

# Olympic Mittens

The Winter Games are awfully exciting, but it can get cold outside! Your little athlete is sure to be inspired by the games and will be eager to get outside and play. Guide him through a quick sewing activity to make fleece mittens that will help him keep warm outside. This is a fun, simple sewing exercise that helps introduce children to sewing and works on their fine motor skills.

Fleece can be expensive in a fabric store, so another option is to use an old fleece jacket or blanket you have around the house, or find some at a local thrift store! Have him choose a color that suits his favorite Olympic team.

## What You Need:

- 1/3 yard of polyester fleece
- Slightly darker-colored polyester thread (ideally, the thread color should blend into the fleece)
- 20 inches of 1/4-inch or 1/8-inch elastic
- Sewing pins
- Pen and paper for tracing hands
- Chalk
- Fabric scissors
- Pinking shears (unless you want to hem the edges)
- Paper scissors



## What You Do:

1. Help your child create a pattern with his hand. He should place his hand on a sheet of blank paper, with his four fingers together and thumb sticking up, slightly offset from the fingers.
2. Draw around his wrist, thumb and fingers, about a half-inch offset from the hand, so you have room to sew and the hands can move a little in the mittens. Try to trace around the finger section in a U-shape. Mark how far down on the wrists he wants the mittens to go, but keep the pattern the same width as his hand at its widest point. Mark where his wrist is on the page, because he will sew elastic there to make the mittens stay put.
3. Have him cut out the pattern piece, and then use it to cut four more identical pieces (a back and front for each hand).
4. Encourage your child to look at the fleece fabric and determine if there is a right side to the fabric—the side that should face out. (The wrong side of the fleece will appear more like felt.) Smooth out the fabric and pin the pattern piece on.
5. Ask him to cut four matching pieces from the pattern (a back and front for each hand).
6. Before he sews the pieces together, attach the elastic at the wrist. Pin it at the marked wrist line on the pattern, on the wrong side of the fabric. Remember, the elastic should be on the inside of the mittens so that it's invisible. Hold it taut while you pin, so that when you release the elastic, it pulls the fabric together and holds the mittens on your child's hands.
7. Invite him to either sew the elastic on by hand or use a machine.
8. Once the elastic is attached, carefully pin together the two pattern pieces for each hand. You want the wrong sides with the elastic facing out, so the seams don't show.
9. Show him how to use a backstitch or whip stitch to carefully sew the pieces together. Remember to leave an opening at the wrist!
10. Have him trim any loose threads, and turn the mittens right side in.

11. Use your pinking shears to trim the wrist line, or hem them.

Now his hands will be kept warm in the chilly winter weather! When he outgrows the mittens, he can easily make a new pair, or simply cut off the finger section to create a pair of fingerless gloves.

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