



# 18th Century Knitted Mittens



## Adult Mittens

### Sizes:

Small (fits hand circumference 7" - 7.5")

Medium (fits hand circumference 8" - 8.5")

Large (fits hand circumference 9" - 9.5")

Xlarge (fits hand circumference 10" - 10.5")

The first size number listed in the pattern will be for size Small measurements, followed by Medium, Large, and XLarge, as follows: S (M, L, XL). It may help to print these directions and use a highlighter to mark the instructions for the size of mitten you are knitting.

Yarn: Worsted weight

Gauge: 5 st./in.

Needles: 1 set of 5 double-pointed needles (dpns), in size needed to get gauge, plus 1 straight needle 2 sizes larger than gauge size. I knit very loosely, so I use a size 3 needle to get 5 st./in., but many knitters may need to use a size 5 or 6 needle.

## **Directions**

### Cuff:

Cast on 36 (40, 44, 48) stitches onto a straight needle 2 to 3 sizes larger than needles used to get gauge. Knit stitches off needle onto 1 double-pointed needle. Divide stitches evenly among four dpns; join. Place marker (pm) to indicate beginning of round.

Knitting in the round, alternate knit rows (row 1, 3, and 5) and purl rows (row 2, 4, and 6), to make garter-stitch cuff.

*Note on cuff treatments:* The mitten in the Collector's Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Revolution does not have a garter stitch edge, but it is a period technique used regularly on stockings, and on the Gunnister glove, which helps prevent the edges of knitted garments from rolling. One of the mittens recovered from the wreck of the General Carleton of Whitby (1792) had a row of fringe around the wrist of the mitten and a second row about 1.5 inches from the wrist, either as decoration or perhaps to help retain warmth.

Knit even until total cuff length measures 4".

### Thumb gusset:

*Left mitten:* Knit across 14 (15, 17, 18) stitches. pm, M1L, k1, M1R, pm.

*Right mitten:* Knit across 4 (5, 5, 6) stitches. pm, M1L, k1, M1R, pm.

Increase 2 st inside gusset markers in this manner every other round for 2 (5, 7, 9) rounds.

Increase 2 st. inside gusset markers in this manner every third round until there are a total of 13 (15, 17, 19) gusset stitches.

On next rnd, place gusset sts on length of yarn. Remove gusset markers, use backwards loop method to CO 1 st over gap left by gusset, and knit to end of rnd. Total st: 36 (40, 44, 48).

### Hand:

Knit even until hand is even with the top of the little finger, or until hand is about about 4 ½ (5 ½, 6 ½, 7 ½") long, measuring from bottom of gusset.

On next rnd, decrease as follows:

Needles 1, 3 -- k1, ssk, knit.

Needles 2, 4 – knit to last 3 st, k2tog, k1.

Decrease in this manner every other round until there are 5 (5, 6, 6) stitches left on each needle.

Decrease every round until there are a total of 8 stitches left. Cut yarn; using yarn needle, thread tail

through remaining sts, pull tight, and fasten off (pass needle to inside of mitten; turn mitten inside out, weave in end, and cut.)

Thumb:

Place gusset sts onto 4 dpn. Pick up and knit 3 st over gap, and join. Total sts = 16 (18, 20, 22).

Work in the rnd until thumb measures  $\frac{1}{2}$ " shorter than thumb, or about  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " ( $1\frac{3}{4}$ , 2,  $2\frac{1}{4}$ ").

On next rnd, decrease as follows (needles 1 and 4 are the needles next to the hand portion of the glove):

Needles 1, 3 – knit to last 3 st, k2tog, k1.

Needles 2, 4 -- k1, ssk, knit.

Rnd 2: knit.

Decrease in this manner every other rnd until there are a total of 4 st left. Cut yarn, thread tail through rem sts, pull tight, and fasten off as above.

Turn mitten inside out and weave in end where yarn was joined for thumb, closing gaps at base of thumb.

# Children's Mittens

## Sizes:

Small (fits hand circumference 5 ½")

Medium (fits hand circumference 6")

Large (fits hand circumference 6 ½")

The first size number listed in the pattern will be for size Small measurements, followed by Medium, and Large, as follows: S (M, L). It may help to print these directions and use a highlighter to mark the instructions for the size of mitten you are knitting.

