

Gloves for Polar Explorers

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Evidence from kit lists show that gloves worn by the Polar explorers would have been wool, with a pair of large fur over-mittens for wear outside. The gloves are adapted from a vintage pattern in Baldwin's *Penny Guide to Knitting and Crochet*, published in 1910 and now part of the publications collection of the Knitting and Crochet Guild of the UK (see www.kcguild.org.uk). At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were many books of patterns for knitters, most published by yarn producers. The books offered patterns and instructions for a range of basic garments, including underwear, socks, and gloves in sizes for all the family. The best known of these books was Paton's *Woolcraft: A Practical Guide to Knitting & Crochet*, which published this glove pattern in the 1930s.

The original instructions, if followed accurately, produce rather small and oddly proportioned gloves. I have modified the instructions to produce gloves of more appropriate proportions. As many as possible of the original features of the pattern have been retained. I have also preserved methods, such as the knit into the front and back increase, used infrequently now, as well as idiosyncrasies, such as the differences in the numbers of stitches cast on and picked up at the base of the fingers. It all works out in the end! The pattern states that six needles are required, but a set of four double-pointed needles or circular needles can be used. The yarn, Blacker Elegance, is 80% wool with 20% alpaca, which gives it a soft hand. It comes in a range of attractive mixed undyed colors. For the men's size, I have used the DK weight and for the women's, the 4-ply. The stitch pattern, a seed stitch, produces a glove that increases warmth by adding texture, which is also supposed to give the gloves and the wearer a better grip. Both the yarn and the stitch pattern are forgiving of small irregularities while looking authentically vintage. (With thanks to Dr. Barbara Smith, publications curator of the Knitting and Crochet Guild of the UK, for identifying a suitable pattern from the collection, and to the Board of the Knitting & Crochet Guild of the UK for permission to reproduce this material.)

Instructions

Notes: See Materials box and page 120 for Abbreviations and Techniques. The size of the gloves can be varied by using a larger or smaller needle than the one specified or by using a lighter or heavier yarn. It is best to have the recipient try this on as work progresses. If this is not possible, an outline of his or her hand is a useful guide. The Simple Seed Stitch pattern does not fit exactly into the number of stitches for some of the fingers, but match the pattern to the hand sections and knit any

Materials

Blacker Yarns Elegance, 80% pure new wool/20% alpaca yarn, 4-ply, 190 yards (173.7 m)/50 gram (1.8 oz) ball, 2 balls of Pewter for women's gloves and Blacker Yarns Elegance, 80% pure new wool/20% alpaca yarn, DK weight, 119 yards (108.8 m)/50 gram (1.8 oz) ball, 2 balls of Nutmeg for men's gloves; www.blackeryarns.co.uk

Needles, set of 4 double pointed size 3 (3.25 mm) for women's gloves and set of 4 double pointed size 5 (3.75 mm) for men's gloves or sizes needed to obtain gauge

Stitch markers

Contrasting thread for holding stitches

Tapestry needle

Finished sizes: Women's (men's), 7½ (8¾) inches (19.0 [22.2] cm) hand circumference and 9 (10) inches (22.9 [25.4] cm) long

Gauge: 26 sts and 36 rnds = 4 inches (10.2 cm) in Simple Seed st with 4-ply yarn on smaller needles for women's gloves; 22 sts and 32 rnds = 4 inches (10.2 cm) in Simple Seed st with DK weight yarn on larger needles for men's gloves

Special Stitch

Simple Seed Stitch (multiple of 4 sts)

Rnd 1: *K1, p1, k2; rep from * to end.

Rnd 2: K.

Rnd 3: *K3, p1; rep from * to end.

Rnd 4: K.

Rep Rnds 1–4 for patt.


remaining stitches placed on the sides of the fingers. If adjusting length of thumb and fingers, the top decreases will add about ¼ inch (6 mm) in length.

Glove

Right Glove

Cuff,

Using yarn and needles for your size, CO 48 sts. Distribute 16 sts on each of 3 dpn, pm, and join in the rnd.



The wool/alpaca yarn Angharad Thomas selected for her Gloves for Polar Explorers provides a soft hand. She used DK weight for the men's size (shown at right) and 4-ply for the women's (shown at left).

Work in k2, p2 rib for 20 rnds.

Next Rnd: [K1f&b, k23] 2 times—50 sts.

Thumb gusset,

Rnd 1: P1, k1, p1, k1f&b, p1, pm, work Rnd 1 of Simple Seed st to last st, k1—51 sts.

Rnd 2: P1, k4, p1, sl m, k to end.

Rnd 3: P1, k3, k1f&b, p1, sl m, work Rnd 3 of Simple Seed st to last st, k1—52 sts.

Rnd 4: P1, k5, p1, sl m, k to end.

Inc Rnd 5: P1, work in Simple Seed st to 2 sts before m, k1f&b, p1, sl m, work in Simple Seed st to last st, k1—1 st inc'd. Work 2 rnds even in patt. Working new sts in Simple Seed st, rep last 3 rnds 5 more times—58 sts.

