

TOP-DOWN BIG KIDS' MITTENS

A knitting pattern

© Kim Salazar, 2001, 2012; <http://www.string-or-nothing.com>



Regia Ringel continues to besot my imagination. I thought it would be fun to design a top-down mitten using this self-striping yarn. My nine year old daughter informs me that these are ultra cool, and that she'll be the envy of her pre-teen snowboard-wanna-be set.

This mitten is ambidextrous - both the left and right are alike. I did this so I could replace mittens quickly when they are (inevitably) lost. The fingering weight yarn knit at sock gauge is warm, but not wind-proof. These are light-duty mittens, perfect for short errands but probably not warm enough for winter outdoor events. The thumb has a gusseted base, and is knit palm out, making the entire mitten very easy to try on while it is still on the needles. I had my daughter try hers on throughout production, and ended up with a custom fit. I encourage you to do the same if your target wearer is near to hand. [grin]

The only caution about working method is that I use the crochet chain provisional cast-on to re-establish the stitches below the thumb opening. You can use another method if you like, but the provisional cast-on yields a seamless thumb join, without an annoying ridge on the inside at the thumb's base. I find that picking up stitches in the bumps on the back of a crocheted chain very difficult at this

gauge, so I work my crocheted chain around a spare double pointed needle, then knit the stitches directly off this spare needle.

I used one 50-g skein of Schachenmayr's *Regia Ringel* in color #5048 for these mittens. It's a self-striping mix of bright green, medium blue, fuchsia, and orange. Each of the main color stripes is further accented by a secondary color - pale green on the green, turquoise on the blue; salmon on the fuchsia, and yellow on the orange. If you like this yarn in this color group, you will probably also like my Jelly Bean Toe Up Socks.

As presented, the pattern should fit most kids, teens, and women. I used only one 50 gram/210 meter skein of Ringel for the pair. If you are knitting for a large teen male, or any adult with larger than average hands, you will probably need to break into a second skein of Regia, or do part of the cuffs and thumb in a complementary color left-over.

Materials

- Approximately 50g of fingering weight sock yarn. I used one 50g skein of Schachenmayr's Regia Ringel, in color #5048, Clown

Top-Down Big Kids' Mittens

- About one yard of scrap fingering weight yarn for the provisional cast-on (I find cotton yarns or bakery string are easiest to use for this)
- US #0 double pointed needles - one set of five
- One spare DPN, close in size to the five you are using for the mitten body (exact match isn't vital)
- Small crochet hook to make the crochet chain for provisional cast-on (I used a size 2mm/size 5)
- Two small safety pins, miniature stitch holders, or small pieces of string for holding thumb stitches
- One small safety pin, split ring stitch marker or piece of string to mark Needle #1
- Tapestry or yarn needle for weaving in the ends

Gauge:

Needle size specified is for convenience only. Use any size needle required to achieve the desired gauge.

8.5 st = 1 inch in stockinette on US #0 needles;

12 rows = 1 inch in stockinette on US #0 needles

Special Instructions

These abbreviations and symbols are used in this pattern.

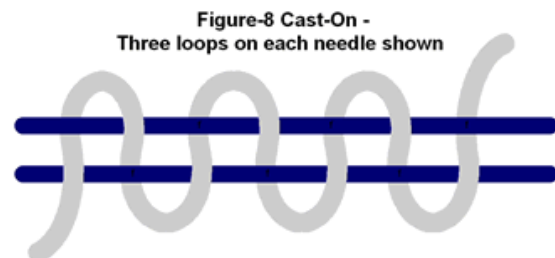
M1 Make One - Pick up the bar running between the stitches on each needle, knit through the back of this new "loop" to make an invisible no-hole increase.

K2tog Knit two together - Make a decrease that slants to the right by knitting the next two stitches together.

SSK Slip, slip, knit - Make a decrease that slants to the left by slipping the next stitch purlwise, and the stitch after that knitwise. Return both stitches to the other needle, then knit them together through the back of the loop.

