

Nicole's Sock Recipe

There are many ways and many types of supplies for knitting socks. What is described here is my personal favorite way of knitting socks, my sock recipe. I like knitting my socks cuff down, using 9" inch circular needles for most of the sock and double pointed needles for the heel and toes. In this sock recipe, I include directions for a heel flap and gusset.

Supplies

My favorite way to knit a sock is using both 9" circular needles and double point needles. I like to use the 9" circular needles for the cuff, leg, and foot of the sock. And, I like to use the double pointed needles for the heel and the toe of the sock. I list the supplies that you need next with some options of where you can purchase these supplies from.

Sock yarn (fingering weight)—80% merino 20% nylon or 75% merino 25% nylon recommended.

- Any sock yarn will do! However, I think it's really fun to get a sock set with a coordinating mini skein for contrasting toes and heels.

9" circular needles—size 0 if loose knitter, size 1 if regular tension, size 2 if a tight knitter

- Personally, I have really been enjoying the [ChiaoGoo 9" inch circulars](#); but, I also use the [9" Zings](#), too.

Double point needles—size 0, 1, or 2 (in [ChiaoGoo](#) or [Knitter Pride](#))

Knitting Abbreviations

K = knit

P = purl

CO = cast on

BO = bind off

Ktbl1 = knit 1 stitch through the back loop

PU = pick up

Part 0: Introduction to Sock Anatomy

One way to knit a sock is with a “cuff-down” approach (this is my favorite way of knitting socks). But, we can also knit socks toe up! After deciding cuff-down or toe-up, one way we decide the method of sock knitting is *with needle choice*. The method of sock knitting ranges from so many different ways: from using only double pointed needles, one longer length circular needle, two medium length circular needles, one small circular needle, or a combination of these. But, wait: you can also insert a variety of different heel methods amongst other variations.

A little sock math...

number of different sock constructions (cuff down or toe up) x number of different methods with needles (e.g., magic loop, DPNs) x number of heels (e.g., cut in, heel flap) = number of possibilities for different ways to knit a sock.

2 different sock construction techniques (i.e., cuff-down, toe-up) x 6 ways of choosing your needles x at least 5 different heels (extremely conservative estimate) = 60 combinations of different ways to approach sock knitting!

But, really it's even more than that because some people like to knit socks two at time or one at a time. So, considering that, this could easily become **60 x 2 = 120 different ways of knitting socks**. And, there are specialized types of heels; for example, there is more than one way to do a heel, flap, and gusset. All that to say, the sock math reveals everyone's sock recipe might be just a little different and a little the same and that's ok.

	Sock construction	
Methods with needles	Cuff-down	Toe-up
Double-pointed needles	Heel-flap and gusset Cut in heel ... and more	Short-row heel Cut in heel ... and more
Magic loop with a 32" or 40" circular needle	Heel-flap and gusset Cut in heel ... and more	Short-row heel Cut in heel ... and more
One 9" inch needle	Heel-flap and gusset Cut in heel ... and more	Short-row heel Cut in heel ... and more
Two circular needles (12" or 16")	Heel-flap and gusset Cut in heel ... and more	Short-row heel Cut in heel ... and more
Hiya hiya flyers/Addi flexi flips	Heel-flap and gusset Cut in heel ... and more	Short-row heel Cut in heel
Combination of methods	Heel-flap and gusset Cut in heel ... and more	Short-row heel Cut in heel ... and more

So, that's ridiculous and overwhelming if you are new to knitting socks. What I will present in this pattern is my favorite way, highlighted in the table above in yellow. But, obviously, this is one of many different ways and not "the right way," but a way that I like.

Before you get started

Measure the circumference of your leg where your sock will likely be. Determining the size of your sock (extra-small, small, medium, large) is based on the *circumference* of your leg (6-7" around, 7-8" around, 8-9" around, 9-10" around).

The length of your feet will help you determine how long you will need the foot of your sock. *With knitted patterns, size is not related to your shoe size, but rather the size around your foot/leg or circumference of your foot.*

- What size sock should I knit? Measure ankle/leg and the width of the widest part of your foot.
- How long are each of your feet heel to toe? Measure the length of your feet.
- How tall do you think you want your socks to be? Consider measuring socks that you like.

Part I: Cuff

(adult extra small, adult small size, adult medium size, adult size large)

CO (56, 60, 64, 68) using your contrasting color yarn.

When you CO join in the round on the 9" inch circular needle.

Mostly importantly, you do not want a tight CO. I suggest using either the long-tail cast on or the German twisted cast on. Links for tutorials for both are below:

Tutorial for long-tail cast on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sp8pUd5M0DM&list=PL1AVMWiYaMyIOE5CMgtjJZPXGPYrnuwzn&index=7>

Tutorial for German twisted cast on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcwmCulyIII>.

