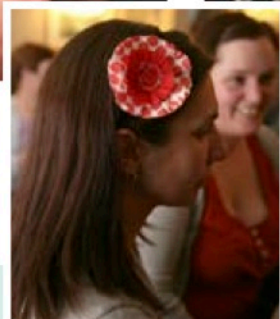
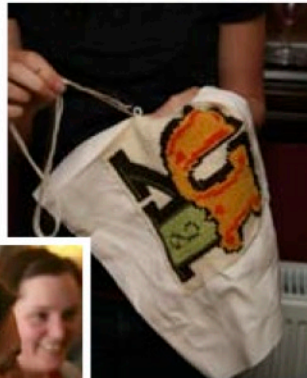


SPINNING yarns

Craft clubs are springing up everywhere so like-minded crafters can inspire one another. And if you can't find one near you, start your own!



How to start your own club!

1 Choose a location

Find a good venue. It should also be fairly quiet and brightly lit as you'll need good light for crafting. A café or pub off the beaten track is a better option than one that's popular and full every evening. Avoid meeting in people's homes, as it makes it harder to establish a regular night.

2 Tell people

The internet is good for finding like-minded people and there are lots of craft forums and social networking sites as well as free listing sites. Post

notices about your group at your local HobbyCraft or at your venue, including the time, place and an email address for signing up. Don't forget to speak to your friends or post on your Facebook, Myspace or Twitter account too.

3 Regular as clockwork

Decide how often you want to meet – once a week, for example, or once a month. Once you've set a regular date, don't change it.

4 First meeting

Keep it informal and ask people to bring a project they're working on, or an

idea for a project. Once you're up and running, try giving the group a shared focus by suggesting a joint project.

5 Why do it?

'It's all about social interaction and skill sharing,' says Gerard Allt of Iknitlondon.com. 'Working in a group inspires you and we have a great mix of people,' says Deborah. 'Beginners and experienced crafters. It's about sharing in an increasingly mass-produced world, so take it as it comes and just enjoy it!'

'Working in a group inspires you and gets you excited about your creations, it's energising'

Gerard Allt,
Iknit London

The idea behind craft clubs is simple: women (and men!) meet every week in bars and cafés to knit, sew and gossip over a latte or glass of wine. The first clubs were christened 'Stitch 'n' Bitch' by US magazine editor Debbie Stoller in 2003 when she

published *Stitch 'n Bitch: The Knitter's Handbook* and crafters loved the idea. It spread like wildfire, with the UK holding its first *Stitch 'n' Bitch* day (stitchnbitch.org) in 2007. It's not just knitting either, groups like East London's *Craft Guerrillas* (craftguerilla.com) meet regularly for DIY craft

nights that involve everything from quilting to button making and there's the Dulwich-based *Skip Sisters* (skipsisters.co.uk) who rescue objects destined for the landfill and revitalize them. 'In the past, crafting was a very sociable thing,' says Deborah Daniel of the *Craft Guerrillas*. 'I guess we're all trying to reproduce that feeling of passing on ancient craft knowledge.' Today there are over 800 *Stitch 'n' Bitch* groups worldwide and countless other local craft groups. 'Search the internet for local clubs, sites like Ravelry.com are great,' says Lisa Brooks of the Bolton-based *Knitting Noras* (theknittingnoras.co.uk). 'Ask around your area – and if there isn't a local club, start one of your own!'