No-Sew Cast-On

Take two of the needles and wrap the yarn around them, figure-eight style. The yarn should loop around the bottom needle and cross to the opposite side of the top needle. Loop over it and then return between the two. The result should look something like this:



Continue wrapping the yarn this way until you have 16 loops on each needle. Let the end dangle free with no knots or other securings - you'll need to work looseness in the first row out towards the end later. Knots will interfere with this in-flight adjustment.

Take a third dpn and knit across the top needle. Take the fourth dpn and knit across the bottom needle. Be careful not to twist stitches - one needle's loops will be "backward" with the leading edge of the loop on the rear side of the needle. Make sure you knit into the rear side of these "backward" loops.

You now have a very narrow and slightly awkward strip of knitting suspended between two needles. There should be 162 stitches on each needle. Don't worry if the stitches running down the center are loose, in a couple of rows you can tighten them up by carefully working the excess down towards the dangling tail end.

Finger Shaping

Row 1: k1, M1, k7. Using another dpn, k7, M1, k1. Using a third dpn, k1, M1, K7. Using the fourth dpn - K7, M1, K1. You should now have 4 live needles in your work, each with 9 stitches on it.

Row 2: Knit all stitches on the first needle. Mark the first stitch on the first needle by inserting a scrap of yarn or safety pin in it as you knit it. This will help you remember which is Needle #1. Knit all stitches on the three remaining needles.

Row 3: *k1, M1, k8. K8, M1, K1* repeat

Row 4: Knit

Row 5 and subsequent odd rows: Continue adding one stitch after the first stitch of the first and third needles, and one stitch just before the last stitch of the second and fourth needles.

Row 6 and subsequent even rows: Knit.

When you have 15 stitches on each needle (60 stitches total) the tip of the fingers is done.

Palm

Continue knitting these 60 stitches in the round until the mitten measures approximately 4.75 inches, when measured from the tip to the needles. The fingertip and palm unit should be long enough so that when it is tried on, the needles rest snugly against the base of the wearer's outstretched thumb. I strongly recommend trying yours on the target wearer and adjusting the length to accordingly.

Top-Down Big Kids' Mittens

Thumb Hole and Gusset

- **Row 1:** On the next round after sufficient palm length has been achieved, knit all the stitches on Needle #1, and all the stitches on needle #2. Take the last five stitches on Needle #2 and slip them onto a safety pin or other stitch holder. Knit the stitches on Needle #3. Going back to the front of Needle #3, slip the first five stitches onto another safety pin or stitch holder. Knit all the stitches on Needle #4.

Using the bit of string or contrasting color yarn and crochet hook, make a crocheted chain of 20 stitches. Save this for use in the next round.

- **Row 2:** knit all the stitches on Needle #1. Knit the 10 stitches on Needle #2. Using the chain you crocheted as a base for a provisional cast on, pick up ten stitches (if you do this in the bumps on the back of the chain, it's easy to "unzip" the chain and free the picked up stitches when you need to use them again). Using a new needle for Needle #3, pick up the remaining 10 stitches in the crocheted chain. Knit the 10 stitches on the old Needle #3. Knit all the stitches on Needle #4. You should now have four needles in your work. Needle #1 has 15 stitches on it. Needles #2 and #3 each have 20 stitches. Needle #4 has 15 stitches. Your work will have a thumb-sized hole, positioned on the edge of the work where Needles #3 and #4 meet.
- **Row 3:** Knit
- **Row 4:** Knit the stitches on Needle #1. On Needle #2, knit 8 stitches, ssk, knit 10 stitches. On Needle #3, knit 10 stitches, K2tog, Knit 8 stitches. Knit all the stitches on Needle #4.
- **Row 5:** Knit
- **Row 6:** knit the stitches on Needle #1. On Needle #2, k7, ssk, k 10. On Needle #3, k10, K2tog, K7. Knit all the stitches on Needle #4.

Continue in this manner - knitting all the stitches on Needles #1 and #4, and decreasing one stitch every other row on Needles #2 and #3 until all four needles have 15 stitches.

Knit 8 rounds, or until the hand part of the mitten when tried on is long enough to reach the bottom of the heel of the wearer's palm.

