Note 1 - This booklet is part of a series of DIY booklets published by Lure of the North. For all other publications in this series, please see our website at lureofthenorth.com. Published instructional booklets can be found under "Info Hub" in the main navigation menu, or directly at: https://lureofthenorth.com/instructional-booklets/.

Note 2 – Lure Mitten Making Kits: These instructions are intended to be accompanied by our Mitten Making Kit, which is available through the “Store” section of our website at: https://lureofthenorth.com/shop. Of course, you can also gather all materials yourself and simply use these instructions as a guide, modifying to suit your requirements.

Note 3 - Distribution: Feel free to distribute these instructions to anyone you please, with the requirement that this package be distributed in its entirety with no modifications whatsoever. These instructions are also not to be used for any commercial purpose. Thank you!

Note 4 – Feedback and Further Help: Feedback is welcomed to improve clarity in future editions. For even more assistance you might consider taking a mitten making workshop with us. These workshops are run throughout Ontario, and include hands-on instructions and all materials. Go to lureofthenorth.com/calendar for an up to date schedule.

Our Philosophy: This booklet describes our understanding of a traditional craft – these skills and this knowledge has traditionally been handed down from person to person and now we are attempting to do the same. We are happy to have the opportunity to share this knowledge with you, however, if you use these instructions and find them helpful, please give credit where it is due. We have worked hard to produce this package and would appreciate any acknowledgements given. Thank you.

- The Lure Team, Kielyn & Dave Marrone

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https://lureofthenorth.com
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0.0 What Makes Winter Mittens So Great?

Having comfortable and cozy extremities is essential to enjoying the frozen, sun thirsty season. Hands and feet are of the utmost importance when braving the elements. Using a combination of thick wool inner layers and a breathable buckskin outer your hands will be warm, comfortable and dry. These mitts have travelled with us for hundreds of nights in the northern frozen wilderness and we’re confident you'll find them a fantastic addition to your winter kit!

Illustration 1: Winter Mittens made from a Lure of the North workshop

0.1 DIY Benefits

Making mittens yourself gives you an opportunity to customize and personalize them to your heart's content. This can be elaborate ornamentation, including bead work, burning and the like, or simple elegance. The skills learned in making these mittens will give you the knowledge and confidence to repair them and other equipment in the field. And of course, this is an opportunity to connect with the heritage of our land and those that have travelled it before us.

Illustration 2: Trappers Mitts made from our locally harvested beavers
1.0 Getting Prepared

1.1 Kit Contents:

- ~ 5 square feet of deerskin for the outers (available in a variety of colours);
- ~ 4 square feet of wool for the inner mitt (available in a variety of colours);
- 2 x 1” x 1’ decorative ribbons (available in a variety of styles);
- ~ 8 metres of yarn for stitching inner mittens;
- 1 darning needle;
- Artificial sinew – enough for project, plus extra for repair kit;
- 2x “Glover's Needles” (Aka. “Triangular Needles” or “Leather Needles”);
- 2 x 3/4” buckles;
- ~ 2’ of 3/4” webbing;
- Lure of the North Patch;
- Paper patterns;
- These instructions;
- If selected: fur trim in 2” x 14” strips
1.2 Items Not Provided

Illustration 4: You need only supply a few standard household items.

- Scissors;
- Pins;
- Sewing machine (optional);
- Measuring tape;
- Pencil
1.3 Prepare Your Pattern

The pattern you will receive with your kit coincides with the sizing chart provided. The mitten is constructed from three pieces: The largest piece, referred to as the “palm”, a skinny long piece, referred to as the, “back” and the smallest piece, referred to as the “thumb”. See illustration at right.

1.3.1 Finding Your Pattern Size

Using a flexible measuring tape, hold one hand out with your fingers straight and together with your thumb extended outwards. Measure around the widest portion of your hand, excluding the thumb.

Refer to the sizing chart and find the number that closest suits the circumference of your hand that you just measured. Look across to find your pattern. Eg. If your hand measures 23cm in circumference then you will cut a size 2 pattern for your inner mittens and a size 3 pattern for your outer mittens.

