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THRUMMING 101: SUPER COZY MITTENS

with Mieka John of Salt & Stone Knits

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WHAT IS THRUMMING?

Thrumming is a technique originating from Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada that incorporates wisps of animal fiber roving (combed, unspun wool) into your knitting or crochet. It provides a beautiful pop of color and a thick and soft insulating layer on the inner side of your garment/accessory that will felt over time with wear!

HOW TO PREPARE A THRUM

Always pull the fiber, never cut! Thin out the roving and gently pull the fiber. If it's not separating, space your hands a bit farther apart and try again. Separate the roving equally in half, one for each mitten.

Pull a small section of the fiber. When you twist the center of the wisp you've just pulled, it should be slightly larger than the thickness of the yarn you're using. It is easiest to prepare the thrums for each round and set them aside, ready to use. You will need 9 thrums per round. The length of your mitten will vary but you will need about 99 thrums in total.

HOW TO KNIT A THRUM

If you are an English knitter (thrower/flicker, holding yarn in the right hand): Insert your needle knitwise into the stitch that is going to be thrummed. Twist the thrum in the center and wrap the center of the thrum around your right needle (Figure A). After placing the thrum, pick up your working yarn to the right of the thrum, bring it over both ends of the thrum, and wrap it around the needle as you would for a knit stitch (Figure B), pulling both the yarn and the thrum through the stitch (Figure C).



Figure A



Figure B



Figure C

If you are a Continental knitter (picker, holding yarn in the left hand): Insert your needle knitwise into the stitch that is going to be thrummed (Figure D). Bring your working yarn to the front, over the crossed needles (Figure E). Twist the thrum in the center and wrap the center of the thrum around your right needle (Figure F). Bring the working yarn to the back, in position to knit (Figure G). Knit the stitch pulling both the yarn and the thrum through the stitch (Figures H + I). On the WS of the work, make sure that the yarn from the stitch you've just completed is resting above the thrum. This ensures that it is oriented properly for the next round.



Figure D



Figure E



Figure F



Figure G



Figure H



Figure I



Figure J

After the thrummed stitch is worked, you should see the yarn of the thrummed stitch sitting directly to the left of the fiber on the right needle regardless of your knitting style (Figures C + I).

In the following round (for both knitting styles): knit the yarn and the thrum together through the back loop (ktbl) careful not to split the thrum (Figure J). This secures the thrum and orients it to sit nicely and look like a little heart.

CONSTRUCTION

These thrummed mittens are knit in the round. They begin with 1x1 ribbing and continue in stockinette with thrums evenly distributed throughout the body of the mitten. Stitches are left on waste yarn for an afterthought thumb and the body continues until the decreases are worked for the mitten top and finishing with Kitchener Stitch. Then the afterthought thumb is created, ends are woven in and the mittens are ready to wear! With time, the fiber on the inside of the mitten will felt creating a warm, insulating layer.

GAUGE

Cuff Gauge: 22 sts x 24 rounds = 4 in / 10 cm in 1x1 ribbing with smaller needles

Body Gauge: 17 sts x 24 rounds = 4 in / 10 cm in stockinette stitch with larger needles

SUGGESTED NEEDLES

DPNs, 8-10" circulars, or ~32" / 80 cm circulars

Needle A: US 7 / 4.5 mm (or 1 size / 0.5 mm smaller than

Needle B: US 8 / 5.0 mm (or size to obtain body gauge)

SIZE

One size - adult - finished mitten measures approx. 4.5 in / 11.5 cm in width and 9.5 in / 24 cm in length

ABBREVIATIONS

— from * to *

BOR beginning of round

cm centimeter

CO cast on

DPN(s) double pointed needle(s)

g grams

in inches

k knit

k2tog knit two stitches together (decrease)

k1tbl knit 1 stitch through back loop

YARN & YARDAGE

Aran weight yarn

Isle of Auskerry Aran weight, Seal Grey (167 yd / 153 m per 3.5 oz / 100 g)

Fiber

John Arbon Harvest Hues Top, Pomegranate (approx. 15-20g per mitten)

NOTIONS

Stitch marker

20 in / 50 cm waste yarn

Tapestry needle

Scissors

PATTERN

CUFF

With your working yarn and Needle A, loosely cast on 32 sts using the long-tail cast-on method. PM for BOR and join in the round careful not to twist sts.

Rnd 1: *K1, p1*. Repeat *—* to end.

Repeat Rnd 1 until cuff reaches about 2 in / 5 cm or desired length.

BODY

Switch to Needle B and knit 1 round.