On the next round, on each needle Knit 13 stitches, K2tog. You should now have 14 stitches on each needle.

Ribbing

Continue in K2, P2 ribbing. Some people find it easier to begin each needle with knits instead of purls. If you find it more convenient, feel free to slide the two purl stitches that begin Needle #2 and #4 onto the ends of Needle #1 and Needle #3 respectively. If you do this you'll have 16 stitches on

Needle #1, 12 stitches on Needle #2, 16 stitches on Needle #3 and 12 stitches on Needle #4.

Keep ribbing until you have approximately 3 inches of ribbing done, measured from the first ribbing row. Cast off VERY LOOSELY and darn in all ends.

Alternate finishing: A hanging loop.

It's easy to make a small loop on the mitten's cuff. I find these

loops convenient for buttoning onto a hidden button sewn to the inside side seam of a child's coat to keep the mittens from getting lost in between wearings, or to hang from a hook to dry. Follow the ribbing directions as written above, all the way through the first three needles of the cast off row. On the fourth needle, cast off until only two stitches remain. Pick up one stitch in the top of the first stitch cast off. Be sure to pick up both of the "chain loops" formed when that first stitch was cast off.

Using those three stitches, knit an I-cord approximately 1.5 inches long. Break off the yarn leaving a 4-inch tail. Use the tail to sew or graft the I-cord's three stitches to the row of cuff ribbing stitches just below the I-cord's origin. Darn in all ends..

Thumb

The thumb will be knit on only 4 DPNs. You can put the fifth one aside.

Slide the ten stitches currently secured on safety pins or stitch holders onto one DPN. Take another DPN and use it to pick up the first 10 stitches created when you picked up the twenty stitches along the back of the crocheted chain. Use the third DPN to pick up the remaining 10 stitches from the crocheted chain.

You now have three needles in your work. One should ride along the crotch of the thumb. The other two should form an acute angle at the outside edge of the mitten. Arrange the mitten so that the thumb



Top-Down Big Kids' Mittens

edge is on the right. The needle lying across the front of the mitten is now Needle #1. The one along the crotch of the thumb is #2, and the one on the back of the mitten is #3.

Starting at the rightmost edge of the mitten, knit across Needle #1. Just as in socks, there is a tendency for a small hole to form at the point where Needle #1 and Needle #2 meet. Avoid this by picking up a stitch in between the two. Knit across Needle #2. As the first stitch on the next needle, pick up a stitch (more hole-avoidance). Knit across Needle #3. There will now be 11 stitches on Needles #1 and #3, and 10 stitches on Needle #2.

- **Row 1:** Needle #1 - K9, K2tog. Needle #2 - SSK, K6, K2tog. Needle #3 - SSK, K9.
- **Row 2:** Knit around all three needles.
- **Row 3:** Needle #1 - K8, K2tog. Needle #2 - SSK, K4, K2tog. Needle #3 - SSK, K8.
- **Row 4:** Knit around all three needles.
- **Row 5:** Needle #1 - K7, K2tog. Needle #2 - SSK, K2, K2tog. Needle #3 - SSK, K7.
- **Row 6:** Knit around all three needles. You now have 8 stitches on Needle #1 and #3, and 4 stitches on Needle #2. If you feel more comfortable, you can rearrange them so that Needles #1 and #3 each have 7, and Needle #2 has 6.

Continue knitting the thumb until about only 1/4 of an inch of the wearer's thumb pokes out of the end of the newly formed thumb tube when the wearer tries on the mitten. On my mitten, I knit about 2 inches before it was long enough.

When your thumb is long enough, begin the thumb tip: K2 tog. Repeat this all the way around until only 5 stitches remain on your needles. Break off the yarn, leaving a 4 inch tail. Using a tapestry or wool needle, thread the tail through the remaining stitches, and draw them together like a draw-string bag. Thrust the needle through the thumb tip so that the tail is now on the inside of the thumb. Take a couple of sewing stitches through the thumb's tip as reinforcement, making sure they do not pierce the mitten and cannot be seen from the right side.

Darn in all remaining ends, and make that second mitten