



Super Simple Mittens

Any Size Hands, Any Size Yarn

Size: May be adapted to any size hands; see following directions.

Yarn: Any yarn may be used. Wool is recommended for mittens; it is warm and naturally water resistant, and it will keep hands warm even when wet.

Yarn amounts vary with the size of the mitten and the weight of the yarn. Generally speaking, you will need more yarn by weight the thicker the yarn is.

General guidelines for yarn amounts for different hand circumferences are as follows:

Up to 6 ½" (16cm) (Child)	2 oz. (50 gms)
6 ½" - 7 ½" (16 - 19cm) (Women)	4 oz. (100 gms)
7 ½" (19cm) and over (Men)	6 oz. (150 gms)

As usual, if you are in doubt, get extra yarn!

Gauge: This depends on the yarn chosen.

Needles: Set of five double-pointed needles (four needles may be used if desired for most of the mitten, but the top decreases are easier if divided onto four needles rather than three). Mittens should be knitted snugly for the best wear. Choose a needle size several sizes smaller than the "average" needle size for your yarn. For example, a light worsted-weight yarn, such as Brown Sheep Nature Spun, might suggest a #7 (4.5mm) needle; try a gauge swatch for your mitten on a #5 (3.75mm) needle.

Suggested needle sizes for different weights of yarn are listed in the gauge swatch instructions. For tips on working with double-pointed needles, see next page.

Abbreviations and special stitches:

K = Knit

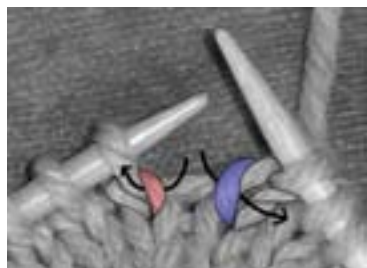
P = Purl

st or *sts* = stitch or stitches

rep = repeat

K2tog = *Knit two together*: Knit the next two stitches together as if they were one. This makes a decrease that slants to the right.

SSK = *Slip, Slip, Knit*: Slip the next two stitches, ONE AT A TIME AS IF TO KNIT, then insert the point of the left-hand needle from left to right into the front loops and knit them together through the back loops. This makes a decrease that slants to the left.



Right and Left Lifted Increases: The illustration at left shows which part of the stitch is lifted and knitted to make the increase. The pink-shaded stitch is picked up for the Right Lifted Increase; the blue shaded stitch is lifted for the Left Lifted Increase.



Rinc = *Right Lifted Increase*: With the point of the right-hand needle, pick up the side of the stitch below the next stitch on the left-hand needle (photo below left). Place this loop on the left needle and knit it (photo below right), then knit the stitch above it (the original stitch).



Linc = *Left Lifted Increase*: With the point of the left-hand needle lift the side of the *stitch below the stitch just knitted* (photo left) and knit it through the back loop so it doesn't twist.

Gauge Swatch

The most accurate way to knit a gauge swatch for circular knitting is by knitting it in the round, just like the mitten, and this is also good practice if you are not accustomed to double-pointed needles. However, you can knit a flat swatch if desired. The important thing is to knit a swatch at least 5" (12 or 13 cm) wide, so you can accurately measure 4" (10 cm) in the center.

At right are minimum numbers of stitches for each yarn size; the larger the swatch, the more accurate the stitch and row gauge will be. CAUTION: some American and millimeter needle size equivalents vary depending on brand. Be sure you use the same needles for the swatch and the sock.

Starting and using double-pointed needles

Double-pointed needles come in sets of four or five (which you use is a matter of personal preference) and are used to knit seamless tubes too small for circular needles, such as socks or sleeve cuffs. The knitting is divided onto three (or four) needles, making a triangle (or square), and the knitting is done onto the fourth (or fifth) needle. You are still only knitting with two needles at a time, and you are always on the right side of the fabric.

It is easiest to cast all the stitches onto one needle and then slip some of them onto the other two (or three) needles. It is not necessary to have exactly the same number of stitches on each needle; often it is more convenient or necessary to divide them differently. Before you join the work into a circle, MAKE SURE the cast on row does not twist or spiral around the needles. It helps to lay the knitting down on a table and straighten out the cast-on row.

