

BLANKET SHIRT

Shirts made from blanket material are quite warm, and can also be rather stylish —especially if they are hand stitched with a contrasting color of yarn. These shirts are not hard to make either. However, if you have not sewn clothing before, it may be a good idea to at least pin one together from ‘scrap’ material first, rather than risk ruining a good blanket due to some simple mistake.

Although not absolutely necessary, it is recommended that the shirt be made from a wool blanket, as wool is tough, durable, spark resistant, and will keep you warm even if it gets wet. Wool blanket material is also ‘fuzzy’ enough that it will not unravel on its own, so it does not need any seam binding. Military surplus stores are a good source for wool blankets.

Begin by laying out the pattern. This pattern can be made on paper or commercial pattern material. But most of this pattern is simple enough that it can be measured directly onto the blanket. First take the following measurements on the person the shirt is to be made for. Seam allowances have been ‘built in’ to these measurements.



Body

Start by measuring the ‘girth.’ One’s girth measurement is the largest measurement *around* their body. This could be around the shoulders, chest, abdomen, or hips, which ever is largest.

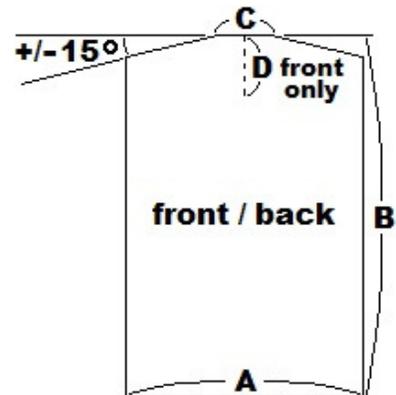
A —is the width of the Front and Back pieces. For large sizes add 6 in / 15 cm to the girth measurement, then divided the total by two. For smaller sizes it would be the girth measurement plus about 4 or 5 in / 10-12.5 cm, divided by two.

The shoulders can be left coming straight out from the neck. However, angling the shoulders down slightly, at about 15 degrees, gives a better fit. If you choose to leave them straight, the Front and Back could be cut as one piece, attached at the shoulders like a narrow poncho.

B —is the length of the Front and Back pieces. Measure from one side of base of the neck down the front of the body as long as you want the shirt to be —about mid-thigh is a good length.

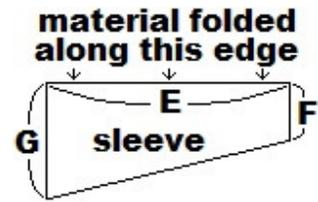
C —is the width of the neck opening. Measure straight across the back of the neck.

D —is the length of the slit at the front of the neck. This will be determined later after the shoulder seams have been sewn together. Usually it will be about 6 in / 15 cm long. Be sure to cut this slit along the center-line of *only the front piece*, to make the neck opening large enough to fit the head through comfortably.



Sleeves

The pattern for the sleeves is made on a piece of paper folded in two across the top. After the pattern is made, it is opened up and placed on the blanket. Make two sleeves, one for each arm. Measure from the center of the back of the neck, down and across the shoulder, then on down the arm to the knuckles, or even almost to the finger tips if you want extra long sleeves, which are nice when it is cold.



E — is the length of the Sleeve piece. From the measurement taken in the paragraph above, subtract one half of 'A,' to leave the measurement for 'E.'

F —is the cuff measurement. Measure around the closed fist, and divide by two for the cuff measurement.

G —Double the 'F' measurement for the width of the sleeve at the point where it attaches to the body.

