

## Mitten Basics

At its simplest, a mitten is a hand covering, for protection, insulation, decoration, or one or more of these three. Since human hands vary, a mitten should be made to fit the hand that will wear it.

Parts of a Mitten:

**Cast On:** For ribbing, it should be stretchy, a knitted CO or any version of long-tail. Do not use cable CO. Many ethnic traditions begin with various types of braids or multi-color COs.

**Cuff:** Snug against the wrist (any version of ribbing), loose around the wrist (same or slightly larger circumference than the hand), or gauntlet (extending onto the forearm).

### Thumbs:

- a. Peasant or Sore Thumb: Different for right and left hands, stitches are reserved on the palm side for a thumb pocket that covers bottom thumb joint to just over tip of thumb. Number of stitches will be  $1/4$  to  $1/3$  of total stitches around hand.
- b. Norwegian Thumb: Different for right and left hands. Begins from a narrow cuff and grows to form a pocket close in width to actual palm. Number of stitches will be  $1/4$  to  $1/5$  of total stitches around hand.
- c. Thumb Gusset: Depending on color or texture pattern, may be the same or different for right and left hands. Increases for thumb gusset may be made at each side, in the middle, or only at one side (usually the palm). Number of stitches will be  $1/4$  to  $1/3$  of total stitches around hand.
  - a. Increases on either side: choose a stitch for the center of the gusset. Begin by increasing on either side of this stitch, placing markers outside of the increases. Repeat increases every two to three rounds, placing increases just inside each marker.
  - b. Increases only in the middle: Position increases on opposite sides of chose central stitch and increase on each side of this stitch every two to three rounds until you have enough new stitches.
  - c. Sneaky Increases: Distribute gusset increases so there is visible pattern of increases
  - d. Increases only on one side (Swedish Thumb): Increases are placed either only on the palm or the back of the hand. Since only one increase is made each round, increases are done **every** round to obtain the correct shape gusset.

**Palms:** Should fit to the wearer's comfort, either snug or loose. Work until mitten just covers the top of the little finger, OR is about 2 inches shorter than desired.

### Tops:

- a. Rounded:

- a. decrease one stitch on each side of mitten side seam every other round (4 sts dec per round) until 1/2 of total stitches remain, then work decreases every round until 8-10 sts remain.
  - b. decrease stitches evenly spaced in a round, work a plain round, then work decreases again, with one fewer plain stitches between decreases on every subsequent decrease round. Work until 8-10 stitches remain.
- b. Pointed:** decrease one stitch on each side of mitten side seam every other round (4 sts dec per round) until 8-10 sts remain.
- c. Square:** Work until mitten covers tip of longest finger, then graft stitches together.

## **Designs**

Plain  
Textured  
Stranded  
Intarsia  
Mosaic  
Twined  
Thrummed  
Embroidered

## **Suggested References:**

The Knitters's Handy Book of Patterns by Ann Budd

Folk Mittens by Marcia Lewandowski

Norwegian Mittens and Gloves by Annemor Sundbo

Magnificent Mittens by Anna Zilboorg

Fox and Geese and Fences by Robin Hansen

Two-End Knitting by Anne-Maj Ling

Latvian Mittens by Lizbeth Upitis

Selbuvotter by Terri Shea

Sata by Eeva Haavisto

I Can't Believe I'm Knitting Mittens by Leisure Arts