Start ribbing for cuff.

Cuff option 1: K2, P2 around

Knit at least 15 rows of ribbing.

Cuff option 2: Ktbl1, P1 around

Video for ktbl: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1KiHViK160>

Knit at least 15 rows of ribbing.

Figure 1 shows what K2, P2 and 15 rows of knitting look like for the first step.



Figure 1. This picture illustrates option 1 for the cuff after 15 rows of ribbing on a 9" circular needle.

Part II: Leg of sock

This is a relaxing part of sock knitting. Switch to the main color of your sock yarn and knit around and around until you want to start your heel (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. This picture illustrates what switching to the main color of yarn will look like after you have used a contrasting color on your cuff.

Part III: Heel

Constructing this heel comes in three parts: (1) a heel flap, (2) a heel turn, and (3) a gusset.

1 Heel flap

Cut your main color yarn and switch to your contrasting color yarn.

Set-up:

Place (28, 30, 32, 34) stitches on one of your double point needles (see Figure 3). Leave the other (28, 30, 32, 34) stitches on your 9" needles. You will be knitting the heel flap flat and not in the round now.



Figure 3. This picture shows half of the stitches placed on a double pointed needle. This is the beginning set up for starting your heel flap.

Set-up Row 1 (RS): Knit across with the contrast yarn. You are knitting (28, 30, 32, 34) stitches and leaving the others on your 9" circular needle.

Set-up Row 2 (WS): S1, purl across. When you slip you stitch, do it purl-wise.

The heel flap (see Figure 4):

Row 1 (RS): *S1, K1* across

Row 2 (WS): S1, P all other stitches

Repeat these two rows (14, 15, 16, 17) times, or for (28, 30, 32, 34) total rows.

End on a wrong side row. This means that the last row you knit was a purl row and your next row should be a right-side row.



Figure 4. This is what the heel flap will look like as you knit it. It is actually a flap which is how it gets the name “heel flap.”

2 Heel turn

Continue using your double points and working flat with your double pointed needles.

Row 1 (RS): K (19, 20, 21, 22), SSK, turn work

Row 2 (WS): S1, P (10, 10, 10, 10), P2tog, turn work

Row 3 (RS): S1, K (10, 10, 10, 10), SSK.

Row 4 (WS): S1, P (10, 10, 10, 10), P2tog.

Repeat Rows 3 and 4 in this way and continue with “closing the gap” until you reach a point where the gaps/SSKs/P2tog are at the edges. When you are finished with the heel flap you will have (12, 12, 12, 12) heel stitches remaining.

Advice about Rows 3 and 4: For your SSK and P2tog, you will be using one stitch that is across the gap and one stitch that is before the gap. Doing an SSK and P2tog in this way will “close” the gap nicely for your heel turn.

These two pictures below show what the turn does; the heel turn creates a little extra pucker and turn so that your sock can transition from the leg to the foot.



Figure 5. The images in (a) and (b) are different views of the heel turn.

Figure 6 shows an inside view of the heel flap and the heel turn. The slip stitches on the flap created a thicker fabric that will endure wear. The slipping of the first stitches on each row provide nice Vs that facilitates picking up for the gusset.



Figure 6. Another view of the heel turn.

3 Gusset

For the gusset, transition to working in the round with your double pointed needles. Cut your contrasting color and switch to your main color again.

Set up row:

PU (16, 17, 18, 19) stitches on the edge of your heel flap. These stitch counts include picking up each V and then one stitch between the flap and instep to help close the gap.

Continue knitting across the sock.

PU (16, 17, 18, 19) stitches of the other edge of the heel flap.

Then knit the heel turn stitches.

Place a stitch marker in the middle of the heel stitches to marker the new beginning of round (see Figure 7).

Advice for using the double pointed needles on the gusset:

Double pointed needle 1: I like this need to be across the heel flap/turn.

Double pointed needle 2: I like this to be one side of the sock, where you will be doing the gusset decreases.

Double pointed needle 3: I like this to be across the instep or the original part of the sock you where knitting.

Double pointed needle 4: I like this to be the other side of the sock, where you will be doing the gusset decreases.

Sometimes, I like to use three needles (instead of four). I split the heel flap stitches these stitches in half, with half of the heel stitches on double point needle 1, and the other half on double point needle 3, so that I am knitting my heel with only three double point needles on the sock.