1.3.2 Pattern Sizing for Outer Buckskin Layer

We size the buckskin outers one size larger than the wool, to accommodate the thickness of the wool (this is shown in the sizing chart). However, even with the larger sized buckskin outer, you may find it feels a bit tight initially. The buckskin will stretch. So we intentionally size them so they are a bit snug over the wool initially, but they will relax with a few uses.
1.3.3 Adding Length

We're short mitten, long anorak people. We find that way our mitts work well with any insulating combination we're wearing, and they tend to go on and off more easily. And when the wind is blowing and we want extra protection, the anorak comes on and hangs down over the wrist of our mitts.

But we realize other people like a longer mitt that hangs over some of their clothing layers. Our kits aren't designed around a really long chopper mitt, but if you want to add a bit of length to your mitten, you could probably extend all pieces of your mitts a couple of inches. This isn't necessary as the patterns are cut to our preference, but is optional if you want to customize your mitts a bit.

2.0 Making a thimble (Aka. “The Basics”)

1. Grab your leather needle. Notice the needle has a triangular tip with blades on each edge. This needle is designed to cut through your leather, and will likewise cut you if you're not careful. We will begin by constructing a small leather thimble (or two) for protection.

2. Thread the needle. Depending on the type of thread you are using, you may need to split it down in thickness. The sinew we use and supply with our kits, does need to be split into halves before it can be used. Our sinew will easily and naturally split into 4 quarters. If you are trying to force it, try again until you find the natural split. Try to split your sinew so that you are sewing with half of the supplied thickness, or two of the quarter-splits. If your thread is too thick for your needle, you will be struggling with every stitch. If your thread is too thin, it will be less durable.

3. The thread should be hanging unevenly from the needle – that is, one half of the thread should be longer than the other. Put a knot at the end of the long half of thread.

4. From your scrap pieces of leather, cut a rectangle ~ 1 ½” wide and 5” long. Fold this in half width-wise to form a thimble ~ 2 ½” x 1 ½” wide with seams on either side.
   a) Adjust this size according to your finger... it should snugly fold around the finger you intend to use your thimble on, and reach beyond your first knuckle.

5. You will sew the seams of the thimble using the “Whip Stitch”. This is essentially the same stitch (with some small variations) that you will use for almost every
seam on this project. The whip stitch is done as follows:

a) Holding the thimble in your left hand and the needle in your right, you will stitch from one open corner up into the fold you have made. Begin by opening the two halves of leather and push the needle down through just the bottom piece of leather. Pull all the way through to the knot. This initial stitch is placed between your two pieces of leather to hide your knot inside your thimble.

b) Bring your needle back up, fold your two pieces of leather back together and push the needle down through both pieces of leather. This is your first full stitch.

c) Bring your needle back up and again stitch down through both pieces of leather ~ 1/8” (2 – 3 mm) over from your previous stitch.

d) This is the whip stitch. If done properly your thread will lay over the open edge of the thimble. **The key to doing the whip stitch properly is to put every stitch down through the same piece of leather first.** For example, in the thimble you have already started you will continue by always pushing the needle down through the upper piece of leather first (except for your initial ½ stitch which is done to hide your knot...). Stitches continue: down and out, down and out, down and out...

![Illustration 8: Appropriate stitch length and stitch depth.](image)

**Note – Whip Stitch Details:**

Your deerskin is very forgiving material in terms of how you sew it together. Because the skin does not fray when cut, you do not have to worry about finishing edges. Likewise, you can place your stitches fairly close to the edge of the material without worrying about them pulling through. I like to keep my stitch depth (distance from edge of material) at about 3mm (or 1/8”). The stitch length (distance between each stitch) should also be kept fairly tight (again ~ 3mm or 1/8”). This makes a very nice, professional finish. Finally, the key to a really nice looking finished mitten is consistency. If you can keep your stitch depth and stitch length consistent from one stitch to the next you will do a very fine job. **IMPORTANT:** There is no need to place your stitches tighter together or closer to the edge than
1/8”. Unlike woven fabrics, when sewing deerskin you are cutting holes in the material with each stitch. Place your stitches too close together and risk weakening your material.

6. Continue sewing your thimble using the Whip Stitch until you reach the fold in the leather – you have completed one side, and now need to finish off your stitch.