To begin knitting, the needle with the working yarn is on the right-hand side; with the empty needle knit the first stitch cast on (which is on the needle in the left hand). The working yarn crosses the gap and closes the triangle (or square) of needles. The first stitch is awkward since you have to support both the needle on the right-hand side with the stitches and the empty needle you are knitting with; once you have knitted the first stitch, everything hangs together. Pull this first stitch snug. Keep knitting across the first needle to the left of the join, which is marked by the starting tail from the cast on. When all the stitches have been worked, transfer the now-empty needle from the left hand to the right hand, turn your work toward the right, and begin knitting off the next needle around the triangle (or square). **One round or row is complete when you have come back around to the cast-on tail, which marks the beginning and ending of the round.**

Be aware that you are knitting around a tube. Most people find it more comfortable to knit on the outside of the tube, but many seem naturally to knit on the inside. As you knit, notice which you are doing. At first it can be hard to visualize this, since you don't see a tube until you have knitted several rows. If you knit on the outside, the needles that are not being used will be pointing away from you, behind the working needles. If you knit on the inside, they will be in front between you and your hands, and the right side of the fabric will be on the inside of the tube. Following some written patterns may be trickier if you choose to knit this way, because you are knitting "inside-out".

Note that in circular knitting, Stockinette Stitch is made by knitting every row (as opposed to K 1 row, P 1 row in back-and-forth knitting) and Garter Stitch is Knit 1 row, Purl 1 row (in back-and-forth knitting, Knit every row).

Bulky Yarn: #8 (5mm) needles, 24 stitches.

Heavy Knitting Worsted: #6 (4mm) needles, 28 sts.

Knitting Worsted: #5 (3.75mm) needles, 32 sts.

Sport Weight: #3 (3mm) needles, 36 sts.

Fingering Weight: #1 (2.25mm) needles, 40 sts.

Cast on 24-40 stitches or more depending on yarn. Divide them onto three needles. Join, taking care not to let the cast-on row twist or spiral around the needles. The yarn tail will mark the beginning and end of the round.

Knit several rounds in Garter Stitch (Knit one row, Purl one row in circular knitting) to help keep the edges from curling. Continue knitting every round until the stockinette portion measures at least 3" (8 cm). Knit several more rounds in Garter Stitch and bind off. Hand wash the swatch in cold water with a little dish soap. Cut the swatch vertically where you have marked the beginning and end of the round. Lay flat to dry.

In the center of the stockinette portion, measure 4" (10 cm) and count the number of stitches to the nearest half-stitch. Note the number: _____ stitches in 4" (10cm). Divide this number by 4 (for inches) or 10 (for centimeters); use 2 decimal places and write the number on line (A) on Pg.2.

Hand Measurements

Measure around the palm of the hand at the widest part of the hand and enter this measurement into line (B) below. You may also measure the wrist; if this is more than about an inch (3cm) smaller than the hand you might want to adjust the number of stitches in the cuff (this will be explained later).

Custom Mitten Calculator

Note: You may photocopy this page to use for different yarns and different hands, leaving the pattern itself blank.

Fill in the rest of the blanks below (a calculator will help) and transfer them to corresponding lettered blanks in the pattern.

NOTES: Most of the calculations below require rounding. If you like snug mittens, you will generally want to round down; if you prefer your mittens a bit looser, round up.

It is always preferable to try the mitten on as you are knitting, if possible. The proportions calculated are averages only and while they are generally fairly close, hands do vary! The pattern explains where to try on.

(A) Stitches per centimeter or inch = _____

(B) Hand Measurement = _____ centimeters or inches

(C) Calculate the number of hand stitches:

(A) x (B) rounded to the nearest multiple of four = _____

(D) Calculate the number of stitches for the thumb gusset:

(C) x .35 = _____ stitches, rounded to the nearest even number.