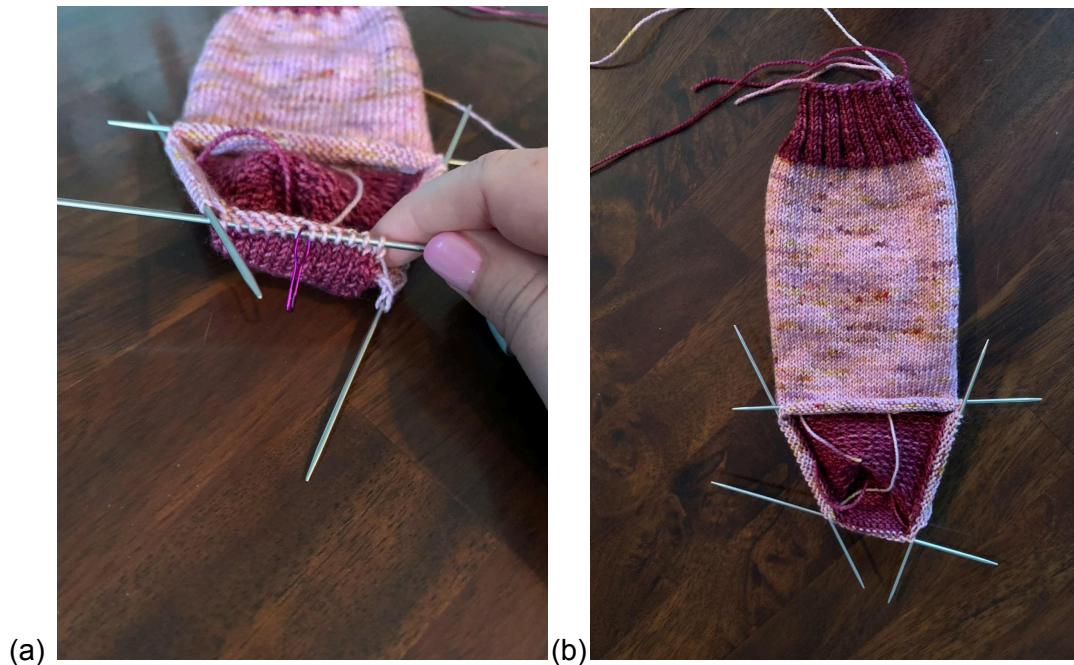


Figure 7. A picture of four double pointed needles for the gusset.

Advice about picking up stitches on the heel flap: Because you slipped stitches, you should have smooth Vs/knit stitches that can be readily picked up. When I pick up stitches, I pick up both Vs and knit. Also, I knit one stitch before the Vs start and one stitch after to help with any gaps. If there are gaps after you have picked up your stitches and continue your sock, don't worry! You can always sew them up later.

Gusset decreases

Row 1: K until you are 2 stitches away from the top of the sock of the instep, K2tog. Keep knitting across the top of the sock, then SSK, and K the remaining stitches.

Row 2: K

Repeat Rows 1 and 2 until you have (56, 60, 64, 68) stitches on your sock again.

Part IV: Foot

Switch back to 9" circular needles at this point (see Figure 8).

Knit until the bottom of the foot (back of heel to needle) measures 2" less than the length of your foot. For example, my foot is 9½ inches and I knit until the foot measures 7½ inches.



Figure 8. This picture shows switching back to the circular needle.

Part V: Toe

For the toe, we are going to switch from our 9" inch circular needles to using the double point needles.

Set up row:

K (14, 15, 16, 17) from your BOR marker (which should be centered at the heel) on your 9" circular needles.

Place the next (28, 30, 32, 34) stitches on a double point needle by using the double point needle to knit.

Then, K the next (28, 30, 32, 34) with a different double point needle.

Half of the stitches are on one double point needle (the top of the toe) and the other half of the stitches are on a second double point needle (the bottom of the toe). Figure 9 shows the two double pointed needles set up on the toe.

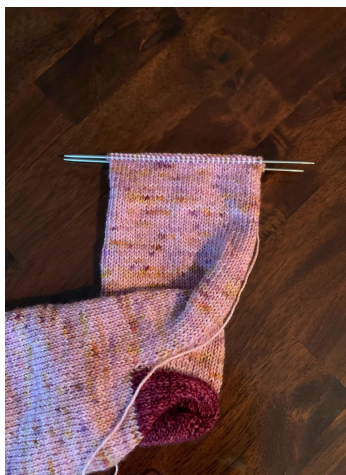


Figure 9. Switch to two double pointed needles for knitting the toe.

Toe decreases:

The BOR is moved. The BOR is switched to the beginning of the first double pointed needle.

Row 1: K2, SSK, knit until 4 stitches before the end of the double needle, K2tog, K2

Repeat for the second double point needle.

Row 2: K

Repeat rows 1 and 2 until (10, 12, 12, 14) stitches remain on each double point needle. Figure 10 illustrates what the toe decreases look like.



Figure 10. Toe decreases with double pointed needles.

Finishing the toe:

With the remaining stitches (10, 12, 12, 14) on each needle, graft the stitches together using the kitchener stitch (see Figure 11).



Figure 11. An image of the finished toe.

Weave in ends. Knit the second sock! Block both socks and wear.