7. Seams are finished as such:
   a) After your final whip stitch, bring your needle back up, and stitch down through the exact same hole that you just made. This will lay a second whip stitch on top of your last one. 
   b) Bring the needle back up and make another stitch in the same hole – a 3rd stitch now lays on top of the first two.
   c) Place a fourth stitch in the same hole, but do not pull tight. Pull the stitch most of the way through, leaving a small loop of thread. Pass the needle through this loop twice. Pull tight to knot.

8. Snip your thread close to your thimble to keep things neat and tidy.

9. Put another knot in the long end of your thread and sew up the second side of your thimble, following steps 5 – 8. Start at the open corner, hide your knot by starting with a ½ stitch (just through one piece of leather) initially, and then whip stitch up into the fold. When you reach the fold, stack four stitches in one hole, make a knot and pull tight to bind.

The thimble should fit very snugly on whatever digit you choose to use it on (force it on - it will stretch). Many people use it on their index finger and/or thumb, while others find it most useful on the middle finger. This is a matter of personal preference. Make yourself a second or third thimble at this time if you feel you will want the extra protection (more thimbles are more cumbersome however!). Spice up your thimbles by drawing faces, cutting fringe or burning a design in them.

Hurrah, you are now ready to begin your mittens!!
3.0 Making the Inners

3.1 Trace and Cut

1. Pin the pattern pieces on the wool, or simply hold in place and trace. Discretely mark the tick that is located at the top of the “back” and the “palm” piece on the inside of the mitten pattern pieces with a pen or marker.

2. Because both faces of the wool are identical, you don't need to worry about flipping your patterns to create a right and left, but you will have to when it comes time to cut your hide.

3. Also, you will notice that it is difficult to accurately trace the depth of the “thumb pit” on the palm piece. That is OK, you can leave that part mostly uncut for now, and we will open it up in the next step.

4. Cut two of each piece, six pieces total.

3.2 Cut open the “thumb pit”

That's a term we made up, but hopefully you're still with us here. As mentioned previously, its hard to use the pattern to accurately cut the line that partly separates the thumb portion of the “palm” piece from the rest of the body of the “palm”. So you will use the “thumb” pattern piece to figure out the length of your cut.

1. Place the “thumb” on the palm, facing upside down, so that the rounded part of the “thumb” is facing the wrist of the “palm”. See the illustration at right.

2. The straight edge on the “thumb” will be your reference as to how deep to cut the slit on the “palm”. Cut the slit to exactly match the “thumb” as shown.

3. This also happens to be the orientation you will start sewing in, so just leave your pieces as is for now.

Note: Cutting this slit deep enough is important to having free movement of your thumb. If this part is not cut deep enough, then your thumb movement will be restricted, and this point will be more likely to fail as a result of the extra strain being applied.
3.3 Choose your Weapon!
We supply wool yarn and a darning needle with the intention that you will use that to sew up your inner mittens. It looks nice as a complimentary colour to your colourful wool mitts, and it also has more surface area than the sinew, meaning it will be less likely to pull through wool felt. Having said that, our current (as of fall 2019) wool is very dense and durable, and we are not concerned with sinew pulling through it. So if you aren't concerned with a nice colourful stitch on your wool mittens, then you can use your leather needle and sinew instead, as it will be somewhat faster and easier to work with than the yarn and darning needle. We have supplied enough of both wool yarn or sinew for you to do either.

3.4 Sew Thumb onto Palm
The inner mittens will be sewn right side out. This means you will see the stitching on the finished mitt, but you won't feel the seam on the inside of the mitt.

1. As mentioned earlier, your “thumb” should still be placed atop your “palm” with the rounded part of the “thumb” facing towards the wrist of the “palm”. This causes all sorts of consternation at our workshops, but trust us here. It looks funny but it will work. It helps to bear in mind that you are making a 3D object, not a 2D one. As you spin your “thumb” around later, it will pull on the “palm” and cause things to stand up or bunch up. That is OK and intentional.

2. Thread your needle (yarn or sinew) and add a knot at the end, as you did with the thimble.

3. Hide your knot between the layers, by starting with an initial stitch that just passes through the palm. Begin to whip stitch at the tip of the sharp edge on the thumb piece and continue towards the centre of the palm.

4. Stitch two reinforcing whip stitches at the corner.

5. Once you've reinforced the corner, swivel the thumb piece so that the thumb matches up with the palm. Reinforce the first stitch with the thumb and palm now lined up.