(E) Calculate the length of the thumb gusset:

(B) x .4 = _____ centimeters or inches

(F) Calculate the length of the hand:

(B) x .5 = _____ centimeters or inches

(G) Calculate the number of stitches for top decreases (this will be explained in the pattern: (C) x .65, rounded to the nearest multiple of four = _____ stitches

(H) Calculate the length of the thumb:

(B) x .25 = _____ centimeters or inches

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Cuff

Cast on (C) _____ stitches, unless the wrist is much smaller than the hand or you like a very snug cuff. In this case, subtract 4 from (C), then add the stitches back in at the end of the cuff. Use needles several sizes larger for casting on so the cast-on edge will be elastic, or use the cast-on described on the last page. Be sure to leave a tail at least 6" (15cm) long for weaving in at the end.

Divide the stitches onto 3 or 4 needles (whichever you prefer), with some multiple of four on each needle. This makes it easier to knit the ribbing.

Work cuff in K2, P2 ribbing (*K2, P2*; repeat from * to * around) for desired length. This is usually 3" (8cm) or more.

If you have not subtracted stitches from "C", knit two rows in stockinette stitch (knit every stitch). If you have subtracted 4 stitches from (C), increase four stitches evenly around on the first of the two stockinette rows using the Right Lifted Increase (see Abbreviations).

Thumb Gusset

Knit around until you are two stitches from the end of the round. Place a marker on the right-hand needle (a small plastic ring, or a piece of string tied into a loop that will fit over your needle); this will mark the beginning of the thumb gusset. Slip the marker from the left to the right needle when you come to it on every round. Then Rinc, K2, Linc (see Abbreviations).

Next round: Knit.

Next round: Knit around to marker, slip marker, Rinc, K to end of needle, Linc.

Repeat these two rows until the thumb gusset is _____ (D) sts.

Knit even (on the number of stitches you now have) until gusset measures _____ (E) inches or centimeters. Try the mitten on, if possible; the gusset should come up to the base of the thumb where it joins the rest of the hand (this is easier to do if you stop knitting halfway through the gusset, which then allows the gusset to fold when you try it on).

On the next round, stop when you come to the marker; remove the marker. Thread a yarn needle with a piece of string or waste yarn and take the gusset stitches off the knitting needle onto the string. Tie the string into a loop.

Cast two stitches onto the needle you just took the gusset stitches off of, using the half-hitch cast-on (photos below).



Hand

Knit even until the hand above the thumb measures _____ (F), or to the top of the little finger.

Hand Decreases

Divide your stitches, which should be evenly divisible by 4, onto 4 needles, if they aren't already. There should be the same number of stitches on each needle.

Next round: *K2tog, knit to end of needle*, repeat from * to * for each needle to the end of the round.

Next round: Knit

Repeat these two rounds until you have _____ (G) stitches.

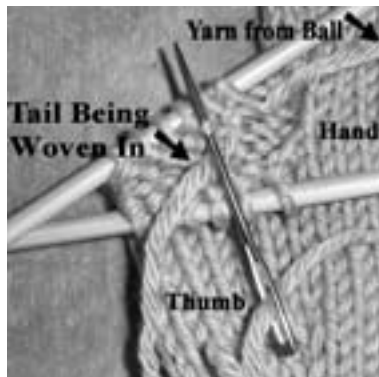
Work the decrease round every round (no plain round) until you have 4 stitches left (or 8 if your yarn is fine).

Break the yarn leaving a tail of about 6" (15 cm). Thread the tail into the yarn needle and thread the tail through the remaining stitches in a circle. Remove the knitting needles and pull the stitches tight. Poke the needle through the center of the stitches to the inside. Turn the mitten inside out and weave the tail into the stitches on the wrong side.

Thumb

Place the thumb gusset stitches onto 2 needles. Attach yarn by weaving the end in on the wrong side next to the cast-on stitches (that way you won't have to weave the end in later - photo below left). Four stitches will be picked up across the base of the hand - the two cast on stitches and one stitch on either side. These stitches will be considered the beginning of the round. Use two new needles. The strands in the illustration on the right below will be picked up and knitted one at a time in the direction of the red arrows, from right to left. With the point of the left-hand needle, pick up the rightmost strand indicated and knit it THROUGH THE BACK LOOP so it puts a twist in it. Repeat

with the next three stitches. You should now have the thumb stitches on three needles.



