

Easy Cuff-down Short-row Heel Socks



These socks are a great introduction to the Short Row Heel using worsted weight yarn. They knit up quickly and the instructions are chatty enough to answer most beginners' questions. After you've mastered the basics, you can add color and texture to create your own fancy socks.

Many thanks to Robley Brown for showing me that Short Row heels can work, and can fit my high-arched feet. You are fondly remembered every time I knit a short row heel.

Yarn: 220 yards of worsted weight wool. The socks pictured above were knit with Cascade 220 in color 9826. 220 yards will be plenty to knit a pair of Women's Medium socks with a 9 ½" leg and a 9 ½" foot. If your feet are larger you will need more yarn. If they're smaller, rejoice in your good luck and know that you'll have yarn left over.

Gauge: 5 stitches per inch with a US #3 needle (or size to give **you** gauge) in stockinette stitch. Save yourself some time and frustration and work a gauge swatch before beginning. Yes, these socks really are knit at this tight gauge – if you can see your skin through the socks when on, they will wear out quickly, wasting all your hard work.

These instructions assume that you are familiar with DPN needles and that you know how to knit and purl. Place the stitches on three needles and knit with the fourth.

Cast 45 stitches onto a circular needle at least 3 sizes larger than the needle you used to work your gauge swatch – you want that cast-on edge to be loose. Work the first round of Knit 2, Purl 2 ribbing from the circular needle right onto your DPN's. On round two, join, being careful not to twist, and knit that extra stitch together with the first stitch of the round – this will help eliminate the jog that occurs when joining in the round. 44 stitches are now on three needles.

Knit 20 or so rounds of Knit 2, Purl 2 ribbing, or however much you like at the top of your socks, or until you're tired of it. Some people like to knit the whole leg in ribbing, but I find this boring and tedious, so I prefer only a little ribbing at the top, and then stockinette for the rest of the leg. Remember that you are working with a limited amount of yarn, so be a little conservative on the rib and leg. You can always use a contrasting color for the rib, heel, and toe if you experience any YSO (Yarn Shortage Anxiety)

This will bring you to the heel.

Short-row heel:

The short-row heel is worked with no heel flap, but with short rows to form a cup for your heel. It is the hand knit heel that most resembles that of a commercial sock. It is worked on half the leg stitches, 22 in this case. It helps to place the instep stitches on a holder (or two) while working this type of heel. Place a marker at the center of the heel stitches.

You will be leaving the last stitch (or the last un-wrapped stitch) un-worked on each row. This is the stitch that gets wrapped.

Row 1 – Knit across, leaving one stitch un-worked. Slip this stitch to the right needle, bring the yarn to the front, put the stitch back onto the left needle, and put the yarn to the back in preparation of a Purl row. Turn your work.

Row 2 – Purl across, leaving one stitch un-worked. Slip this stitch to the right needle, bring the yarn to the back, put the stitch back onto the left needle, and put the yarn to the front in preparation of a Knit row. Turn your work.

Repeat these two rows, until you have 1" of un-worked stitches (1/2" on either side of your marker,) wrapping the last un-worked stitch on each row. If you have a narrow heel or high instep you may want to work an extra couple of short rows so the finished socks won't pinch over the instep.

Now for the work longer short rows -

Row 1 – Knit to the first wrapped stitch. Pick up the wrap around that stitch and place it on the left needle. Knit the stitch and wrap together as one stitch. Turn your work.

Row 1 – Purl to the first wrapped stitch. Pick up the wrap around that stitch and place it on the left needle. Purl the stitch and wrap together as one stitch. Turn your work.

Repeat these two rows until all wrapped stitches have been worked. If your wraps look sloppy, twist the wrap as you put it back on the needle.

Pick up a stitch or two where the heel meets the instep stitches on the next round. Decrease them away on the next round (or two) by Knitting 2 together – this will help prevent the hole that sometimes forms there.

Foot:

This is just endless 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.

Stop knitting when the sock measures 1 1/2" less than the length of your foot from the back of the heel to the tip of your longest toe. Measure the sock from the back of the heel to the bottom of the current round of stitches to check your progress. This may vary slightly depending on your row gauge. If you measure how far 13 rows is, you can subtract that from your foot measurement, and calculate how soon to start the toe decreases.

Toe decreases:

Needle 1 - Knit until 3 stitches from the end, Knit 2 together, Knit 1.

Needle 2 - Knit 1, Knit 2 together, Knit until 3 stitches from the end, Knit 2 together, Knit 1.

Needle 3 - Knit 1, Knit 2 together, Knit to the end.

Next round - Knit even around.

Repeat these two rounds 6 times - 20 stitches remain.

Knit across needle 1. Put the stitches from needle 1 and 3 onto one 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. If you're in a hurry and not too picky, a 3-needle bind off works just as well and doesn't require a needle.



Hand dyed yarn by Sandy Sitzman of www.woolgatheringsfibers.blogspot.com/

I would love to post a picture of your finished socks on my Customer Gallery web page.

I'm always happy to answer questions via e-mail – sofialeo2013@gmail.com

Happy knitting!

Mary aka Sofia Leo

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