

## TRANSCRIPT

# Introduction to Spinning from Scratch

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Welcome to Spinning from Scratch. I'm Felicia Lo from Sweet Georgia Yarns, and I'm absolutely thrilled to be here to share with you one of my most favorite fibre arts. Learning to spin has been the single most important thing in my entire journey of working with yarn, fibre, and textiles. Maybe learning to dye was pretty significant too since it led me to starting Sweet Georgia Yarns. But, I learned to dye because I wanted colour fibre to spin with. So spinning really started it all.

Spinning changed how I think about knitting and how I think about what's possible. Before I learned to spin, I only knew commercial yarn and was often frustrated by what was available or not available in shops. It was only after I learned to spin that I discovered the incredible variety of yarn that could be created. In terms of colour, in terms of texture, in terms of fibre content, and blends. Seriously, anything that you could dream of could probably be spun into yarn. Learning how yarn is made is the very best way to improve your skills as a knitter or a weaver. By learning to spin, you'll gain insight into the characteristics of yarn that will make it more durable, or resistant to pilling. And what kind of yarns will be more suitable to lace knitting, or simply how to substitute yarns for a knitting project.

Learning how yarn is made is the very best way to improve your skills as a knitter or a weaver. By learning to spin, you'll gain insight into the characteristics of what makes a yarn more durable or more resistant to pilling. Or what types of yarn will be more suitable to lace knitting or sweater knitting, or simply knowing how to substitute yarns for a knitting project. And through the experience of handling spinning fibre itself, you'll learn how to look at wool for spinning and understand the features and the characteristics of different sheep breeds. So that you'll know what to look for when you go to build your own stash of treasured spinning fibre. In this course, I have a very simple goal for you.

By the end of this course, I would love for you to be able to achieve three things. One: To be able to spin a continuous yarn using your spinning wheel. Two: To be able to make a simple, traditional two-ply yarn, and to finish that yarn in preparation for knitting or weaving or whatever you might like to do with it. And three: To understand the multiple variables that affect the characteristics of your finished yarn. So we'll talk about the main variables that affect your hand spun. Things like, what makes it a thin yarn? Or what makes it a thick yarn? What makes it a soft and a smooth yarn? What makes a lofty yarn versus a sleek and a slinky yarn? And lots of aspects like that.

So I have structured this course into four modules. The first one is about getting started on making the yarn. The second one is mainly about troubleshooting, and to make sure that you're on track. And the third module introduces different ways of plying your yarn. And the fourth one is about finishing and working with the yarn that you've made. Typically, when I teach this content in sort of a live classroom setting, each module roughly takes about a week or two to make it through that content. But I encourage you to go through this content at your own pace. You could work through one module per week, or one module per month, either way is totally fine. This is the whole point of making these online courses. Is so that you can watch, rewind, review, and repeat as many times as

you like. And just go through the content whenever you have time.

Also, at the end of each module, I'll be giving you a little homework assignment. So be sure to check that out and complete it in order to move on to the next module.

If you have any questions as we move through the lessons, please feel free to drop into the discussion forum to get answers to your questions. And you can also find us chatting away on slack. You can find the discussion forum under the community tab on the website, and you'll also get an invite to our slack group through the dashboard tab on the website as well.

Now, learning to spin can be a physically challenging activity. Like trying to thread a needle while also riding a unicycle. It requires your body to be engaged and doing multiple activities simultaneously. So maybe I'm making it sound harder than it really is. But seriously, before we get started, I hope you will keep two things in mind.

The first thing is, to be patient with your progress. You are learning a brand new physical skill that requires time, and repetition to develop. I would strongly encourage you to come to your wheel every day. Even if it's just ten minutes a day. But just sit at your wheel and spin a little every day, and I promise you your spinning will improve tremendously by the end of this course. Say it takes 28 days to develop the muscle memory that you need for activities like knitting, or crochet, and spinning. So give yourself that time to practice. I developed this course to be just like that four week long beginner course that I used to teach in a classroom setting. So the idea being that it will take about four weeks for you to acquire all of the book knowledge that we need to make the yarn, as well as that muscle memory in our hands in order to actually produce the yarn. So that's point number one. Just be patient with the process.

Number two is to take care of your body. Over the past couple of years I've started participating in half marathons. But I didn't start out running half marathons straight away. When I first started running, I don't think I could run more than two minutes without getting a cramp in my side, or getting tired or wanting to stop. I had to slowly build up that endurance. And the way to do it is to go at your own pace, starting slowly, stopping when you need to, and giving yourself plenty of patience and rest. Spinning is a physical activity that requires you to be sitting for a long time. So it can be hard on your body. Sitting hunched and tense for an hour or two can easily cause lots of muscle pain in your back, in your shoulders, and your neck. So you want to be sure that you give yourself rest and breaks. Every 20 minutes, get up, walk around, that kind of thing. The other thing that I'll mention now, but I'll probably mention again, is to be aware of anything that you do that causes any amount of pain or discomfort. When I first started learning how to spin, I used really poorly prepared and felted spinning fibre because I didn't think that I could afford to spin with the really nice spinning fibre. And as a result, I ended up injuring my thumb from all of the pressure that I put on my thumb joint while trying to draft out that really stubborn, felted fibre. And so now, even now, 14 years later after I've learned how to spin, my thumb still gets swollen and sore if I spin for too long. So you have to take care of your body.

So with these two points out of the way, be patient with yourself and take care of your body, I do want to reiterate how amazing it is to be able to create any yarn that you can imagine. I'm excited to share with you this wonderful skill, so that you might find new ways of exploring the world of yarn and fibre that is out there.

I'm going to suggest that while you watch these first few videos, that you go ahead and sit at your wheel and treadle while you watch. I do this in the live course as well, just giving everyone more time to get familiar with your spinning wheel, until treadling and changing directions just with your feet and the drive wheel become something that is, something that you don't even need to think about. So go ahead and treadle your wheel and learning to stop and start it just with your feet. And then I'm going to go on and talk a little bit about spinning fibre and equipment.