6. Continue whip stitching around the thumb and down towards the wrist portion. Watch that the pieces are lining up at the bottom and stretch one (usually the palm) to fit if needed. You can pin or clamp the two together at the wrist to make sure they line up.

7. When you reach the wrist, reinforce by doing two extra whip-stitches and then double back for 5 stitches to reinforce this high-stress area.

8. Finish the stitch with the same triple stitch as is done for the thimble.
3.5 Sew Back to the Palm and Thumb

1. Thread your needle with a fresh piece of yarn or sinew.

2. Line up the back piece with the concave (inside curve) facing towards the thumb as shown.

3. Align the tick marks at the top of back and palm.

4. Begin sewing at the tick mark, remembering to hide your knot between the layers.

5. Whip stitch towards the thumb piece. Reinforce where the thumb, palm and back all come together by adding double stitches to either side of this location.

6. The pieces should all line up at the wrist. Check as you go, and stretch (“ease”) one piece or the other if needed to ensure a nice fit at the wrist. This should be done over a large stretch of the mitten, not all at once right at the end. Just like the previous step, you can pin or clip the two pieces at the wrist to make sure they line up.

7. Head back up the seam for five stitches to reinforce the stress point at the wrist.

8. Finish your stitch as usual.

9. Start again at the top of the back at the tick mark. Whip stitch down the other half of the mitten to the other side of the wrist. As usual, check that things are lining up nicely at the wrist and “ease” if required.

10. Double-back 5 stitches to reinforce the wrist.

11. Finish the stitch.
3.6 Blanket Stitch Around the Cuff for a Finished Edge

Finally, your mitten could get a blanket stitch at the wrist. This step is optional and we have mostly moved away from it lately, but it can add a nice touch.

1. A blanket stitch is similar to the whip stitch with one difference. Start your stitch as for the whip stitch. This creates a loop of thread. Before pulling tight, pass your needle through that loop of thread. See diagram to right.

2. When done correctly, this will lay the thread across the wrist opening. See photo below
   Note: Don't pull too tight to ensure a nice flat lined cuff!

![Illustration 12: Blanket Stitch]

Illustration 13: A finished, blanket-stitched wrist.

3.7 Create a Second Mitten

1. Repeat the steps above to create your second inner mitten.

Very Important!

Before you start stitching be sure that you have flipped your pieces and are making a mirror image of the mitten you've just made, so that you are making a right and a left, and not two identical mittens!

Note: In the photo at right, the mitten has been flipped inside out after sewing. This hides the seam, and creates a bit more of a finished look. We like the fit and feel of NOT doing this though, so your mitten will probably have a more visible seam than the one pictured here.
4.0 Making the Outers

4.1 Inspect your hide and select a tracing location

Note: The inside (fuzzy or 'suede' side) of the hide is known as the “flesh” side, the smooth side is known as the “grain” side and is the side of the hide that had the hair.

For mittens we recommend using the flesh side (fuzzy) of the hide facing in and the grain side out. We find that the flesh side grips the inner woollen layers quite nicely and reduces mitten slippage.

Inspect your hide for any thin spots, holes, or brands that you may want to avoid. If in doubt, run your hands over the hide, push and pull on any spots you are nervous about.

4.2 Trace and Cut

Important Reminder! Remember, your outer mitten will most likely be a larger pattern size than the one used for your inner mitten. Be sure to double check the sizing chart, and look under the “outer mitten” column. See Section 1.3 “Prepare Your Pattern” for more information.

1. Place the pattern pieces on the 'wrong' side of the deerskin (i.e. The side of the deerskin you intend to be the inside, typically the flesh side), and carefully trace the patterns using a regular pen (or marker if necessary). Mark the tick that is located at the top of the “back” and the “palm” piece on the wrong side (inside) of the mitten pattern pieces with a discrete pen mark.

2. Important! Cut one of each pattern piece, and then flip your pieces over before cutting a second set. This will ensure you have a right and left mitten. This step is necessary here (and not with the wool inners) because the hide has two different faces (a grain side and flesh side).

3. Cut the patterns using a sharp pair of scissors.

4.3 Adding the Lure Logo

Now is a great time to add that snazzy Lure of the North logo included with your kit! It should go on the back of one mitten. It is much easier to sew it on now rather than to wait for the completed mitten.

