

Mittens for Movember

a quick & dirty pattern by Maire Martin

November at my workplace becomes a somewhat surreal experience. Men who normally sport moustaches and goatees will spontaneously shave their faces clean on November 1st. Before you're really quite aware of what's going on, you're surrounded by a variety of moustache styles including the handlebar, the "Magnum PI", and even the twirled tips of an evil villain. I think the only moustache I haven't seen is pencil-thin, a la John Waters.

What are my gentleman co-workers doing? Participating in Movember!

Movember was started to bring attention to men's health, particularly prostate cancer and men's mental health. Guys don't generally talk about these problems, and take a back seat to the plethora of women's issues that are often at the forefront of our thoughts.

My grandfather passed away from cancer. It spread so fast that the doctors couldn't be sure where it started. All he knew was that one day he didn't feel well, so he went to the doctor. Less than a couple of months later, he was gone.

I'm offering this pattern for free, as I haven't had a chance to test-knit it. It is basically a chart with some handy tips thrown in. In return, all I ask is that you consider making a donation to the Movember movement (the link to my co-workers' team is on the pattern page). If you do, please leave a message of encouragement for the boys with your donation, and let me know via the comments on this pattern!

Yarn

I recommend a good solid colour for the pattern & a variegated or graduated yarn for the contrasting background. It may seem backward, but since the pattern is the star of the show, I call the black areas of the chart the "main" colour, and the background the contrast.

Sizing

As with any mitten pattern, the size of your mitts can vary depending on the gauge of needle and yarn. A fingering weight yarn will yield a pair of women's medium-size mitts, dk for large, and (light) worsted for men. Choose your needles to give you a gauge that is not too tight to work with, but is not so loose that the wearer has cold hands (yes, I know, very helpful, right?). Let's just say that unless your intended wearer has hands the size of dinner plates, you probably don't want to use bulky yarn with size 10 needles...

Cuff:

If you prefer lined mitts, you may use the techniques outlined in the Fiddlehead Mitts pattern by Adrian Bizilia. Otherwise...

Cast on 72 stitches and join in the round, being careful not to twist. Using a k1p1 repeating rib pattern, knit 5 rounds.

Mitten Body

Begin pattern according to the chart. Spaces are marked in pink and lavender on the pattern where one may choose to use waste yarn for thumb placement.

There are some very long floats in this pattern, so I would recommend learning how to weave your yarns as you go.

Decreases:

At the beginning of the round, knit 1 with the main colour, then slip the next stitch, knit 1, and pass the slipped stitch over (skp). Three stitches from the end, k2tog, then knit in the main colour. Continue in this pattern around until 14 stitches per needle remain for your mitten body. Graft with your main colour.

Thumbs:

Pick up the 12 stitches above and below the waste yarn, as well as any additional stitches to the sides. You can decrease them back to 12 as you go, and come back to them afterwards from the inside to tighten things up and graft the thumb socket more securely.

You may choose to knit around plain in your contrasting background colour, or use the pattern on the palm of the mitten chart to compose a thumb that blends in with the background. After you feel you have knit a sufficient thumb length, decrease as for the mitten body with skp and k2tog. Decrease until you have about 4 stitches per needle and graft.

