

# Basic Nalbinding

By: Lady Caelfind ingen Failtigerna, better known as Spider

Nalbinding/ Naalbinding/ Needlebinding: uses lengths of yarn as opposed to knitting or crochet that use a continuous ball of yarn. We tend to associate nalbinding with the Scandinavian countries during the Viking Age, but its history is much more widespread. The earliest example is from Israel from around 6500 b.c.e. using the simple, unconnected loops or buttonhole stitch. Other examples include China 1000 b.c.e. ,Peru 200 b.c.e., Egypt 100 c.e. , Syria 200 c.e. The majority of examples however are from Denmark. There are surviving examples up until 1600s c.e.

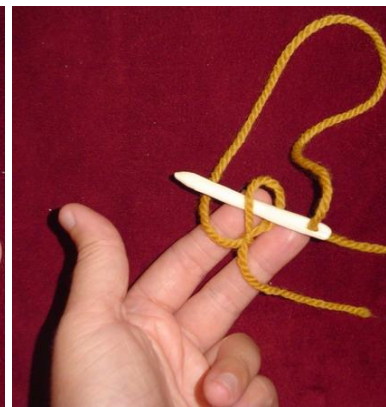
But let us start with Simple Looping, also known as buttonhole stitch O. For the least frustrating endeavour use a plain, thicker, light coloured (all wool) yarn and a tapestry needle. Start by threading your needle and at the other end make a slip knot. Holding the knot in your off hand (left hand if you're right handed) with the working yarn directed away from you. Plunge the needle in through the slip knot and over the working yarn.



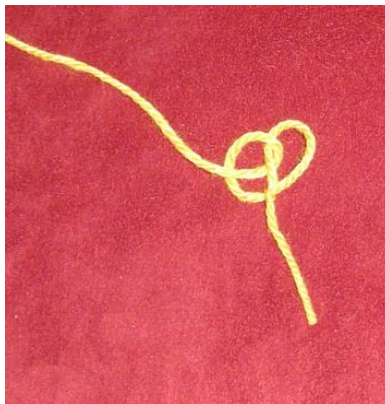
slip knot



hold with tail in palm



making the first loop



slide the loop to the side and make the next stitch in the same slip knot



make a flower of stitches into the slip knot for your first row



the second row no longer works in the initial slip knot, but in the first row of loops

These examples are kept very loose to show how to do them. \*Do not tighten your stitches down too much or you will not be able to put your next row of stitches through them. Nalbinding does not come undone like knitting or crochet. Once it's there, that's it. The only way to undo your work is to retrace your steps. Make the stitches as even as you can.

To make a first row of stitches repeat this step six to eight times until you have a little flower of loops. All centred through the beginning slip knot. Your second row will no longer use this slip knot, but the first stitch that you made. To increase, put two stitches into each first row stitch. The third round is single stitches, and the fourth you can increase again. When the desired size of disc is reached change to single stitches again and the work will begin to form a tube.

Interconnected Looping, your basic nalbinding stitch U/OO

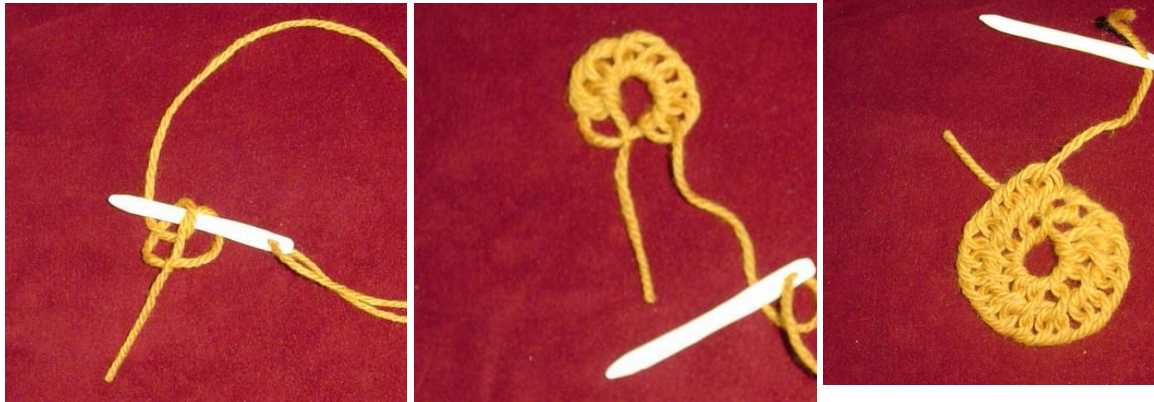
Now before you become too lost:

O means over, and U means under. The / indicates that you will be changing the direction of the path of the needle. The initial "plunge" into the stitch is not included in this instruction (the U/OO), but is understood (otherwise your work won't be connected to the previous row).

The "Under" comes from coming up through the previous loop (working back). Changing direction to forward (after tightening your loop to the desired size) the two "Overs" are over the last loop and the working yarn.

Begin with the same first four steps from above. The next stitch is the slight change:

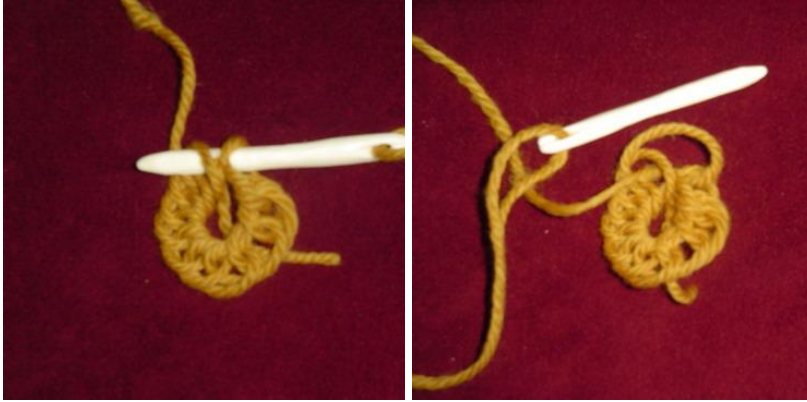
When you make your next stitch come back up through the last stitch, and then over the working yarn.



work up through the last loop you just made.

don't try to scrunch too many stitches in your first row

remember to start working two stitches into each of the first row.



directions start by working to  
the back

turn the needle towards the  
path of working loops

The flower looks slightly different.

*\*Warning\** the following rows will look a little daunting. Don't give up. I had to work at it several times before I was able to do it. *\*You can do it!\**

To attach a new piece of yarn fray out the two ends and intertwine them. Now, using water or spit wet the ends and rub in between hands. The ends should felt together and with practice will be as strong as the rest of the yarn. This is why you need all wool yarn. Acrylic won't felt.

Most stitches are named after an extent piece:

UO/UOO Lund, and Oslo mitten

UOO/UUOO Mammen

U(U)O/UO:UOO Asle mitten

Nalbinding is used for hats, mittens, socks. Usual examples from history are done in the round, but you can also work in rows. If you have questions feel free to email me at

[stephanie@periodperceptions.com](mailto:stephanie@periodperceptions.com)

#### **References:**

Nalbinding Made Easy by Sigrid Briandsdotter (Anne Marie Haymes)

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<http://www.cs.vassar.edu/~capriest/nalebind.html>

<http://www.regia.org/naalbind.htm>

<http://home.arcor.de/bedankbar/index-eng.htm>

[http://www.shelaghlewins.com/reenactment/naalbinding/sock\\_construction.htm](http://www.shelaghlewins.com/reenactment/naalbinding/sock_construction.htm)