Knit one round.

Next round: SSK, K2tog (this reduces the 4 picked-up stitches to 2); knit to end of round. The thumb should now have (D) + 2 stitches.

Knit until the thumb measures _____ (H) inches or cms , or to about the center of the thumbnail.

Thumb Decreases

K2, K2tog; rep from * to * around, ending with K2tog if you have a number of stitches divisible by 4, or with K2 if you have a number divisible by 2.

Next Round: Knit.

Next Round: *K1, K2tog*; rep from * to * around. If you ended with K2 on the last decrease round, this one will also end K2.

Next Round: K2tog around.

Repeat the last round until you have 3 or 4 stitches (the number will depend on how many you started with). You may have an odd number of stitches eventually; simply knit the odd stitch.

Finish the thumb as you did the top of the mitten. Weave in the tail from the beginning of the knitting.

Make a second mitten as the first.

Finishing: Wash your mittens, or steam them gently on both sides (by holding a steam iron just above the mitten until it is fairly wet) to relax the yarn and set the stitches; dry flat. Remember, knitting isn't finished until it's "Finished"; that is, "blocked" by washing or steaming.

The Most Elastic Cast-On

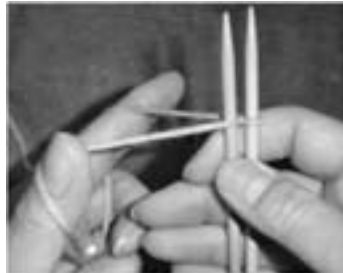
I learned this method of casting on from the book, The Principles of Knitting, by June Hemmons Hiatt, Simon & Schuster, 1988. This comprehensive, almost-600-page reference is unfortunately out of print now. This cast-on, called the Double-Needle Cast-On in the book, is so good for socks and mittens (as well as other uses) it needs to be shared.

The method is based on the "long-tail" cast-on, also sometimes called "sling-shot", so if you know this already you are halfway there. The "double needle" refers to two needles held one on top of the other.

The upper needle is the size that you are knitting with; the lower needle is the same size or smaller. The larger the lower needle is, the stretchier the cast-on is. If I am using small needles for a sock or mittens (#3, 3mm) or smaller, I use the same size for both. If your needle is larger, you may want to use a size or two smaller for your lower needle.

Begin by making a slip knot with a long enough tail for all your stitches. An inch per stitch is a handy starting place; unless my yarn is VERY precious and I don't want to waste any, I always estimate very generously. If you need to get very close, cast on 10 stitches, rip it out and measure the tail used. Divide the number of stitches you need by 10 and multiply this number by your tail measurement. Then add a few extra inches so you have a long enough tail to weave in at the end.

Position your hands as for a long-tail cast-on, tail over your thumb and ball yarn over your index finger. Place the second needle under the first between the yarn strands, and hold both needles together as if they were a single needle.



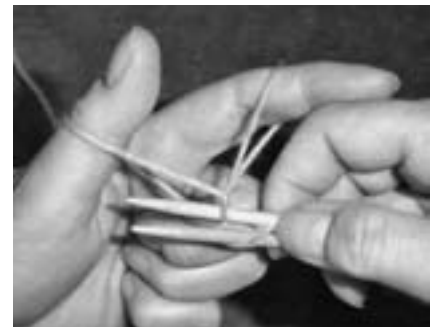
Insert both needles up under the strand in front of the thumb.



With the upper needle, grab the strand in front of the index finger.



Pull this strand back through the thumb loop, reversing the path going in.



Insert the LOWER needle into the thumb loop. Now release the loop from your thumb and snug it up against the lower needle (not too tight).



Pick up a new thumb loop. Then, holding the two needles together in the same relationship to each other, rotate both needles toward the back, around over the finger strand and forward under both strands, making a complete circle around both strands. This puts a twist in the two strands under the lower needle. Repeat all steps for as many stitches as you need. When all stitches are cast on, remove the LOWER needle. When knitting the first row, the cast-on will feel very loose; this is normal.



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