



An HJS Studio Tutorial: Mitered Mitten Set



Sometimes a project brings together inspiration from a wide variety of sources. This is certainly such a project! I've made lots of bits and pieces of winter woolies—mittens in one yarn, hat in another, scarf in a third, etc—but not a whole matching set to go with my winter coat. 2004 became the year in which that ambition was finally realized.

Sources of inspiration:

- ❖ This year (barely still 2004 as I write), my spinning group decided to do some sort of hat or other handspun headgear for the guild project—each member of the group interprets the suggested project as desired.
- ❖ Early in the year, I also experimented with the concept of mitered garter stitch squares, and found them to be lots of fun to knit. My inspiration was a lovely shawl in Spin-Off Fall 2003, pages 56-58, designed, spun, and knit by Freyalyn Close-Hainsworth. I love that shawl and hope to do something closer to it someday. In the meantime, mundane mitered squares for me :)
- ❖ I found I had lots of yarn left over from a shawl I made. The yarn was what I call 'quick and dirty'—fast spun from so-so roving, the yarn is not heirloom quality by any means. The wool is from our BL sheep, Mary, but is much softer than most BL—next to the skin soft. It's a natural dark gray, approximately double knitting weight, which I overdyed in 12 rainbow colors after spinning.
- ❖ Finally, kind of a negative inspiration, but it worked: My winter coat is a very ugly bright school-bus yellow sort of color. Fortunately, it works well as a backdrop for these deep jewel tone colors.



The first item I made was the scarf. The hat came next, and the partial set then languished over the fall because I couldn't quite figure out how to incorporate mitered squares into mittens. Something my daughter suggested one day sparked some ideas. After a couple



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sketches, I picked up the needles again. I had to rip out several attempts, but I like the finished product very much. And still do, in mid-winter 2008!

Total yarn weight for the set, using a lofty handspun two-ply similar to double knitting in thickness, is about 10.2 ounces or just shy of 300 grams, with about 3.5 ounces / 100 grams used for each part. If you're using commercial yarn, I recommend buying extra. This is a very light, lofty yarn; the same commercial yardage needed might be as much as 50% more. You can see in the picture that I changed colors frequently. In this case, I was using up left-overs from an earlier project. It would be easy to space-dye yarn, or deliberately spin a randomly-colored yarn to get a similar effect without actually changing yarns. One of the very nicest things about handspun yarn is being able to design the colors to do what you want.

Tip: If you must change colors to get the effect you want, just knit together the new and old color for about five stitches. Clip the old color and continue in the new. No further working-in of the yarn ends is needed. I like to leave tails of about 1 inch / 2.5 cm in length for most projects to keep the tail from working out on the right side, but since the scarf is basically reversible, I clipped them almost flat in that one project.



Mitered Squares

Garner stitch mitered squares are super fun and fast to knit. These instructions make the simplest variety, used in the Mitered Mitten set.

Using some scrap yarn and whatever size needles you like with that yarn, cast on about 21 stitches for a smallish sample square. An odd number of stitches is needed, because the knitting will decrease around the center stitch until there is one stitch left.

To make the square tidier along the edges, slip the first stitch of each row. This will also make it much easier if you need to pick up stitches along the sides later on.

Knit one row plain (wrong side).

First right side row: Knit 9, slip 1, knit 2 together, pass slipped stitch over, knit 9.
Knit one row plain.

Second right side row: Knit 8, slip 1, knit 2 together, pass slipped stitch over, knit 8.
Continue knitting the wrong side rows plain, while decreasing two stitches in the center of each right side row.

Eventually, you will have one stitch left. If you want to keep your sample mitered square, cut your yarn, thread it through the last stitch, and pull tight.

Scarf

General Method: The scarf is made by making one mitered square, picking up and casting on stitches at the end of it to knit another mitered square, attached to the first. At the end of the second square, pick up stitches across its top and work a few rows in garter stitch (this



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helps prevent the ribbing section from pulling in and distorting the mitered square's edge). The center section in my scarf is worked in 2/2 ribbing (knit 2, purl 2 across), or you could continue in garter stitch for a warmer, wider scarf at the back of the neck (in which case you'll need more yarn). A few more straight garter stitch rows, then stitches are cast on to make the last mitered square, and the scarf is finished. If you have enough yarn, you can make another mitered square for a longer scarf—I was worried I'd run out of yarn, so I quit with a short scarf.

Finished Dimensions: About 45 inches / 115 cm long; about 6.5 inches / 16 cm wide across garter stitch areas; about 3.5 inches / 9 cm wide across ribbed area.

Materials: About 3 ounces / 85 grams very lofty worsted weight or double knitting weight yarn.

Gauge: Is very flexible in this project. My gauge was about 18 sts and rows = 4 inches / 10 cm measured over garter stitch.