Note: If you are planning to add decorative ribbon or fur, then be sure to leave enough room for those items below the logo.

- The logo can be added by hand, using the by-now-familiar whip stitch. This will be a slight variation to the whip stitch you are familiar with, as the logo will be added to the middle of a piece of hide, and not sewn with edges aligned as we have always previously done. For that, we use a technique we call the “closed whip stitch” (as in, not at an open edge). Stitch down through the logo and the hide behind. Bring your needle back up through just the hide, to the outside of the logo. Sew down through both logo and hide, up through just hide. Down through two (layers), up through one (layer); down through two, up through one. Continue all the way around.

- Or can be added with a sewing machine. It is important to set a very long stitch length (“stretch stitch”) on a sewing machine though. Watch the material and make sure it is feeding properly
through the machine. Help it a bit if need be. If the material is not feeding properly your machine might put too many holes in the deerskin!

4.4 Are you an Innie or an Outie?

Illustration 15: L: Mittens sewn with the seam out; R: Mittens sewn with the seam in

You should have already decided what face of the hide you want out: flesh or grain side (remember, we recommend the grain side out, so that the flesh side adheres to the wool inner mittens nicely). Now you are going to decide whether to have your seam point out, or rolled inwards. In the photo above, the mitten on the left has been constructed “seam out”, while the one on the right is “seam in”. To achieve the seam in look, you simply do all of your sewing with your mittens inside out, and then flip them right-side-out to complete. We feel this is a more finished, refined look. However, if you are working with a heavier hide (moose, bison, elk, cow) we find the folded seam can sometimes feel a little bit cumbersome and can take a bit of time to get it to relax and help with a really comfortable fit. Ultimately the folded seam should relax and not give you any issues, but if you're an instant gratification type, you may prefer to leave your seam facing out (or maybe you just like this somewhat more rugged look). The choice is yours, either option will work nicely.
4.5 Sewing the Outers

After completing your inners, the outers are very simple and more of the same awesome stitching. This time you will definitely need to work with the leather needle and sinew.

Notes:

- If you've been working with the yarn up until now, remember the sinew needs to be split in half to work with.
- As mentioned above: if you want a more finished looking rolled seam, then do all of this work with the mittens inside-out; otherwise have them right-side-out as you sew.

1. Complete all the steps in Section 3.2 “Cut Open the Thumb Pit”
2. Section 3.4 “Sew Thumb onto Palm” and Section 3.5 “Sew Back to the Palm and Thumb” are also completed almost exactly as they were done with the wool inner mittens, with one exception detailed below. Step 4.5.1 is done concurrently as you are sewing the thumb to palm, or back to thumb and palm. So please read below before continuing.

4.5.1 Adding Wrist Closure Strap

The wrist closure strap is a new addition for 2019. We like to keep most of our gear really simple and straightforward, but this is such a nice addition, we wonder why we didn't add it earlier!

1. Cut your 3/4” webbing into 4 pieces, and seal ends with heat: 2 each at 4” length and 2 each at 8” length.
2. Take a look at the buckle supplied. This is known as a “centre-bar” buckle, and is often used improperly. The sewn piece of webbing is intended to pass around the slightly recessed centre-bar. You can ID that bar because it is the one with the name “tensionlock” stamped into it. The rear bar is there to help keep the buckle aligned and in the proper orientation for locking. The black webbing on black buckle isn't great in the photo, but if you look closely it can help with alignment if you're unsure.
3. This will be described below, but I'll repeat it here: for easiest operation of the strap, the buckle should be sewn to the “thumb” side of your mitten palm, so that you pull inwards to tighten.

Illustration 16: Wrist closure installed. This was a test mitten that was taken apart and modified through the process, so excuse the somewhat messy stitching!
4.5.1.1 Wrist Closure Strap for Seam Out Mitts

If you are making “seam out” mittens, this is pretty easy to visualize.

