

A Winter Glove Here, Fifteen Pair There

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Do you have too many gloves? More specifically: winter gloves?

Brrr...with me.

When autumn weather arrives and isn't going to leave, I find my winter gloves. There's a pile of them. My winter wardrobe lies strewn in what used to be my daughter's bedroom upstairs. Extra blankets, electric blankets, warm hats, snow pants, snow boots, scarves, long underwear, hefty coats, and my many, many, gloves. These cold weather items migrate to the main floor's back room. The rear door is there...and through it a winter smorgasbord.

I live in Eastern Washington – by choice – though now I question remaining here. But after 40 winters I'm tired of even pondering the four months of chilly, chillier, more-chillier, (officially) cold, too cold, and unnecessary damn freezing temperatures. No, I don't do any winter sports. Such as snowmobiling, skiing, ice skating, ice fishing, hunting, sledding, igloo construction competitions or snowbound snowshoe weaving.

I do necessary activities such as: shoveling snow, icicle management, spreading salt and gravel, digging out, snow blowing, cussing while scraping frost off the car windows (again), warming up parked cars (again), chipping ice dams while cussing, driving on black ice cussing, cussing while looking out of the windows of my house, turning up the thermostat while cussing, watching the latest weather report (again and again, and just one more time), and of course, wearing the proper gloves.

Did I tell you that I grew up in sunny Southern California? Nev'r a snowflake nor icicle in my childhood. Yes, our front yard had real palm trees.

THIS NEXT SECTION IS WHERE I GET VERY PERSONAL

Now before you point your finger in cold judgment (I just couldn't pass that up) and call me a "winter wimp" READ THE FOLLOWING. Try to sincerely understand my deeply rooted problem. *Confession time.* I have poor blood circulation—*no, it's worse than yours!* I recently had a blood test, and if you're curious, they did find blood!

It seems that my internal furnace of 64 years, just won't work right. As Edgar Allen Poe lamented, "Nevermore..." In the years behind me I've needed to wear socks to bed. My feet are not happy even during the summer months. (Don't ask about my vast winter sock collection! That's a separate rant.) My

hands are typically cold—I know, I know—cold hands, *cold heart!* Right. My hands get painfully numb abnormally quick and they're hard to warm back up. When my gloved fingers nearly turn into icicles I put on another pair of gloves. It's no fun. *It sucks.* (Don't ask me about the tip of my nose. That's yet another rant.)

In my glove emporium there is one pair of gloves, only one, which I count on to keep my digits warm in below freezing temps for more than 30 minutes. That pair is bulky and long-sleeved and is always close by, just in case. No, I don't keep them under my pillow at night—not a bad idea now that I think of it.

When the weather gets challenging, autumn turns unfriendly and those pretty, colorful leaves have blown away. You'll find me sorting a large basket full of said gloves. I know that I won't wear all 15 pairs (including those 3 gloves without partners) in the next four months. I figure that I don't know just when I'll need this or that pair for the differing cold weather conditions.

You asked, "But, Mark, what about the near useless partner-free gloves?" Yes, it is folly to keep them in hopes of a better outcome – which after these years will *never* be. The only solution is for me to dispose of them on a bristling hot summer day next year. Then, no practical nor emotional attachment would register as I toss them in the gaping maw of the mindless garbage can. (I must remind myself to do this come July.)

This winter season, I paired the gloves into a respectable pile while questioning the probability of once again, ever using ALL of my cold temp buddies. Two piles manifested. #1. Really, really cold. #2. Not as cold as #1.

I photographed this gathering of 155 fingers and thumbs. Refer to photo provided.

You ask, I ever sought counseling, been accosted by mental health professionals or visited a Gloves Anonymous support group. NO. And, I am not a glove-a-holic. NO I'M NOT. Also, I'm not promoting glove porn – *honestly where has your mind been?* Yes, I have looked at the Dictionary's definitions of 'accumulating vs hoarding' – I passed. Did I



hear one of you say "Overkill, oh, c'mon!" Plus, I am not planning, though tempted, to start a GoFundMe site in order to expand and *round out* my...well, y'know what. Finally, yes, I've researched a double-hand transplant operation. It costs a bundle!!!

Now, it is true that somewhere in the Gospels According to Old Man Winter, Jesus (while shivering) proclaimed, "You who have two pairs of mittens, give to him who has none." And I intend on doing so.....I do.....I really do, someday.

BTW the inspiration for the glove portrait was not the Christmas tree. No, it was quite obviously the 1969 Pink Floyd double-album cover of "Ummagumma."

