

Opera Socks

by Tracy Seamster



This stitch pattern is really a mistake gone right. I picked out a likely looking image from my Japanese stitch dictionary, charted it, and then knit the socks with a band heel.

It wasn't until I was finished that I saw my stitch was nothing at all like the one in the book! I hadn't copied the entire chart! But I loved how this modification looks. Graceful yarn overs swirl up and down, like an opera singer practicing scales.

This pattern fits a US Woman's size 8. You can adjust the fit by knitting with either

larger or smaller needles if needed.

Ingredients:

100 grams (at least 374 yards) fingering weight yarn. The sample sock knit in Crystal Palace Yarns Panda Cotton Print, colorway Red Cinnamon. *Note:* if your skein(s) have more yardage, you can knit a longer leg; I stopped at 5 chart repeats, and ultimately used 328 yards from the sample yarn. US size 2.5 needles (40-inch circular needle for Magic Loop; or 2 circular needles; or set of DPNs) Tapestry needle for weaving in ends

Abbreviations:

K – knit

P – Purl

K2tog – Knit two stitches together

SSK – Slip 1 stitch knit-wise, slip 1 stitch purl-wise. Slip left-hand needle through both slipped stitches and knit them together through their backloops

YO – Yarn over

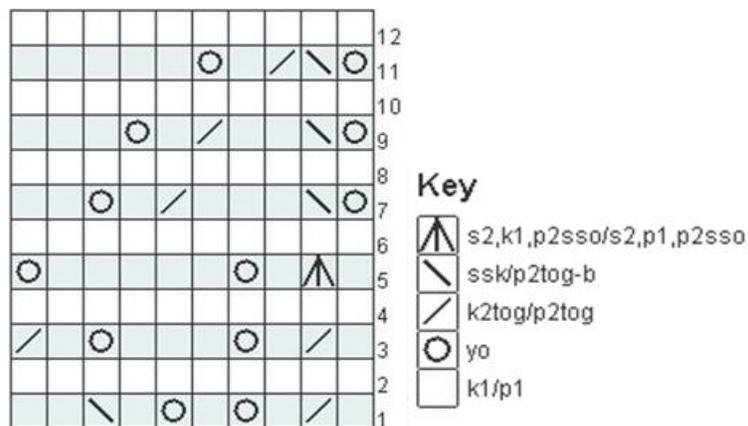
Sl – Slip 1 stitch

// – Slip 2 stitches, knit 1 stitch, pass the slipped stitches over the stitch just knit

Cuff:

Cast on 60 stitches using a stretchy cast on method (I use the knitted cast on), dividing the stitches in numbers divisible by 10, and prepare to knit in the round. There's no cuff per se, though you're welcome to customize your socks with an inch of ribbing if you'd like.

Opera Chart



Remember: These socks are knit in the round, so charts are read *right to left* on every round.

Leg:

Begin with round 1 of the Opera Chart and continue knitting these charts in the round for approximately 5 inches (7 inches, if your skein has 400 yards).

If you plan to use the band heel given in this pattern, read the next section before continuing. If you want to use a different heel, such as a standard heel flap, continue the leg chart to 5 (or 7) inches. It's *only* the band that should begin halfway through the final leg chart repeat; I explain why below.

Heel Flap:

Setting up the Heel:

The band heel is also known as the German heel, and creates a smooth heel as the decreases are done beneath the heel. I've used the band heel on a number of socks and have not had a problem with either feeling them or having them rub through. Just knit tightly (as you should any heel) and they're as sturdy as any other style.

The "flap" portion of the heel is shallow, and those who wear their handknit socks with closed shoes may prefer plain stitches against the back.

To do so, create a "visual flap" by knitting across half (30) the stitches and continue across the instep in pattern for another 6 rows (i.e., half of a pattern repeat) before starting the actual heel.

Make a note about which row you ended the instep with, in order to start at the right place again after the heel is turned.

Heel:

Heel will be worked on half (30) the number of cast-on stitches.

R1 (RS): S1, K to end

R2 (WS): S1, P to end

Repeat both rounds 1 and 2 a total of 7 times.

Heel Flap Shaping:

R1 (RS): Sl, K9, K2tog, K6, SSK, K10
R2 (and all even WS rounds): Sl, P to end
R3: Sl, K8, K2tog, K6, SSK, K9
R5: Sl, K7, K2tog, K6, SSK, K8
R7: Sl, K6, K2tog, K6, SSK, K7
R8: S1, P to end
Verify that you now have 22 stitches



Heel Turn:

Note: After the first round, the number of stitches worked does not change in successive rounds of decreases. The first round is **13 stitches**; all subsequent rounds, both right and wrong sides, are **6 stitches** to preserve the band. Decreasing is done to either side of the central band, so while the *total* number of stitches per row changes, the number of stitches *worked* does not.

R1 (RS): Sl, K13, SSK, turn
R2 (WS): Sl, P6, P2tog, turn
R3 (RS): Sl, K6, SSK, turn
Repeat R2 and R3 until you have 8 stitches remaining – your central band, plus one stitch to either side of it.
Sl, K to end

Finish Heel:

Pick up and knit 11 stitches evenly along the edge (the slipped edge stitches). Knit in pattern across the instep, then pick up 11 stitches along the other edge of the flap. You will be back to 60 stitches total.

Foot:

Knit the established chart pattern on the instep (pick up whichever row you'd left off at after setting up your heel), and knit the sole plainly until the sock is approximately 2-inches shorter than the length of your foot. The pattern is very swirly, so it doesn't actually matter where you stop before doing the toes.

Toe:

Knit two rounds plain before the toe decreases.

Round 1: Knit first stitch, then SSK. Knit until 3 stitches from the end of the needle. K2tog, then knit the last stitch. Repeat on other needle.

Round 2: Knit all stitches.

Alternate decreases with plain knit rounds until there are only 8 stitches left on each needle (16 total for one sock). Kitchener the ends and enjoy!