



## *Tip of the Month—October 2016*

### *– Using Plarn*



While I have never yet crocheted with plarn, I have been collecting bags to give it a go. I did get thinking about what could I learn from others who have used it, so I went searching for some tips, beyond how to prepare your plarn (which most books give you). I've summarised what I've found, along with some useful links if you want to find more tips and ideas what you can make from recycled items.

1. It can be hard on your hands and arms, so take regular rests. One way of doing this is by only cutting up a few bags at a time rather than all of them at once. This also allows you to adjust the thickness of the strips as you go if needed—see tip 6.
2. Work loosely—while it is also easier on your muscles and joints, this will also ensure the plarn doesn't tear or break. In particular don't make the chain or knots too tight.
3. Keep your tension constant. The plarn will likely stretch and thin out a bit as you apply tension. Keeping tension consistent will not only keep your stitches even, it will also keep your yarn even, reducing your chance of accidentally breaking through it.
4. The size and thickness of the stitch vary with the weight of the plastic, so stick with the same type of plastic for your project if possible. See tip 6 if this is not possible.
5. Mesh crochet patterns are best, as are those using double crochet (UK terminology).
6. Cut strips according to the thickness of the plastic **and** the size of the hook you are using. When using light flimsy plastic with a large hook, cut the strips thicker (you might cut the strips 5cm thick). If you are using a smaller hook, cut the strips thinner (you might cut the strips 2.5cm thick). If using heavy-weight plastic with a large hook, cut the strips thinner (you might cut the strips 1.5cm thick). As you are cutting the strips in 'circles' you are doubling them when they are joined—for heavy-weight plastic you may need only use single strips.
7. Paint and dye will generally rub off the bags as you use them, making the plarn stick and crocheting awkward. Wash hands and your hook regularly with soap and water to make it easier.
8. If you do have to unpull some stitches, do it slowly so you don't tear or weaken the plarn.
9. There are several types of joins you can use—choose one that suits your project.

Useful links:

[www.myrecycledbags.com](http://www.myrecycledbags.com)—many recyclable products and project ideas.

[www.bagsbegone.com](http://www.bagsbegone.com)—primarily recycled bags—tips and project ideas

[www.amandashappyhearth.com.au](http://www.amandashappyhearth.com.au)—general crochet and knitting site with tips and patterns for recycled bags and t-shirts

[www.lagringasblogicito.blogspot.com.au](http://www.lagringasblogicito.blogspot.com.au)—primarily recycled bags—tips and project ideas



Sleeping mats for the homeless crocheted from plastic shopping bags.

Would you like to participate? Click [here](#) to see how