Equipment: A set of straight, double pointed, or circular needles in the size needed to give you approximately the above gauge.

First mitered square: Cast on 61 stitches. Work mitered square according to directions above, in whatever colors you like. Do not cut yarn at end unless you plan to change colors for the beginning of the next square.

Next square: Pick up a total of 29 stitches across top of first square—one in each slipped stitch works well. You should have 30 stitches on the needle at this point, including the loop left at the end of the previous square. Next, cast on 31 stitches at the end of the picked-up stitches, for a total of 61 stitches again. Knit one row back, and continue working second mitered square just like the first, decreasing on right-side rows, changing colors as desired. At end of second mitered square, pick up 29 stitches as before, having 30 on the needle when you're finished, and work back and forth in garter stitch as long as desired. My garter stitch section has about 24 rows (12 ridges) total.

Neck portion: Change to knit 2, purl 2 ribbing for desired length (mine is about 14 inches / 35 cm long).

Next garter stitch section: Work back and forth on 30 stitches in garter stitch for desired length. I worked about 24 rows again.

The last mitered square: Cast on 31 stitches at the beginning or end of a row, whichever strikes you as easiest, for a total of 61 stitches. On the next right side row, start your usual mitered square decreases. Work to end of square, and finish off the last loop.

Hat

General Method: The hat is simple and fun to do. A set of 6 mitered squares are worked, one after the other, and sewn together at the end to make a circle. Stitches are then picked up along one edge of the strip, and the hat is ribbed to the top.



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Size: Fits an average adult head. For a child's size, use a smaller gauge, smaller squares, or reduce number of squares to 5.

Materials: About 3.5 ounces / 100 grams very lofty worsted weight or double knitting weight yarn.

Gauge: Is very flexible in this project. My gauge was about 18 stitches and rows = 4 inches / 10 cm measured over garter stitch.

Equipment: A set of circular and 4 or 5 double pointed needles in the size needed to give you approximately the above gauge. Blunt tapestry needle for sewing up.



First mitered square: Cast on 31 stitches. Work mitered square according to directions above, in whatever colors you like. Do not cut yarn at end unless you plan to change colors for the beginning of the next square.

Next square: Working from the right side of the first square, pick up a total of 14 stitches across top of first square—one in each slipped stitch works well. You should have 15 stitches on the needle at this point, including the loop left at the end of the previous square. Next, cast on 16 stitches at the end of the picked-up stitches. Knit one row back, and continue working second mitered square just like the first, decreasing on right-side rows, changing colors as desired.

Continue this way until you have a total of 6 mitered squares, in a strip, completed. Sew the ends of the first and last squares together to form a circle. (And, if you're like me, your brain will start ticking over other arrangements of squares that can be sewn into three-dimensional shapes!)

Crown of hat: Pick up about 88 stitches around one edge of the mitered square circle, working from right side of squares. You will be knitting the hat inside-out for the best look to the finished hat. Work in knit 2, purl 2 ribbing around to about 6 inches / 15 cm from beginning.

Decrease row: Knit 2 together in each knit rib; purl 2 in each purl rib; 66 stitches left. Work 1 inch / 2.5 cm in knit 1, purl 2 ribbing.

Decrease row: Purl 2 together in each purl rib; knit 1 in each knit rib; 44 stitches left. You may need to switch to double pointed needles now. Continue k1, p1 ribbing for 1 inch / 2.5 cm.

Decrease row: k 2 together around twice; 11 stitches left. Break off yarn, draw tail through last stitches, and secure, leaving yarn tail on side facing you. Turn hat inside out, and turn up cuff to wear.



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Mittens

General Method: The mitten's construction is a little more complex than the other pieces, but still within the reach of most knitters:

The cuff is worked in ribbing first (in rounds to save sewing a seam, but you can work back and forth if you prefer), then a few rows are knit in garter stitch back and forth, spanning the front and back of the hand and including the beginning of the thumb gusset. At the base of the mitered square, the knitting is divided into separate palm and back pieces.

On the back of the mitten, the mitered square is worked in the standard way, then rows of garter stitch are knit, with some decreases to shape the top.

Next, the palm continues back and forth in garter stitch, increasing the thumb gusset until it's time to place the thumb stitches on a stitch holder. The palm now begins to join the back of the hand by knitting the last stitch of the palm with the slipped stitch edge of the mitered square.

Shaping at the top is about the same as the mitten back. Pick up the thumb stitches on the stitch holder and knit the thumb. Then weave the tops of the mitten and sew the remaining seams: thumb and edge of the hand next to the thumb (plus the cuff if you worked it flat).

Size: Fits a hand up to 8 inches / 20 cm around. The length of hands varies more than the width, so get good measurements or try the mitten on the recipient's hand as you work.