Arm-pit Gussets

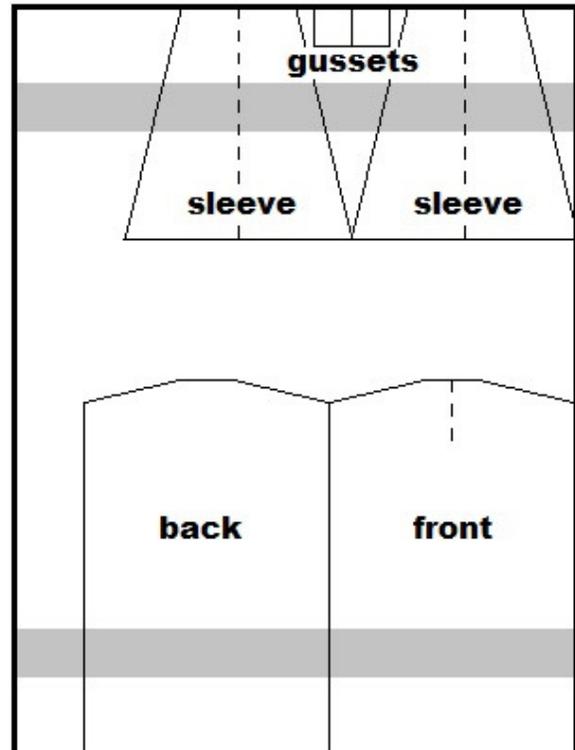
Cut two 4 in / 10 cm squares for the arm pit Gussets.

Collar (optional)

After the front and back pieces have been sewn together, and the edges of the neck opening have been rounded, (if desired), measure *around* the neck opening for the length of the collar. Make the collar as wide as you want it, probably about 2 to 4 in / 5 to 10 cm, adding ½ in / 1 cm to the width for seam allowance. Cut the Collar from the remaining piece(s) of blanket material.

Hood (optional)

Measure around the head at the point where a head-band would go for the length of the hood. For the width of the hood, measure from the collar bone, up over the head, and down to the collar bone on the opposite side of the neck, then divide this measurement by two, and add 1 in / 2.5 cm for seam allowances. Cut the Hood from the remaining piece(s) of blanket material.

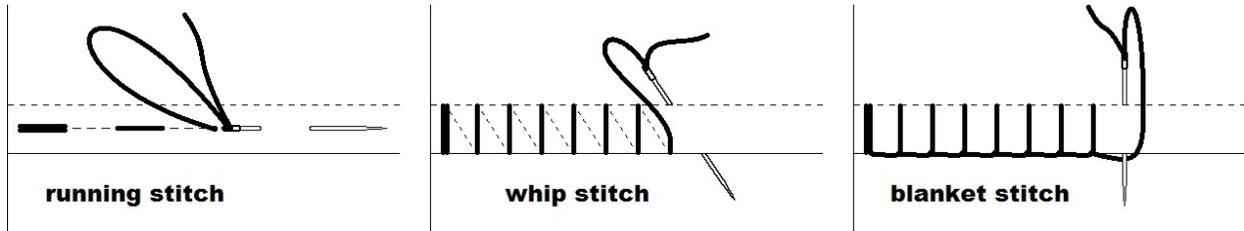


Hand-Warmer Pocket (optional)

From the remaining piece(s) of blanket material, cut a rectangle for the Hand Warmer Pocket. A good size is about 10 to 12 in / 25 to 30 cm wide, by 7 to 9 in / 18 to 23 cm deep. But you can make it as wide or as deep as you want.

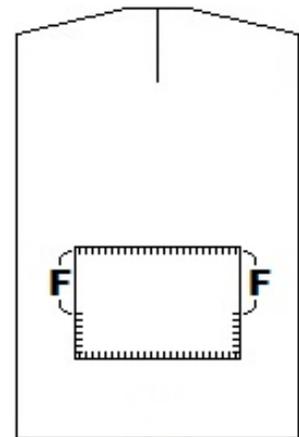
SEWING

This blanket shirt can be sewn on a sewing machine. But, hand stitching, (even if it is done over the top of the machine sewing), in a contrasting color of yarn gives a very nice look. The 'running stitch' would go the fastest, and it would work, but either the 'whip stitch' or 'blanket stitch' would probably look better. Begin stitching by overlapping the pieces to be sewn, and stitch through the first two 'holes' a couple times, leaving 1½ to 2 in / 3 to 5 cm of yarn hanging out. When you get to the end of the seam, go through the last couple of holes a couple times again. Then tuck the ends of the yarn down in between the two layers of blanket material.



1. Hand-Warmer Pocket

If you are planning to have a hand-warmer pocket, it is best to sew it on to the Front piece before doing anything else. It could also be done after the Front and Back pieces are sewn together and the neck opening refined. Center the pocket on the front of the Front piece. Allow openings for the hands on the upper part of each side of the pocket equivalent to the 'F' measurement. Make these openings just above the waistline. Pin the pocket in place. Sew all the way across the top of the pocket. Then, starting at the lower part of the opening on one side, sew down to the corner, across the bottom, and back up to the lower edge of the opening on the other side.

