

EN POINTE

by sharonf



Photo: sharonf

No one looks at you funny if you say you can't hike as far as you used to because of knee problems, but it's embarrassing to say you need to stop because your toes hurt. I've tried different boots and different lacings, but haven't figured out how to keep my toes from jamming against the front of the boot when hiking down hill. I tried silicone toe cushions made for dancers, which are effective, but unpleasant to wear and nasty to remove.

Finally, I thought to try knitted toe cushions, and my toes haven't looked back. I don't know if these would be cushy enough for dancers, but for the hiker needing a little extra protection, they are a great boon. I imagine they could also be helpful (suitably modified) on any toe that is particularly prone to blisters.

This pattern is intended to give you general construction pointers for knitting something to fit the big toe. Modify as you see fit - just knit to a reasonably tight gauge for durability, and make the cushion thin enough to fit comfortably in your boots.

Short rows are suggested at a couple of places as a way of helping the cushion accommodate the curvature of the toe. I've made and worn these with and without the short rows, and the difference is slight. It's only worth doing if you're charmed by the idea of making a tailored toe cozy, or perhaps if you have a particularly curvaceous toe.

FINISHED MEASUREMENT

Circumference: 2.75 inches

Length: 2 inches

Can be easily modified to different sizes. Should be worn with slight negative ease around the circumference, so it stays on the toe.

GAUGE

32 sts/40 rounds = 4 inches

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MATERIALS

KnitPicks Stroll (formerly Essential) Solid [75% superwash wool/25% nylon; 231 yd / 211 m per 50g skein]; color: Grass; about 10 yards per toe cushion
US #1 / 2.25 mm circular needle (or 5 DPNs)
yarn needle

PATTERN

Cast On

Using long tail caston, CO 22 sts very loosely (one way to accomplish this is by holding your fingers on the needle in front of the last stitch you cast on, to prevent snugging the next stitch up to it). Join to work in the round, being careful not to twist.

Garter Stitch Band

Round 1: knit
Round 2: purl
Rounds 3 -4: repeat Rounds 1-2

Shaping Rounds

Round 5: *k1, k2tog, k8; repeat from * (20 sts)
Round 6: knit
Round 7: *k1, k1fb, k8; repeat from * (22 sts)

If it would amuse you, throw in a couple of short rows across the bottom of the toe at this point (k10, W&T; p9, W&T).

Body of Toe

Rounds 8-20: knit (Again, if it pleases you, do another couple of short rows across the bottom of the toe after Round 14 or so.)

Garter Stitch Toe Tip

Assumes stitches are on two needles.
Round 21: *k1, k2tog, k to end of needle; repeat from * (20 sts)
Round 22: purl
Round 23: *k to 3 sts from end of needle, skp, k1; repeat from * (18 sts)
Round 24: purl
Rounds 25-32: repeat Rounds 21-24 two more times (10 sts)
Rounds 33-34: repeat Rounds 21-22 one more time (8 sts)

Finishing

Break yarn and pull through remaining stitches. Weave in ends.



ABOUT THE DESIGNER

Sharon (sharonf on Ravelry) has resumed knitting after a twenty-year hiatus and is attempting to make up for lost time. She keeps a sporadic knitting and miscellany blog (blog.sharonmattnadia.com), but thinks her cake design blog is more interesting (cake.sharonmattnadia.com).