Materials: About 3.5 ounces / 100 grams very lofty worsted weight or double knitting weight yarn.

Gauge: Is very flexible in this project. My gauge was about 18 stitches and rows = 4 inches / 10 cm measured over garter stitch.

Equipment: A set of 4 or 5 double pointed needles in the size needed to give you approximately the above gauge. A stitch holder or (my favorite) a piece of scrap yarn to keep the thumb stitches on. Blunt tapestry needle for sewing up.

You'll be working the right-hand mitten first, then reversing the shaping to make the left-hand mitten.

Cuff: Cast on 36 stitches. Work in rounds for about 24 rows (3 inches / 8 cm). Less experienced knitters may find it easier to work the cuff flat and sew it up later, due to the shaping of the mitten's hand. If you do knit flat, figure a way to identify which are the right side rows—for example, place a scrap piece of contrasting yarn at the beginning of the right side when you start the garter stitch portion of the mitten.



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Base of hand: Begin working back and forth in garter stitch, slipping first stitch of every row throughout mitten—this fact won't be mentioned again. On the first row (right side), increase a total of 4 stitches, 2 on each side of the hand: 40 stitches total.

All wrong side rows: Knit even.

Next right side row, right side : Knit 20 stitches (will be back of hand); place marker, knit 1, make 1, knit 1 (thumb gusset); place marker, knit 18 stitches (will be palm of hand). 41 stitches.

Next right side row: Knit even.

Next right side row: Knit 20; marker, knit 1, make 1, knit 1, make 1, knit 1; marker, knit 18. 43 stitches.

Next right side row: Knit even.

Next right side row : Knit 20; marker, knit 1, make 1, knit 3, make 1, knit 1; knit 18. 45 stitches.

Continue in this pattern of doing a thumb gusset increase every 4th row, consisting of working the side stitch, then an increase, then the gusset stitches, then an increase, then the side stitch, until you have knit six right side ridges (12 garter stitch rows), ending with a right-side row.

Separating back of hand from palm: On next wrong side row, leave the palm stitches and the thumb stitches on two holders (I used wooden double-pointed knitting needles). Knit the next 20 stitches on new needles. At the end of this row, cast on 19 stitches. You will now work the mitered square, doing the center decreases on the right side rows, on 39 stitches.

When the mitered square is done, break off yarn and secure. From the other side of the top of the square (away from the thumb, right side facing), pick up and knit 20 stitches across top of square. Work back and forth in garter stitch on the 20 stitches until you have either 10 rows / 5 ridges done or the mitten measures about 1 inch / 2.5 cm shorter from end of cuff to last row than you want it to finish. End with wrong-side row.

Shape tip of mitten back: Decrease row: Knit 1, slip 1, knit one, pass slipped stitch over; knit to last three stitches; knit 2 together, knit one. Knit one row even. Repeat until you have 10 stitches left. Work next two rows as decrease rows. Leave last 6 stitches on a holder.

Return to the palm and thumb: Continue knitting the palm and thumb together, working the thumb gusset increases until you have a total of 15 stitches for the thumb. Place the thumb stitches on a holder (I used contrasting yarn), cast on two stitches to bridge the thumb gap (20 stitches total for palm), and knit palm onto mitten back as follows:

Knit across mitten palm to last stitch at edge opposite thumb gusset. With the last stitch still on the needle, put the tip of the needle through the cast on stitch of the mitered square of the mitten back, wrap the yarn around the needle and pull through a stitch, then knit this stitch together with the last stitch from the row. Knit back across to thumb side. Continue



knitting the last stitch together with the mitten back's edge through the mitered square and then the decrease rows, managing the decreases the same way as for the back of the mitten.

Weave 12 stitches now at the tip of the mitten together, using garter stitch weaving (which isn't on my website because I'm not very good at it!). Leave one or the other yarn end long enough to sew side seam, but wait til after the thumb is done.

Back to the thumb: Slip the 15 stitches onto probably two needles and work back and forth in garter stitch for 12 rows. Knit 2 together around on next row. Work 1 row even. Knit 2 together around for last row. Break yarn, leaving a tail long enough to sew thumb seam. Draw through stitches on needle, and sew thumb seam.

Secure all yarn ends, then sew the remaining side seam, above thumb, of the mitten.

Second mitten is done with mirror-image shaping in two places. The first change is working the mitered square on the second half of the hand stitches rather than the first. Then when you get to the end of the mitered square on the back of the hand, don't break off the yarn (unless you are changing colors), but pick up the stitches across the top, from the 'point' of the square, from the right side, and continue as for first mitten. When knitting together the palm and back of the mitten, be sure it's the edge away from the thumb that is knit together. Remaining shaping is the same either way.

That's it, and I hope you enjoy making and wearing your set as much as I have!



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