Work 4 rnds even in patt.

Thumb,

Next Rnd: Work 13 sts in patt, place rem 45 sts on holder for hand, using the backward-loop method, CO 5 sts—18 sts rem for thumb. Pm and join in the rnd. Work in Simple Seed st (see Notes) until thumb measures $1\frac{3}{4}$ ($2\frac{1}{4}$) inches (4.4 [5.7] cm), or length required, ending with a k rnd.

Shape top,

Rnd 1: *K1, k2tog; rep from * to end—12 sts rem.

Rnd 2: K.

Rnd 3: *K2tog; rep from * to end—6 sts rem.

Break yarn and thread through rem sts and fasten off securely on WS.

Hand,

Return 45 hand sts to needles and join yarn to CO sts from thumb.

Next Rnd: Pick up and k 3 sts from thumb CO, work in patt to end—48 sts.

Distribute 16 sts on each of 3 dpn, pm, and join in the rnd. Work in Simple Seed st for 10 rnds. *Note:* Length can be adjusted here.

First finger,

Next Rnd: Work 4 sts in patt, place next 34 sts on holder, CO 2 sts, work 10 sts in patt—16 sts rem. Pm and join in the rnd.

Work in patt for 2 ($2\frac{3}{4}$) inches (5.1 [7.0] cm), or length required, ending with a k rnd.

Shape top,

Rnd 1: *K1, k2tog; rep from * to last st, k1—11 sts rem.

Rnd 2: K.

Rnd 3: *K2tog; rep from * to last st, k1—6 sts rem.

Finish as for thumb.

Second finger,

Place 1st and last 6 sts from hand onto dpn and rejoin yarn.

Next Rnd: Work 6 sts in patt, CO 2 sts, work 6 sts in patt, pick up and k 3 sts from first finger CO—17 sts. Pm and join in the rnd.

Work in patt for 2¼ (3) inches (5.7 [7.6] cm), or length required, ending with a k rnd.

Shape top,

Rnd 1: *K1, k2tog; rep from * to last 2 sts, k2—12 sts rem.

Rnd 2: K.

Rnd 3: *K2tog; rep from * to end—6 sts rem.

Finish as for thumb.

Third finger,

Place 1st and last 6 sts from hand onto dpn and rejoin yarn.

Next Rnd: Work 6 sts in patt, CO 2 sts, work 6 sts in patt, pick up and k 2 sts from second finger CO—16 sts. Pm and join in the rnd.

Work in patt for 2 (2¾) inches (5.1 [7.0] cm), or length required, ending with a k rnd.

Shape top,

Rnd 1: *K1, k2tog; rep from * to last st, k1—11 sts rem.

Rnd 2: K.

Rnd 3: *K2tog; rep from * to last st, k1—6 sts rem. Finish as for thumb.

Fourth finger,

Place rem 10 sts onto dpn and rejoin yarn.

Next Rnd: Work 10 sts in patt, pick up and k 4 sts from third finger CO—14 sts. Pm and join in the rnd.

Work in patt for 1¾ (2¼) inches (4.4 [5.7] cm), or length required, ending with a k rnd.

Shape top,

Rnd 1: *K1, k2tog; rep from * to last 2 sts, k2—11 sts rem.

Rnd 2: K.

Rnd 3: *K2tog; rep from * to last st, k1—6 sts rem.

Finish as for thumb.

Left Glove

Cuff,

Work as for Right Glove.

Thumb gusset,

Rnd 1: P1, k1f&b, p1, k1, p1, pm, work Rnd 1 of Simple Seed st to last st, k1—51 sts.

Rnd 2: P1, k4, p1, sl m, k to end.

Rnd 3: P1, k1f&b, k3, p1, sl m, work Rnd 3 of Simple Seed st to last st, k1—52 sts.

Rnd 4: P1, k5, p1, sl m, k to end.

Inc Rnd 5: P1, k1f&b, work in Simple Seed st to 1 st before m, p1, sl m, work in Simple Seed st to last st, k1—1 st inc'd.



The Seed Stitch pattern that Angharad Thomas used in her Gloves for Polar Explorers increases warmth by adding texture, which also provides better grip.

Work 2 rnds even in patt. Working new sts in Simple Seed st, rep last 3 rnds 5 more times—58 sts. Work 4 rnds even in patt.

Work thumb as for Right Glove.

Hand,

Return 45 hand sts to needles and join yarn.

Next Rnd: Work in 45 sts in patt, pick up and k 3 sts from thumb CO—48 sts.

Distribute 16 sts on each of 3 dpn, pm, and join in the rnd. Work in Simple Seed st for 10 rnds. *Note:* Length can be adjusted here.

First finger,

Next Rnd: Work 10 sts in patt, place next 34 sts on holder, CO 2 sts, work 4 sts in patt—16 sts rem.

Finish first finger as for Right Glove.

Remaining fingers,

Work second, third, and fourth fingers as for Right Glove.

Finishing

Weave in ends, closing gaps at the base of the fingers where necessary. Press lightly using a hot iron and wet cotton or linen cloth. ❁