

Knit and Felt a Jar Cozy



Materials

Worsted weight wool yarn

The yarn must be wool because the natural fibers of wool hook onto each other and compress into felt when agitated in hot water, making a thicker, warmer fabric. Synthetics do not do this.

Knitting needles

Knitting needles size 13 or other, circular or double pointed. Keep in mind that you will knit in the round and will need stitches to slide along freely.

Optional: dish soap (for felting)

Directions

You will knit from the top down, so it will take form in a cone-like shape. Try to knit so there is space and air for the wool to compress in the felting. Keep the end product and goal in mind while working—you're not making lace or battle armor. Any imperfections will likely dissipate in the felting stage, so just have fun with this.

Knitting

1. Cast on 32 stitches & join up the stitches to make a round. If your gauge is different than above, cast on about 12" of stitches.
2. Knit 1, purl 1 for 6 rounds—this creates the ribbing that will hold your cozy in place and allow for some stretch to get it on/off for cleaning and transferring between jars.

3. Knit your piece to about 6" long. This will be approximately 14 rows.

Optional: If you're feeling spicy, these approximately 14 rows can be used for patterns or shifting yarn colors. If you choose that option, remember, do not cut and knot the yarn, but leave a long tail to weave it all in and to carry the yarn between pattern stitches.

4. Decreasing the knit—this is how you get the rounded, fitted shape for the Mason jar. In your usual round, knit 6 stitches, and then knit 2 together. The result: 28 stitches on the needles.

5. Knit one round of those 28 stitches

6. Knit a round of 5 stitches, then 2 together = 24 stitches on the needles

7. Knit one round of those 24 stitches. Knit a round of 4 stitches, then 2 together = 20 stitches

8. Knit one round of those 20 stitches. Knit a round of 3 stitches, then 2 together = 16 stitches

9. Knit a round of 2 stitches, then 2 together = 12 stitches.

10. Skipping that last knit row you were expecting between the 16 and 12 gives a sharper decrease for the flat bottom of the cozy.

Hooray! You're done knitting!

11. Cut a good tail of your yarn. With a yarn needle, weave the end through those last 12 stitches and cinch it up. It should resemble a Mason jar cozy at this point, but one that is big, loose, and floppy.

Gauge

Precision is less important because of felting, but roughly 11 stitches=4 inches long, 12 rows=3 inches tall. To fit a mason jar, your knit cozy should be about 12" in circumference and 7" long, and you will then shrink it to size in the felting.

Felting

The next stage is to felt the wool you knitted. Wool will felt when it is agitated in hot water.

1. Fill up a sink or dish pan with hot water. Be mindful of the warm temperature because your hands will be in the water to felt the cozy. Optional: add dish soap to the water.

2. Place the knitted cozy in the warm water and work the cozy with your hands. Take it out and check the size and fit on your jar occasionally. Change the water as needed. It takes about 30 minutes of agitation.

If it looks like your cozy is not felting, be assured that wool, with enough agitation, will felt. Be patient. The exact time can vary to more or less than 30 minutes depending on several factors, including the tightness of your knit, water temperature, and the vigor of your agitation.

Washing and drying the cozy with your laundry is another way to do this, but it may not work as well because you do not have control to check and shape the felting with your jar.

3. When you've reached a fit that feels right for you, let the cozy dry over the jar to take proper shape...and enjoy your handmade sustainable cozy!

These instructions were inspired by Sabrina Herrin's knitting pattern (<https://www.ravelry.com/patterns/library/felted-mason-jar-cozy>).

This activity comes from a craft night collaboration with the Bowdoin College Office of Sustainability organized in conjunction with *Fast Fashion/Slow Art*. Held in the exhibition gallery in February 2020, the event was open to Bowdoin students who created knit jar cozies with yarn from recycled wool garments. Bowdoin Sustainability Outreach Coordinator Bethany Taylor compiled these craft activity instructions.