Yarn: Worsted weight

Gauge: 5 st./in.

Needles: 1 set of 5 double-pointed needles (dpns), in size needed to get gauge, plus 1 straight needle 2 sizes larger than gauge size. I knit very loosely, so I use a size 3 needle to get 5 st./in., but many knitters may need to use a size 5 or 6 needle.

## **Directions**

### Cuff:

Cast on 28 (30, 32) stitches onto a straight needle 2 to 3 sizes larger than needles used to get gauge. Knit stitches off needle onto 1 double-pointed needle. Divide stitches evenly among four dpns; join. Place marker (pm) to indicate beginning of round.

Knitting in the round, alternate knit rows (row 1, 3, and 5) and purl rows (row 2, 4, and 6), to make garter-stitch cuff.

*Note on cuff treatments:* The mitten in the Collector's Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Revolution does not have a garter stitch edge, but it is a period technique used regularly on stockings, and on the Gunnister glove, which helps prevent the edges of knitted garments from rolling. One of the mittens recovered from the wreck of the General Carleton of Whitby (1792) had a row of fringe around the wrist of the mitten and a second row about 1.5 inches from the wrist, either as decoration or perhaps to help retain warmth.

Knit even until total cuff length measures 2 (2 ½, 3").

### Thumb gusset:

*Left mitten:* Knit across 11 (11, 12) stitches. Pm, M1L, k1, M1R, pm.

*Right mitten:* Knit across 3 (4, 4) stitches. Pm, M1L, k1, M1R, pm.

Increase 2 st inside gusset markers in this manner every other round until there are a total of 9 (11, 11) gusset stitches.

On next rnd, place gusset sts on length of yarn. Remove gusset markers, use backwards loop method to CO 1 st over gap left by gusset, and knit to end of rnd. Total st: 28 (30, 32).

Hand:

Knit even until hand is even with the top of the little finger, or until hand is about 3 (3 ½, 4") long, measuring from bottom of gusset.

On next rnd, decrease as follows:

Needles 1, 3 -- k1, k2tog, knit.

Needles 2, 4 – knit to last 3 st, ssk, k1.

Decrease in this manner every other round until there a total of 8 stitches left. Cut yarn; using yarn needle, thread tail through remaining sts, pull tight, and fasten off (pass needle to inside of mitten; turn mitten inside out, weave in end, and cut.)

Thumb:

Place gusset sts onto 4 dpn. Pick up and knit 3 st over gap, and join. Total sts = 12 (14, 14).

Work in the round until thumb measures ½" shorter than thumb, or about 1 (1, 1¼").

On next rnd, decrease as follows (needles 1 and 4 are the needles next to the hand portion of the glove):

Needles 1, 3 – knit to last 3 st, k2tog, k1.

Needles 2, 4 -- k1, ssk, knit.

Rnd 2: knit.

Decrease in this manner every other rnd until there are a total of 4 st left. Cut yarn, thread tail through rem sts, pull tight, and fasten off as above.

Turn mitten inside out and weave in end where yarn was joined for thumb, closing gaps at base of thumb.

Abbreviations:

CO = cast on

k1 = knit 1

k2tog = knit 2 stitches together (right-slanting decrease)

M1 = make 1

M1L = make 1 (Left). Insert left needle into back of the loop of the stitch below the stitch just knitted.

M1R = make 1 (Right). Insert right needle into back of loop of stitch below the next stitch to be knitted.

Knit this loop, then knit the stitch on the needle.

pm = place marker

rnd = round

ssk = slip two stitches individually knitwise, knit the two slipped stitches together through the back of the loops (left-slanting decrease)

st = stitch

sts = stitches

References:

Neumann, George C. and Frank. J. Kravic, Collector's Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Revolution. Stackpole Books, Harrisburg PA, © 1975, p. 189.

Babits, Lawrence E., *Eighteenth Century British Sailors' Clothing*, Back to Our Roots II: Investigations into the Influences of Immigration and Trade on the Development of 18<sup>th</sup> Century American Dress, Proceedings of Tidy's Symposium, Newark, Delaware, March 20, 1999.