, a backing board often replaces a sewn fabric back.

CHAPTER 2

Blocking

Blocking evens the stitches, sets the size you measured from your swatch, and helps a mild lean or a slight ripple settle. It will not rescue a piece that is many stitches too wide or a carry that has gathered a row tight.

Wet blocking

This is the usual method for a cotton or acrylic portrait, and for most wool pieces that can take water. Fill a basin with cool or lukewarm water. You can add a little mild wool wash if you like; rinse if the product asks you to. Soak the piece until it is thoroughly wet, then lift it in a bundle — do not hang it while it is heavy with water — and press out the extra water in a towel. Do not wring.

Pad a blocking board, a clean carpet, or a folded towel. Pin the piece face up, starting at the corners, then the midpoints of each side, then fill in, easing the edges toward the measurements you calculated from your gauge (plus the border, if the border is already on). Use rustproof pins. Let it dry completely before you remove the pins. A fan nearby will shorten the wait; direct sun can fade some dyes, so choose a bright room instead of a windowsill if you are unsure about the yarn.

Steam blocking

Steam can be enough for a small acrylic piece that is already close to square. Pin the dry work to size, hold a steam iron **above** the fabric (do not rest the plate on the stitches unless the yarn label clearly allows it), and let the steam relax the yarn. Leave the pins in until the piece is cool and dry. Test steam on your swatch first. Some novelty or low-melt yarns do not take steam well.

> MEASURE ONCE MORE AFTER IT IS DRY
>
> Write the blocked width and height on your project planner. If you are making a pillow or cutting a backing board, those are the numbers to trust, not the pre-blocked ones.

CHAPTER 3

Borders

A border gives the portrait a resting edge, evens a slightly wavy side, and makes the next step — a frame, a pillow seam, or a hanging sleeve — much easier.

When to add it

You can add a short border before blocking, then block the portrait and the border as one, which is the usual path. If the raw edge is very uneven, block the portrait first, then add the border, then give the border a light second block if it needs it.

A simple single-crochet border

Join the border color at a corner with a slip stitch. Work one single crochet in each stitch along the top and bottom edges. Along the row-ends (the sides), work at a rate that keeps the edge flat — often about two or three single crochets for every two rows, adjusted until the side does not ruffle or pull. At each corner, work three single crochets in the same corner stitch (or chain 1 between corner stitches if you prefer a slightly sharper turn). Join with a slip stitch to the first stitch, then fasten off, or work a second and third round the same way.

A half-double-crochet border is a little taller and can suit a pillow or a hanging. The same corner rule applies: add enough stitches at the corner so the border lies flat. Keep the same hook you used for the portrait unless the border flares, in which case go down a size for the border only.

Color and width

A narrow border in a quiet color from the legend — a dark from the background, or a cream — usually supports the face better than a bright new color that the eye hits first. Two or three rounds are enough for most pillows and hangings. A blanket wants a wider border, built in several rounds, so the portrait sits in a field rather than at the raw edge.

A hanging sleeve

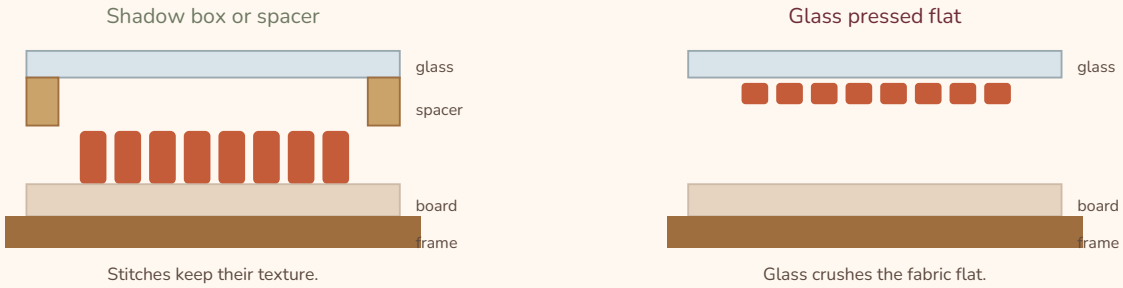
If the piece will hang from a dowel, plan a sleeve now: either a wider top border folded to the back and sewn down, or a separate strip of crochet or fabric sewn as a tube along the top edge after blocking. The wall-hanging chapter returns to this.

