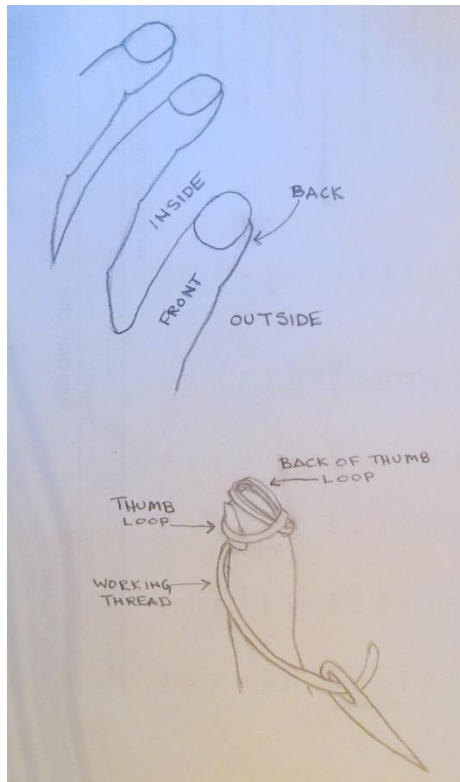


Beginning Nålbinding: The York Stitch

Nålbinding is an ancient technique for making non-woven fabric. Artifacts have been found in the Middle East, Egypt, England, Scandinavia, Russia, Peru, and the American southwest. There are many stitch variations. The York Stitch is one of the easiest. It is named for a 10th century sock found in York, England.

Materials needed: a blunt tapestry needle or nålbinding needle; 100% wool yarn – the yarn must be feltable – do not use superwash wool.

Some terminology:



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1. Thread your needle with an arm's length of yarn. Make a small overhand knot at the end of the yarn. Place the knot on the pad of your thumb, with the needle end of the yarn (the working thread) between your thumb and index finger.
2. Pass the needle through the knot on your thumb and under the working thread. Pull tight. At this point the yarn should be attached to your thumb. You now have a loop on the back of your thumb and a loop on the front of your thumb.



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3. Pass the needle, from back toward front, through the loop on the back of your thumb, and under the thumb loop and working thread. Pull tight. The new thumb loop should be beneath the old thumb loop.

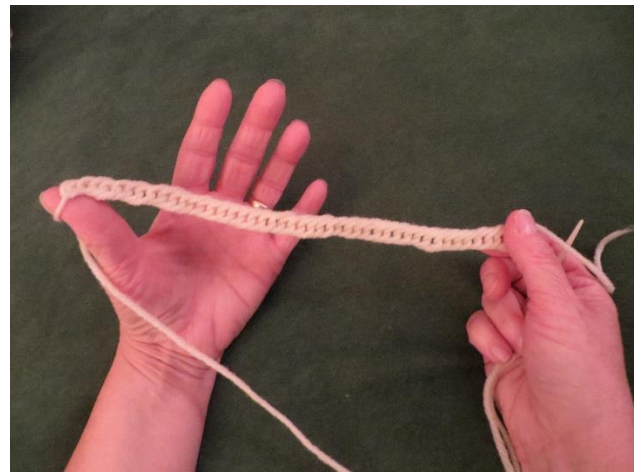


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4. Lift the old thumb loop to the back of your thumb. Pass the needle through that loop from back to front, and under the thumb loop and working thread. Pull tight. You have made a York stitch.
5. Continue making stitches in this way. A long string of stitches ("caterpillar") will form off the back of your thumb. Continue until your caterpillar is slightly longer than needed for your project (nalbinding tends to tighten up on the second row). You are now ready to make a ring.
6. Nålbinding tends to spiral, some stitches more than others. York stitch is one of the curliest. To make a ring, gently hold the end of the caterpillar near your thumb between your other thumb and index finger. Slide your fingers down to the beginning stitches and hold onto that end.
7. Bring the beginning around and carefully hold it below the stitch that is on your thumb. Notice that the side of the nalbinding that was against your thumb before is now facing out.



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8. Pick up the first loop of the caterpillar with the tip of the needle, then go through the back of thumb loop and under the thumb loop and working thread, as usual.
9. Pick up the next loop of the caterpillar and the first loop of the caterpillar and make a stitch.
10. Continue in this way, picking up one new and the previous loop of the caterpillar for each stitch. (This is called an F2 connection.)



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At some point you will need to add more yarn. This is done by felting two pieces together. Moisten the ends of the old and new yarn. Overlap them an inch or so, and rub them briskly between the heel and ball of your palms until they felt together.

You now know all you need to know to make wrist warmers or a pouch, but to make mittens, a hat, or socks, you'll need to be able to increase or decrease. To increase, make two stitches in the same caterpillar loop. To decrease, skip a loop.



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The 10th century York Stitch sock from Coppergate, York, England

