

OUTFIT!

How d' Ye FCF members and Royal Rangers! I hope this article finds you doing well, and well doing.

I want to discuss with you an outfit tip that can be a low-cost method of looking more like a woodsman, hunter, or colonial frontiersman with only adding minimal cost, and with an easy construction. For those who are new or newer, or just want to add another item and look to your kit, this item will be a good resource for you. It will allow the young to make something they can adjust a little as they grow, and repair or adjust the size themselves. Plus the young and older alike to make something that will cover jeans, or whatever they do not have to wear on their legs.

LEGGINGS

First let us discuss what historical leggings were;

Leggings are the answer to a problem colonial men and frontiersman were noticing when wearing knee britches, and NOT having their stockings or legs protected. When one is walking through the woods with little to nothing to protect the legs, it's clear an answer was needed. In something they called "aping the savages", in other words "copying the Indians" the colonial folks on the frontier started wearing leather, wool, and cloth leggings to protect their legs. And that is just what they are. A tube of the three above mentioned material that fit tightly around ones legs, covering from the ankle to the upper-mid thigh.

Second, let's discuss the modern uses of leggings.

In my quest to become as PC as possible, I do what my persona would have done, because he did it. This mindset allows me to hone in on a particular item, and copy what they would have had 230 plus years ago, even if I don't know the reason for something. However for leggings, there are as many modern uses as there were historical. I hunt and scout in my 18th century kit, as I use my kit as closely as my persona would have (in the 18th century) as I can. The added protection from briars and ground brush, the added warmth in the winter, as well as something thick enough to provide a "working" protection to my legs is needed in my modern world too.

When someone finally gets through the Trail of the Grizzly, then the Frontier Adventure, they are faced with a large mountain of acquiring enough things to camp amongst fellow FCF brothers, and "look the part". First let me say, please come to an FCF event with whatever you do or do-not have, and camp with us. An FCF event is MUCH MORE than dressing up, and looking the part! However, when you find yourself starting to look for ways to look and feel more "frontier like", consider this simple option to help your outfit in a way that is period correct (PC), and still cheap, you will find making leggings a welcome instruction.

Let's be practical. Starting out, you can not acquire enough kit to look the part by your next FCF outing. So lets (for this article's sake) say you are only one year into your new FCF life. You have purchased a few things along the way, most likely a throwing knife and hawk, hopefully a sheath for each, a shirt, and maybe some moccasins. Some other odds and ends beyond there, but you still are having trouble completing the look you want. Pants are perhaps one of the hardest areas to conclude what to do, especially if you're 13 and growing like a weed! Painters pants has long been a method of obtaining frontier clothes, and can get you started. Leggings however, can cover most if not all of your modern clothes such as painter's pants, jeans, and even shorts in the summer time. With the addition of a long shirt which comes down to around knee length (also PC), leggings can cover everything below the waist the shirt is not.

Example; lad XYZ is 13 years old. He has been in FCF 6 months. He can have a shirt made for him, make a pair of shoe packs from instructions on the ILRR website (cost of the leather), make a kerchief from canvas to wear around his head or neck, and make leggings out of canvas. Adding his already acquired hawk and knife-with belt, and he is in outfit, looking the part already from head to toe.

Pretty simple, huh?

Cost; One thing that comes along with acquiring kit is cost. I can assure you the cost of making leggings can be kept under \$10, and \$50-\$70 on the higher end (not including brain tanned leather).

Under cost we will discuss materials needed.

- 1) Material; the most simple thing you could make leggings out of is common cotton canvas, purchased from any fabric store. Cotton canvas is not PC, as cotton was not as readily available as it is now, but it was around. Canvas in the 18th century would be made of other material like linen. But, canvas will be fine. You may need (depending on the size of your legs) 1-1/2 yards, which will cost right at \$10. Canvas is durable and fairly tough, so it will protect your legs. You can dye the canvas a darker color, so as to not stand out in the woods.
- 2) Material #2; leather. This for this teaching will be the most expensive material. Leather should be of a vegetable tanned process, which will make it soft and pliable, but yet still be able to withstand the abuse and wear in the woods and camping life. But any actual leather you can get will do. Just keep the soft side out.
- 3) Material #3; wool. An Italian military (100% wool) blanket can be bought for around \$30, and made into leggings for cooler or cold camps. One blanket will be plenty for 3 or 4 pairs of leggings, again depending on the

size of their legs, so you can either make smaller projects with the rest of the blanket, or purchase and split the cost of a blanket with a few other FCF pals.

- 4) Material #4; thicker cotton. This material I am not sure what it would cost, but should be around \$10 as well. However, this material will not lend itself to very much wear, and will wear through much easier than the materials mentioned above. Also it will not provide protection from anything, other than keeping some dirt off your legs.

My recommendation to someone wanting to make leggings for as little money as possible is to make them from canvas.

Instructions.

First you need the measurement of the length. You want the leggings to come down over your moccasins to keep any rocks or dirt from getting to your feet. Measure from the bottom of your feet to about 2" above half way up your thigh. If they are too long, you can always trim them down when finished.

Next you need to decide what you're wearing under your leggings. If you will be wearing pants under them, then wear pants while you're measuring.

Next, start at the top, and measure around your thigh at the highest point (2" above the thigh half way point). This will be the biggest measurement. Add 6" for side flaps. Historically the side flaps were left on and were somewhere around 2 to 3 finger widths wide. We will say 3" for ease of clarification. Write each measurement down in order.

Next take another measurement about 4" below the top, adding 6" to each measurement for the outer flap. Do this all the way down about every 4" to the largest part of your calf muscle. Reason is you have to be able to get your feet through the entire tube, so your calf muscle measurement is about as small as the tube will get. At the calf measurement and lower, will all be about the same width to the bottom.

Next is to take the measurements and apply them to your material. First divide each measurement in half.

Fold your material in half length wise, running down your leg. Then from the fold, measure out the half measurement and make a mark. Continue down the 4" and make another line. Continue down the entire length of the material until you get to the bottom.

Next you will need to mark your cut line. Be careful not to confuse your cut line with your sew line! Cut out your material.

Now you're sewing. Sew a running stitch down the legging, then back up on opposing stitches to double stitch for strength. When done, your most of the way through the process. All that's left is to attach a tie of some sort to the outer portion of the legging, that will tie to your belt loop, or a leather cord around your waist. This tie can be made of a 1/2" strip of canvas, or leather if you have it. It helps hold up the upper half of your leggings.

The only other thing needed to wear leggings is some sort of garter tie or belt. I chose to wear garter belts, which look exactly like miniature belts, and secure around my leg just above the largest point of my calf muscle. You can also just make ties out of 3/4" wide canvas, and tie them around your leg. This is what holds up most of the legging, and keeps it secure on your leg.

Now your set and you can wear your leggings over blue jeans, or painter's pants, or whatever you decide. And as noted, with the addition of a long shirt, will help hide blue jeans, or shorts, or whatever. A very versatile garment for the legs, and will make you look more PC.

I hope this helps, and will move you further into an FCF outfit.

Happy sewing, and until next time!

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