CHAPTER 4

Framing

A frame should hold the piece under slight, even tension and leave the stitches their height. Glass pressed directly onto single crochet will flatten the picture.

GIVE THE STITCHES ROOM IN THE FRAME



A board, not a hoop, for a square portrait

Cut a piece of foam board, archival mat board, or a thin padded panel to the blocked size of the portrait, or a shade smaller if you have a deep border you want to wrap to the back. Center the work face up, wrap the edges to the back, and pin, lace, or stitch them in place so the tension is even. Do not use wet glue on the stitches; if you need adhesive, use it on the board or on a fabric backing, not soaked into the yarn.

The frame itself

A shadow box, or a standard frame with a spacer between the glass and the work, is the safer choice. The spacer can be a deep mat, a small wooden strip, or the built-in depth of the box. If you prefer no glass, choose a frame that still holds the board firmly, and keep the piece out of rooms where it will be handled or splashed. Dust a glass-free piece with a soft, dry brush, not with a sticky lint roller on the stitches.

A cream or off-white mat, close to the paper color of your pattern, usually sits quietly around a portrait. A mat that repeats a strong yarn color can work, but test it before you cut: the mat should not outrun the face.

Light and fading

Some yarns, especially bright dyes and some cottons, fade in strong direct sun. Hang the finished frame away from a south- or west-facing window if you can, or use glass with a UV filter if the piece will live in a bright room. This is ordinary care, not a guarantee against fading.

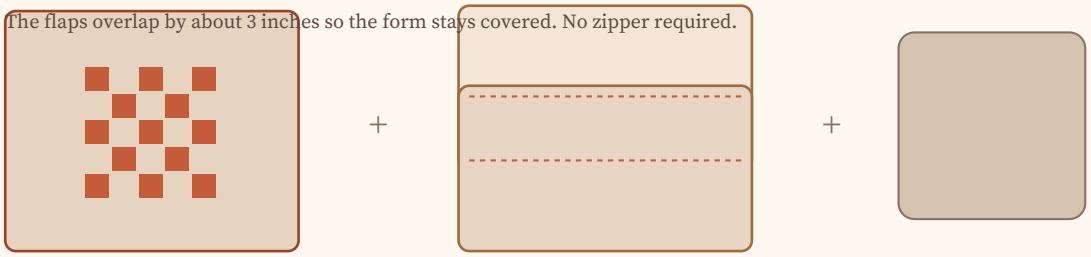
> MEASURE THE BLOCKED PIECE, THEN BUY THE FRAME
>
> Frames are easier to return than a portrait is to restretch. Take the blocked width and height, in inches, to the shop or to the online listing, and allow for the mat if you want one.

CHAPTER 5

Pillow covers

A pillow is a good home for a mid-size portrait. The front is the blocked piece, usually with a short border; the back can be a simple overlapped envelope, so you do not have to sew in a zipper.

ENVELOPE PILLOW BACK



Size the front to the form

Pillow forms are sold by the size of the form, not by the cover. A cover that is the same size as the form, or about half an inch smaller on each side, looks full rather than slack. Use the blocked measurements of the portrait plus its border. If the portrait is smaller than the form, add rounds to the border until the front matches the target size, or choose a smaller form.

The envelope back

Make two back pieces in the same yarn and hook, or in a plain fabric. Each piece should be the full width of the front and a little more than half the height, so the two pieces overlap by about three inches in the middle. Add a short border on the overlapping edges so they sit neatly. With right sides together (or by slip-stitching from the back, if you prefer not to turn the work inside out), join the backs to the front around all four sides, then turn and insert the form through the overlap.

If you would rather use a zipper or a button flap, add it to the back only, and keep the portrait itself smooth. Weave in every end on the back pieces before you assemble; a loose tail will find the inside of the pillow and work its way out later.

Care

Write a short care note for the person who receives the pillow. Most acrylic covers can be spot cleaned and left to dry flat, with the form taken out first. Follow the yarn label if the whole cover is to be washed. A wool or wool-blend cover may prefer a gentle hand wash or a trip to a cleaner who handles wool. Do not put a decorative pillow through a hot dryer unless you have tested that yarn.

CHAPTER 6

Baby blankets

A portrait can sit at the center of a small blanket if the yarn is soft, the ends are thoroughly locked, and the border is wide and even. A blanket for a baby also comes with a safety limit you should not skip.

