

# Easy Cuff-Down DK Weight Socks

After knitting a pair of socks with worsted weight wool, you may be in the mood for some lighter weight socks. This pattern is designed for DK weight wool. They knit up fairly quickly and the instructions are chatty enough to answer most beginners' questions.



**Yarn:** 400+/- yards of DK weight wool. The socks pictured above were knit with Opal X-Large in a lovely autumn colorway. 400 yards will be enough 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 may need more yarn. If they're smaller, rejoice in your good luck and know that you'll have yarn left over

**Gauge:** 7 stitches per inch with a US #2 bamboo needle. Adjust needle size to get gauge and don't fret if you need a larger or smaller needle to get 7 stitches per inch. Row gauge is not important, but you want the stitch gauge to be nice and tight – loosely knit socks will wear out very quickly unless you never wear them in shoes. Or to walk on ☺

A personal note about needles: I prefer a wood or bamboo needle to knit socks. They are warmer to my always-cold hands, and they "give" a little as I knit, making them more comfortable. They also have the added advantage of not slipping out of your knitting like metal needles if you tend to knit loosely – wool yarn tends to "stick" to them a little, keeping your stitches where they belong.

These instructions assume that you are familiar with DPNs (Double Pointed Needles) and that you know how to Knit and Purl. I place the stitches on three needles and knit with the fourth, using the fifth needle of the set for a short time while decreasing for the gusset. Be warned that the first five rounds will look like garbage – there's something magical about that fifth round, the point where it suddenly looks like a sock cuff.

Cast 57 stitches **loosely** onto a single needle. Put a point protector on the end away from the last cast-on stitch to keep them from sliding off. You may prefer to cast on to a larger needle or hold two needles together.

**Start the first row of ribbing:** \*Knit 2, Purl 2\* until there are 18 stitches on your first DPN needle (Needle 1). Start the 2nd needle \*Purl 2, Knit 2\* until there are 24 stitches (Needle 2). Start the third needle \*Purl 2, Knit 2\* until there are 14 stitches (Needle 3). You will have one stitch left on the 4th 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 DPN's you will be able to visualize this when you get there. Knit the first 2 stitches from needle 1, so that needles 1 and 3 have 16 stitches each, and needle 2 has 24 stitches. Join in the round, being careful not to twist. Starting each needle with a Purl stitch will help to eliminate the "ladders" that can form when knitting in the round on DPN needles. Arranging the stitches as above results in each needle beginning with a Purl stitch.

Knit 30 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.

Knit about 50 rounds stockinette, or as many rounds as you like. The sample socks are 5" long from the end of the ribbing to the beginning of the heel flap with 2.5" of ribbing.

Rearrange the stitches on the needles so that there are 28 stitches on needle 2, and 14 stitches on needles 1 and 3. The beginning of each round is at the join between needles 1 and 3.

## Now for the heel -

In order to get to the heel, we have to knit a flap. The heel flap is knit on half of the foot stitches - 28. Leave the other 28 stitches alone or put them on a holder. I prefer to have the "join" at the back, so I put the instep stitches (those 28 on Needle 2) on a stitch holder and put the remaining 28 stitches onto one needle to knit the heel 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. I have a narrow heel, so this fits me just right. **If you have no problems with a narrow heel, you can work stockinette stitch for the same number of rows, instead, Knitting on the Right Side and Purling on the Wrong side.**

Wrong side row - Slip the first stitch and Purl across.

Right side row - \*Slip 1 stitch, Knit 1 stitch\* repeating from \* to \* across. **Slip all stitches as if to Purl.**

Slipping the first stitch of each row will make a series of loops on each side of the heel flap which will make it easier to pick up stitches for the gusset.

Work until the flap measures 2.5 - 3" – this number will depend on how deep you need your heel flap. Measure from your anklebone to the floor (with your foot on the floor) to get a rough idea of how far you need to knit. The only sure way to know is to knit a sock and try it on, but this guesstimate is a good place to start.

**Turn the heel:** It sounds scary at first, and confusing, and illogical, but if you follow the instructions blindly, without letting your brain argue, and have faith that everything will turn out fine, you'll be able to do it with little or no hair pulling. This particular heel is commonly called the Round, or French Heel. You will be working with the stitches of the heel flap - 28 stitches. **Slip all stitches as if to Purl.**

Row one - Slip the first stitch, Knit 15, Knit 2 together, Knit 1, turn.

Row two - Slip the first stitch, Purl 5, Purl 2 together, Purl 1, turn.

Row three - Slip the first stitch, Knit 6, Knit 2 together, Knit 1 turn.

Row four - Slip the first stitch, Purl 7, Purl 2 together, Purl 1, turn.

Continue in this manner, Knitting or Purling one more stitch between decreases, until 14 stitches remain. 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. The stitch count will decrease with each row.

End having finished a Right Side (Knit) row. With a crochet hook, pick up one stitch in each of the slipped stitches on the sides of the heel flap. The number will 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 24 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 24 stitches on the other side of the heel flap, and knit across the heel stitches to the beginning.

This brought my total stitch count to 90 stitches. This may vary, so don't be too worried about it. It's always better to pick up more stitches than fewer - this way your socks won't have gaps at the sides. Be sure that you pick up the same number of stitches on each side of the heel flap. If you can't, it's not a big deal, just make sure that you decrease on the side with more stitches in the first round, so that the numbers end up even.

**Now for the 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:** 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. Each round begins between the heel stitches and the gusset stitches on the left side of the sock.

Round One:

Needle 1 - Knit to the 3rd stitch from the end, Knit 2 together, Knit the last stitch.

Needle 2 - Knit the instep stitches even.

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

Needle 4 - Knit even across to the end.

Round Two: Knit even.

Repeat these two rounds until you reach 56 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.

After the gusset decreases are done, it's time for the 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.

Rearrange the stitches on the needles so that there are 28 stitches on Needle 2, and 14 stitches on Needles 1 and 3. The beginning of each round is at the join between Needles 1 and 3 and this should correspond with the center of the heel. The stitches on Needles 1 and 3 will form the bottom of the foot while the stitches on Needle 2 form the top of the foot – be sure to verify this before you start decreasing for the toe or it will come out sideways. Ask me how I know...

Stop knitting when the sock measures 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 flap to the bottom of the current round of stitches to check your progress. Once you reach this point, it's time for the 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 - 28 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 any further tools.

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 ;-) cast-on for the second sock.

Send me a picture, and I'll post it on my website - with credit to you, of course. I am happy to answer any questions you may have via e-mail – just drop me a note at [sofialeo2013@gmail.com](mailto:sofialeo2013@gmail.com).

Happy Knitting!

Mary in Lebanon, Oregon

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