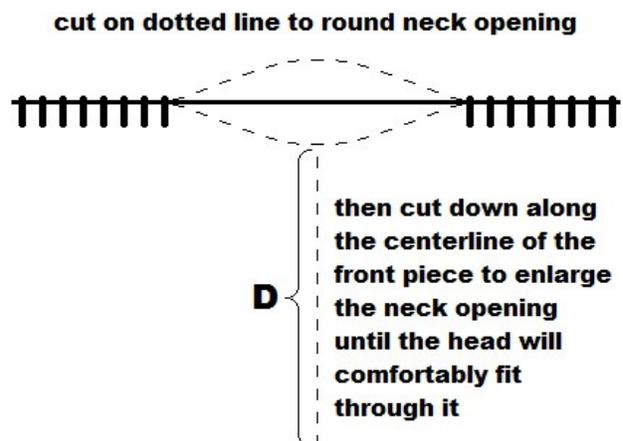


2. Sew the Front to Back

Overlap the Front and Back pieces together at the shoulders about ½ in / 1 cm. Be sure the overlapping, (the Back over the Front, or the Front over the Back), is the same on both sides of the neck. Pin these seams together, then sew the Front and Back pieces together at the shoulders.

3. Refining the Neck Opening

The neck opening *can* be left straight, but rounding it will give a better fit. If you choose to round it, cut a rounded arc on both the Front and the Back that is about ¾ to 1 in / 2 to 2.5 cm wide at the center. After rounding the neck opening, cut down along the centerline of *only* the



Front piece to enlarge the neck slit 'D.' Cut the slit long enough so that the head will comfortably fit through the neck opening. After you have finished sewing the shirt, a loop of material or cordage can be sewn on to one side, and a button on the other, to close off the slit to keep in more warmth.

4. Collar or Hood

Center the lower edge of the Collar, or Hood, on the center of the back of the neck. The Collar should overlap on the inside of the Front and Back pieces, about $\frac{1}{2}$ in / 1 cm whereas the Hood should overlap to the outside of the Front and Back pieces about $\frac{1}{2}$ in / 1 cm. Pin the Collar or Hood in place. The Hood may be longer, and therefore stick out a bit past the front 'corners' of the neck opening, but this will probably be alright and can be trimmed later if necessary. Then sew the lower edge of the Collar or Hood around the neck opening. To sew the top of the Hood, first fold it in half front to back, then overlap one side over the other about $\frac{1}{2}$ in / 1 cm, and sew along the top of the Hood.

5. Sew the Sleeves to the Body

Center the larger end of one of the Sleeve pieces on the shoulder seam on one side of the Front/Back piece. Overlap the Sleeve to the inside of the body about $\frac{1}{2}$ in / 1 cm. Pin the Sleeve to the Front and Back, then sew the Sleeves to the Front and Back pieces. Sew the other sleeve on the other side of the body the same way.

6. Sew Up the Sides

Put the shirt 'on,' and with some pins, mark where the Front and Back pieces come to at, or just below, the hips. Then take the shirt 'off,' and lay it out flat to check to see that the pins are all the same distance from the bottom edge of the shirt—they probably won't be, so average them out, and mark this point on both sides of the body. Then overlap the underside of both Sleeves about $\frac{1}{2}$ in / 1 cm, and pin. Pin an armpit Gusset in each armpit, overlapping the Gussets' edges with both the Sleeve and the body the same $\frac{1}{2}$ in / 1 cm. Then overlap the Front and Back pieces $\frac{1}{2}$ in / 1 cm from the armpit down to the hip mark, and pin. Be sure the overlapping, (Front over Back, or Back over Front), is the same on both sides for both Sleeves and body. Starting at one cuff, sew along the bottom of the Sleeve, around one side of the Gusset at the arm pit, and on down the Front and Back pieces to the hip. Then go back and sew around the other side of the arm pit Gusset. Finally, sew the other side of the shirt the same way.