Next Rnd: K4, M1L, *k8, M1L*. Repeat *—* three times, k4. (36 sts)

Knit 2 rnds. Begin Thrum Pattern and repeat until you've reached approximately 3 in / 7.5 cm from the end of the cuff, stop after completing Rnd 2 or 6 of the chart.

Thrum Pattern (Also see chart on Page 6)

Rnd 1: *K3, thrum 1*. Repeat *—* to end.

Rnd 2: *K3, k1tbl*. Repeat *—* to end.

Rnds 3-4: Knit.

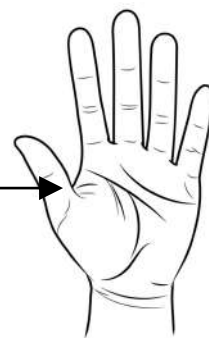
Rnd 5: *K1, thrum 1, k2*. Repeat *—* to end.

Rnd 6: *K1, k1tbl, k2*. Repeat *—* to end.

Rnds 7-8: Knit.

If using DPNs or 8-10 in circulars, place the stitches on waste yarn and try it on. The afterthought thumb should begin just after the crease between your thumb and index finger (see diagram above). If it's too short, continue in pattern until you reach that point, stopping after Rnd 2 or 6 of Thrum Pattern. Take note of how many rounds you've worked from the edge of the cuff as a reference for the second mitten.

Begin afterthought thumb just after this crease



Insert the afterthought thumb:

To make right mitten: Knit 8 sts with waste yarn. Slip these 8 waste yarn sts back onto left needle and continue knitting the following round in Thrum Pattern (Rnd 3 or 7) with working yarn.

To make left mitten: Knit 10 sts with the working yarn and then knit 8 sts with waste yarn. Slip these 8 waste yarn sts back onto the left needle and continue knitting the following round in Thrum Pattern (Rnd 3 or 7) with working yarn.

Continue in Thrum Pattern until about 1 in / 2.5 cm before your fingertips, stop after completing Rnd 2 or 6 of the Thrum Pattern. Take note of how many rounds you've worked from the round with waste yarn as a reference for the second mitten.

Next Rnd: K18, PM. k18.

MITTEN TOP

Continue in Thrum Pattern AT THE SAME TIME as working the decreases for the mitten top. Only work the thrums if they fall between the decrease ridges created on each side.

Decreases:

Rnd 1: *K1, ssk, k to 3 sts before the marker, k2tog, k1*, repeat *—* once more. (4 sts decreased)

Rnd 2: Knit.

Repeat these 2 rnds until there are 8 sts left on your needles. Break the yarn leaving a ~10 in / 25 cm tail. Redistribute the sts evenly between two needles and use your tail and tapestry needle to graft all remaining stitches together with Kitchener Stitch. Note: your mitten should end ~1 in / 2.5 cm after your fingertips to give space for the thrums.

THUMB

Using Needle B DPNs, carefully remove the waste yarn for the afterthought thumb and place these 15 sts on the needle (8 sts on the cuff side and 7 sts on the top side). Join to work in the round.

Rnd 1: Pick up and k 1 st in the gap, PM for BOR, pick up and k 1 more st in the gap, k8, pick up and k 2 sts in the gap, k7. (19 sts)

Next Rnd: K2tog, k7, k2tog, k6, ssk. (16 sts)

Continue in Thrum Pattern on the outer side of the thumb until the length reaches about 0.5 in / 1.25 cm before the tip of your thumb, stop after completing Rnd 4 or 8 of Thrum Pattern.

Try the mitten on. Take note of how many rounds you've worked from the pick-up round as a reference for the second mitten.

Decreases:

Rnd 1: *K1, k2tog*, repeat *—* to last st, k1. (11 sts) Place 2 more thrums on this round one on the front and the back side of the thumb each.

Rnd 2: Knit.

Rnd 3: K2tog until last st, k1. (6 sts)

Break the yarn leaving a 8 in / 20 cm tail. Using your tapestry needle, pull the tail through the live stitches and pull tight to close. Note: your mitten thumb should end ~0.5 in / 1.25 cm after your thumb fingertip to give space for the thrums

FINISHING

Weave in ends. To block, you can wet block, steam block, or spray the entire mitten and turn inside out to dry.

At this point you can also redistribute the thrums to cover the inside of the mitten as desired. If you'd like to create a felted layer inside right away, apply steam and slightly agitate the thrums while the mitten is inside out. To reinforce worn down thrums, thread a tapestry needle with a thrum and duplicate stitch over the OLD thrum.

THRUM PATTERN CHART

Read all chart rounds from right to left beginning at the bottom.