Yarn and ends

Choose a soft, washable yarn, and avoid embellishments that can come off — buttons, beads, loose ribbons, or sewn-on plastic eyes. Weave in ends with extra care, in two directions, and check the back with your fingers for any tail that could work free. A fabric backing, sewn on after blocking, adds a smooth layer behind a portrait that will be held and washed.

A wide border

Build the border in several rounds, increasing at the corners so the blanket stays flat. You can change to a slightly larger hook for a softer drape on the outer rounds if the portrait itself was worked firmly. Block the whole blanket at the end so the portrait and the field sit in the same plane.

> A NOTE ABOUT SAFE SLEEP
>
> Loose blankets, pillows, and soft objects are not recommended in a crib or a sleep space for an infant. If someone asks for a ‘crib blanket,’ it is honest to say that the piece is better as a wall hanging in the nursery, as a lap blanket for later, or for supervised use when the child is awake. This is a safety note, not a legal instruction, and it is worth putting in the care message when you hand the work over.

Washing

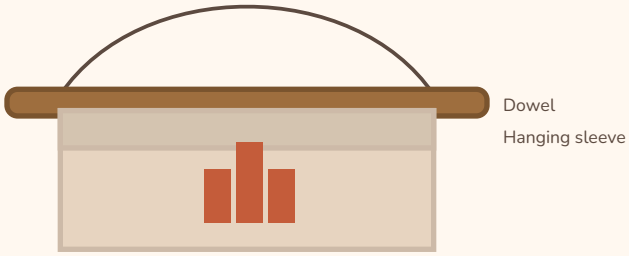
Use a yarn the family can wash the way they already wash baby clothes, and include the washing line from the label with the piece. A first wash, done by you after blocking, will tell you whether any color bleeds; if it does, wash the piece alone and dry it flat before it leaves your hands.

CHAPTER 7

Wall hangings and decorations

A hanging is the lightest way to get a portrait on a wall: no glass, no heavy frame, and a dowel you can cut to length. The same ideas scale down to a small decoration.

SIMPLE DOWEL HANGING



Sew a sleeve along the top border and slide the dowel through.

The dowel and the sleeve

After blocking and after the border is on, sew a sleeve along the top edge on the wrong side, or fold a deeper top border to the back and stitch it down, leaving the ends open. Slide a wooden dowel, a thin brass rod, or a smooth branch through the sleeve. The dowel should be a little wider than the piece so the corners do not collapse inward. Tie a cord or a length of the border yarn to each end of the dowel, or rest the dowel on two wall hooks.

If the hanging is wide and the fabric is heavy, a second thin dowel in a bottom sleeve will keep the lower edge from curling. Do not stretch the hanging so tightly that the portrait distorts.

Small decorations

The same portrait, or a name pattern from the Name to Pattern tool, can become a smaller decoration: a banner for a shelf, a mini hanging on a short dowel, a cover for a notebook, or a panel stitched onto a plain tote or a garment. In every case, block first, weave the ends completely, and attach the panel with a firm, even stitch so the portrait does not sag away from its new backing.

For seasonal decorations, skip loose glitter, pins, and candles near the yarn. A felt or card backing, stitched at the edges, is enough to help a small piece hang straight on a hook or a ribbon.

A last look

Before you pack the work or hang it, look at it in the same kind of light in which it will live. Check the corners of the border, the back of the hanging sleeve, and the trimmed ends. A short care note — how to dust it, how to wash it, and where not to hang it — is part of the finish, especially if the piece is a gift.

PRINTABLE WORKSHEET

Finishing checklist

One page per piece. Fill the measurements after blocking, then tick the finish you actually chose.

Project _____ Date stitching finished _____

Blocked width _____ Blocked height _____

Border (stitch, color, number of rounds) _____

ASSEMBLY

- ☐ Last row counted and checked
- ☐ Carries eased, no long snagging floats
- ☐ Optional fabric backing sewn
- ☐ Blocked size written down
- ☐ All tails woven and trimmed
- ☐ No dark tails under light areas
- ☐ Piece blocked and fully dry
- ☐ Care note prepared

FINISH

- ☐ Framed (shadow box or spacer)
- ☐ Pillow, envelope back
- ☐ Baby / lap blanket, wide border
- ☐ Wall hanging, sleeve and dowel
- ☐ Board stretched and laced
- ☐ Pillow form size
- ☐ Safe-sleep note included if needed
- ☐ Other decoration (notes below)

Materials used in the finish (frame size, form size, dowel, fabric) and any care instructions you sent

Notes

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