

Fringe Benefits

Nancy Wright
for 2018 From the Heart Retreat

Fringe is fun way to add a bit of flair to a simple scarf or blanket, or an item of clothing. Most folks know the basic fringe, but there are other options.... Here are just a few.

Before we start, let's be sure you know two basic knots.



1. **Overhand knot** — the simplest knot — is pulling the yarn end through a loop, then pull tight

2. **Square knot** — ties 2 ends together.
“Right over left, left over right, makes a knot that’s neat and tight.”



Knit or Crochet as you go:

Variation 1, Perfect for scrap blankets or scarves. No ends to work in — they form the fringe! For a scarf or blanket, set up stitches so you are working the long way across.

Working in garter stitch (knit) or (crochet) single, half double, or bramble stitch (single, double across, next row work a double in the single of pro row, work single in the doubles), work one row, then choose a new yarn for the next row. Cut the first yarn, leaving a 6-10 inch tail, lay the new yarn beside tying both yarns together in an overhand knot, close to the row. Knit (or crochet) one row with the new yarn, add new color and tie ends to work new row.

After fastening or binding off, lay finished piece on a flat surface and trim fringe to desired length.



Variation 2, wonderful for self-stripping yarn — exactly as variation 1, but instead of changing yarn, make a loop of the yarn to form the fringe. I use an index card or piece of cardboard cut to size to loop the yarn around, so my loop length is consistent. When finished, leave it loopy or cut the loops, whichever you prefer.



After the fact fringes:

Basic fringe: This is probably the one you already know. Once your item is finished, choose the yarn for the fringe. Matching or contrasting, or several colors — it is up to you. I do NOT recommend fringing with Homespun or other roving type yarns that wind around a core of thread — they tend to fluff out and come undone easily. If your item is made with Homespun, and you really want fringe, look at a loopy fringe such as *Variation 2* above, or see the crochet fringes later on, or choose a contrasting worsted type of yarn in a coordinating color.



Decide the length of your fringe, and cut a piece of cardboard to that size, or find a book or magazine that length. Wind the yarn around the cardboard until you have enough - I usually use 2 strands of yarn for each bit, but sometimes go with 3 or 4. Cut the bundle of yarn at one end and lay it flat.

Select the strands, fold in half. Using a crochet hook, pull the center through at the desired location, then pull the ends through the loop; gently tighten. Repeat as desired, as tightly or loosely arranged as you like. Should you have loose ends in your work, it is easy to slip them into the fringe. (I am all about avoiding working in ends whenever possible!) For a Fringe as you go project, if you feel the fringe needs a bit more thickness, you might “fatten” up things by adding more strands.

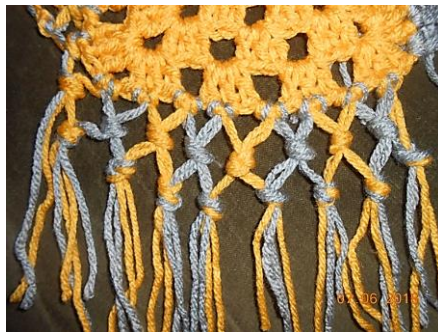
That’s it for basic, though you can do an overhand knot after if you feel your fringe might need a bit more securing, perhaps for a child’s scarf or blanket. This fringe is different on each side. For a different design effect, you might alternate front and back as you pull the loop through.



Knotted fringe: This is prepared just like *Basic Fringe* to start. With a crochet hook or very large eyed yarn needle, pull one end of the strands through at desired spot. Match ends and tie an overhand knot to secure. This version looks essentially the same on front and back.



Dressed up basic or knotted fringe: Just a touch of macramé, for a fancier fringe. Lay your already fringed piece on a flat surface. Separate the first fringe into 2 parts, repeat with the second one. Tie an overhand or square knot with one strand from each, gently pulling it to sit between and slightly below the 2 above. Repeat with pairs across.



This is nice to dress up a very simple scarf in a pretty yarn. My grandmother used it on the bottom of a cape she made for me in the '70's.



Crochet fringes:

Apologies to the knitters, as I can't find a knitted equivalent to these. My attempts have not been successful — maybe next year!

Finger fringe: A friend says this looks a bit like tentacles. It's a finishing touch fringe and could be added to a knitted piece. Work a base row of single or half double crochet along the edge where fringe is to be. Turn. Chain to desired length of fringe, plus one, and keep track of the number. In second chain from hook, slip stitch back along the remaining fringe chains and into the base stitch. One "finger" made. Slip stitch in base stitch to next spot for fringe finger (one or 2 stitches apart is good) and make the next "finger".

Repeat until you reach the end.



Chain loop fringe: Worked much like finger fringe, but instead of slip stitching back along the chains, chain back the same number and slip stitch into the base to form a loop.



Just for fun - Tassels! and a Bonus

Tassels are fun, should you be wanting some to twirl (no judgment) adorn a fez, or the corners of a blanket. This last seems to be in fashion for blankets and scarves this year. Or a make a whole row of them! Wind yarn as for basic fringe, cut. Choose several strands for the tassel — as thick or thin as you like. Tie one strand at the halfway point, leaving ends to attach. Take a second strand and tie using a square knot bit to form the “head” of the tassel. Trim ends to length.

Bonus: tassels can easily turned into dolls. The dolls can serve as tassels, or just be played with for fun — a nice yarn thing to do with kids. Once the “head” is formed, pull strands out to sides to form “arms,” tie at “waist”. “Arms” could be overhand knotted or tied off at “wrists”. Below “waist” can be left loose for a long skirt or separated into “legs”.

Happy Fringing!