

Free Pattern of the Month May 2004

Mom's Socks



These socks had their beginning last Christmas when my Mom asked for a pair of socks, in “subdued colors” to keep her feet warm. She wanted to be able to wear them with tennis shoes and they had to be long enough to “cuff.” This is what I came up with. These socks feature a ribbed leg, heel worked in “heel stitch” for snugness and a stockinette foot.

Yarn: Socka Color in shade 9115, one 205 meter skein per sock. This yarn is 75% wool/25% polyamide and is machine washable. It's sock weight and wears very well.

Gauge: 7 stitches per inch with a US #1 needle, or needle size to give **you** the proper gauge.

These socks will fit a woman's medium foot. Buy an extra ball of yarn if you have larger-than-average-feet, like I do.

These instructions assume that you are familiar with DPN needles and that you know how to knit and purl. I place the stitches on four needles and knit with the fifth.

Leg:

Cast-on 73 stitches over 2 needles to keep the top of the cuff nice and loose. Start the first row of ribbing: Knit 2, Purl 2 until there are 22 stitches on DPN needle 1. Start the 2nd needle Purl 2, Knit 2 until there are 16 stitches on the second DPN needle. Start the third needle Purl 2, Knit 2 until there are 20 stitches on the needle. Start the 4th needle Purl 2, Knit 2 until there are 16 stitches on the needle. There will still be one stitch left on the 5th needle. Put this last stitch on the beginning of the 1st needle so that when you join in the round you will Knit 2 together for the first stitch. If you are familiar with DPNs you will be able to visualize this when you get there.

Join in the round, being careful not to twist. I like the number of stitches on the needles to be different on the ribbing of this sock because the beginning of each needle starts with a Purl stitch. Having a Purl stitch at the beginning seems to help eliminate the "ladders" that can form where the needles come together. (So you will have 20 stitches on needle 1, 16 on needle 2, 20 on needle 3, and 16 on needle 4)

Work in Knit 2, Purl 2 ribbing for 8" or whatever length you like the leg of your sock, or until you want to pull your hair out for the sheer boredom of it. You can switch to stockinette stitch after 30 or so rounds of ribbing if you prefer.

Rearrange the stitches on the needles so that there are 18 stitches on each needle.

Heel:

In order to get to the heel, we have to knit a flap. I like to use a "heel stitch" for the heel flap because it makes a firmer fabric, and it pulls in, making the heel flap narrower. Most of the socks that Mom wears are baggy in the heel, so working the flap in "heel stitch" eliminated this problem. You can, of course, work stockinette stitch for the same number of rows if you don't have this issue.

The heel flap is knit on half of the foot stitches - 36.

To knit the heel stitch –

Row one - * Slip 1, Knit 1 * repeating from * to * across - 36 stitches.

Row 2 - Slip the first stitch and Purl all the way back - 36 stitches.

By slipping the first stitch of each row, you will have a series of loops on either side of the heel flap, which makes it easier to pick up stitches for the gusset.

Repeat these two rows 16 times, or about 2.5 - 3". It will depend on how deep you need your heel flap. Measure from your anklebone to the floor to get a rough idea. The only sure way to know is to knit a sock and try it on.

This heel is called the Band Heel. You will be working with the stitches of the heel flap - 36 stitches.

It goes like this –

Row one - Slip the first stitch, Knit 26, Knit 2 together, turn.

Row two - Slip the first stitch, Purl 18, Purl 2 together, turn.

Row three - Slip the first stitch, Knit 18, Knit 2 together, turn.

Repeat rows two and three until there are 20 stitches left on the needle. You will not be knitting every stitch on each row - you will be creating short rows that will form a cup that will follow the shape of your heel.

End on a RS row.

With a crochet hook, pick up one stitch in each of the slipped stitches on the sides of the heel flap. The number may vary, and that's okay. It's always good to "fake it" and pick up a couple of extra stitches at the beginning and end of the heel flap - this will help eliminate any holes.

I picked up 22 stitches on the first side of the heel flap, knit across the stitches previously neglected on the third needle (the instep stitches), then picked up another 22 stitches on the other side of the heel flap, and knit across the heel stitches to the beginning.

Gusset decreases:

Knit one round even - this will even out the picked-up stitches and make the decreases easier to perform - picked-up stitches sometimes are tight and don't like to be knit together.

Put the stitches on four needles again: The picked-up stitches on the left side of the gusset on needle 1, the instep stitches on needle 2, the picked-up stitches on the right side of the gusset on needle 3, and the heel stitches on needle 4.

Next round:

Knit to the 3rd stitch from the end, Knit 2 together, Knit the last stitch on needle 1.

Knit the instep stitches even.

Knit 1, Knit 2 together, knit to the end of needle 3.

Knit even across needle 4 to the end.

Next round: Knit even.

Repeat these two rounds until you reach 72 stitches, alternating a decrease round with an even round. This works for most feet. If you have a narrow heel or foot, you may need to do two decrease rounds, followed by one even round until you reach the number of stitches

you need. Knitter's choice. If your socks are regularly loose around the ankle, you may want to try this way; if not, consider yourself lucky and continue on to the foot.

Rearrange the needles so that there are an equal number of stitches on each one (18.)

After the gusset decreases are done, it's time for the foot. This is just rounds of stockinette stitch, around, and around. It helps to make a mark on a scrap of paper or use a row counter if you are as anal as I am about making the socks identical. That way you only have to measure one sock, and the second becomes very meditative - just stockinette stitch and marks on the paper.

Mom has short toes and a blocky foot, so I stopped knitting when the foot measured about 1 ¼" less than the length of her foot (measured from the back of the heel turn to the stitches on the needles.) Make sure that you have the same number of stitches on each needle (18) and that you work the toe decreases so that the toe is flat in relation to the heel. It's no fun ripping out a toe after you discover that you knit it sideways to the heel. Ask me how I know...

Toe decreases:

Knit until 3 stitches from the end of needle 1, Knit 2 together, Knit 1.
Knit 1, Knit 2 together, Knit to the end of needle 2.
Knit until 3 stitches from the end of needle 3, Knit 2 together, Knit 1.
Knit 1, Knit 2 together, Knit to the end of needle 4.

Next round - Knit even around.

Repeat these two rounds 5 times – 48 stitches remain.

Knit across needle 1. Put the stitches from needle 1 and 4 onto one needle, and the stitches from needles 2 and 3 onto another needle. Graft the two together, run in all the loose ends on the inside of the sock, and you're done!

There are many sites on the web for the Kitchner stitch, and every good knitting reference has instruction and pictures, so I won't include them here. Feel free to work a 3-needle bind off if you prefer – the ridge won't bother your toes and it's quick and easy.

Put the sock on and see if it fits. If it's a little off, that's okay - make the appropriate changes on the second one.

Put your foot up on a coffee table or low stool, and admire your work. While the heady feeling of making your own sock is still with you - and before you get up to do anything else (some arcane superstition, but I still do this <G>) cast-on for the second sock.

Send me a picture to add to my Customer Gallery page.

Enjoy!

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Karma is a circular thing – stealing is wrong.

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Any questions? E-mail me.

