



Front



Back

Twiddlemuffs

— by Kathy Overholt

Twiddlemuffs are a therapeutic tool used with Alzheimer and dementia patients. These muffs are made with scrap yarn and feature various attached objects which provide stimulation and yet have a quieting effect on restless minds and fingers. I was introduced to this concept at a Family Council meeting at my mother's Long Term Care facility. The Recreation Director for the home, had this to say about them:

As a Long Term Care Home, we recently adapted a new technique to enhance our Multi-Sensory Stimulation Programming through the use of Twiddle Muffs. The concept of twiddle muffs is to have a safe, washable, multi texture item that Residents can sit with to hopefully bring peace and distraction from other stimulants. Our Family Council presented this new concept to our Home last Fall. Our Residents have responded very positively. Some of the behaviours that we have targeted with the goal to diminish are: repetitive verbal calling out, standing up out of wheelchairs, fidgeting, picking at items or skin, etc. In particular, our Home has introduced this new concept to our Residents with Dementia as well as those that fidget and need a calming way for distraction. Twiddle muffs have brought a new direction for our sensory stimulation programs and help minimize responsive, distracting behaviors in our Residents.

I passed the above pictured twiddlemuff on to the Behavioural Supports Ontario organization and they have added several variations to use with their own patient encounters.

Those of you who knit may wish to try creating one or many. The Hamilton Alzheimer's Society would welcome them to pass on to their clients.



Twiddlemuff Knitting Instructions

Materials

- Wool/Yarn. This muff pattern is perfect for using up left over and odd balls of yarn. A variety of textures works really well.
- Beads, zips, ribbons. Anything that can be twiddled with but will not break.
- 8mm circular or 6.5 mm straight needles

Directions

- **Cuff:** Cast on 45 stitches using 2 strands of double knitting wool or 1 strand of chunky wool. One plain colour works best. Work in stocking stitch - knit a row, purl a row - for 11 inches (28 cm).
- **Body:** Continue with stocking stitch using up oddments of various textures of yarn such as mohair, chunky, ribbon etc. until work measures 23 inches (58 cm). Two strands of double knit for two rows each gives a lovely assortment of colour. Cast off.

Finishing

- If working with straight needles, lightly iron the long strip then neatly join the sides together using edge to edge stitch, with the knit side facing out
- Turn inside out and push the one-colour cuff up inside the muff body
- Sew the two ends together, again using a neat edge to edge stitch

Decoration

Now decorate the muff, inside and out, with ribbons, beads, flowers, zips, loops, pompoms, buttons etc. Knit a separate pocket for a favourite photo or hanky. Be creative, but make sure each items is securely attached.