1. As you are sewing the thumb to the palm, pause sewing when you are about 2.5” shy of reaching the wrist.
2. Fold the 4” piece of 3/4” webbing around the centre-bar of the buckle, and stick both ends of the webbing into the seam of your mitten. The ends of the webbing should protrude through the seam at least a little bit, and the buckle should be hanging out such that the release tab at the front of the buckle is away from your mitten.
3. Continue sewing up the seam of the mittens towards the wrist, being sure to capture the 3/4” webbing in the seam as you pass over it.
4. As you are sewing the back to the PALM (not the back to the thumb), you will do the same thing: adding the 3/4” webbing into the seam between the Palm and Back about 2.5” shy of the wrist.

4.5.1.2 Wrist Closure Strap for Seam In Mitts

This step is slightly more complicated to visualize if you are working inside-out.

1. As you are sewing the thumb to the palm, pause sewing when you are about 2.5” shy of reaching the wrist.
2. Fold the 4” piece of 3/4” webbing around the centre-bar of the buckle, and stick both ends of the webbing into the seam of your mitten. The ends of the webbing should protrude through the seam at least a little bit, and the buckle should be hanging inside your mitten against the grain side of the hide, and oriented such that the release tab at the front of the buckle is away from the mitten.
3. Continue sewing up the seam of the mittens towards the wrist, being sure to capture the 3/4” webbing in the seam as you pass over it.
4. As you are sewing the back to the PALM (not the back to the thumb), you will do the same thing: adding the 3/4” webbing into the seam between the Palm and Back about 2.5” shy of the wrist. Again, this needs to point inwards, since your mittens are inside-out. So initially the buckle and strap will be hidden inside your mitten wrist, until you flip the whole thing right-side out.
4.6 Attaching decorative ribbon

If you choose to add decorative ribbon it is easiest to use the sewing machine with the island exposed so you can place the mitten onto the bar and rotate the mitten as you're sewing. (Please see note about “stretch stitching” in Section 4.3). If you do not have a removable island this step can be tricky so be careful you don't accidentally sew the two layers of hide together!

1. Line up the ribbon onto the mitten in the position you would like it;
2. Pin the ribbon, tucking the two ends under themselves to create a finished edge;
3. Extend the stitch length on your machine to a long stitch;
4. Carefully stitch the ribbon on both sides.

You should now hold in your hot little hands a beautiful, functional pair of traditional winter mittens that we hope you use for many years to come!

Congratulations!

That's it, unless you're adding fur, in which case, read on!
5.0 Attaching Fur

1. Measure the width of the fur and make a mark with chalk or another removable marker this distance in from the wrist of the mitten. This mark should be on the outside of the mitten;

2. Pin fur on the mitten 1/8" in towards the wrist from the mark made in Step 1. The fur should be skin side up and upside down so that the strip is hanging towards the palm of the mitten. See photo below.

3. Test your fur orientation and position: if you flip the fur around the pins there should be a hidden seam, the fur should reach the wrist of the mitten, and the direction of hairs should point towards the wrist. Adjust if necessary. See photo below.

4. Sew the fur on using a sewing machine (straight stitch) or hand sew using a whip stitch;

5. Flip the fur and pull so that the edge of the fur lines up with the edge of the mitten;

6. Whip stitch the edge of the fur and the edge of the mitten together. When sewing fur, your needle should travel OUT through the fur. That is, your needle should pass through the deerskin mitten, then through the skin of the fur-strip, and finally should pass the hairs before starting another stitch the same way. If you do this in reverse (passing IN through the fur), you will pull fur into your stitches and have a messy final product.
Appendix 1: Printing Instructions for Patterns

1. There is a separate multi-page .pdf file that includes all pieces and sizes for the mittens. Because these are designed for ledger paper, they are not included in this booklet, but are available on our website for free.

2. Go online to lureofthenorth.com and find the Info Hub where you will find Mitten Instructions and Patterns (lureofthenorth.com/instructional-booklets/).

3. Print all pages according to the directions in the pattern packet. Our current pattern packet is a mix of legal paper and ledger paper, so selecting “print on actual size” should work, but check the pattern packet instructions for the most up to date method.

Appendix 2 Sizing Chart
Because we continually refine our products, and to avoid any confusion or mis-matched sizing charts and patterns, the sizing chart will now be located in the pattern packet mentioned above.

Thank you!

If you were happy with these instructions and our kits please share this with your friends and give us a review on our products page. Every positive feedback we get helps up keep the dream alive :)

And don't forget to follow us on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube @lureofthenorth
https://lureofthenorth.com