

# SIMPLE TOE-UP SOCKS IN FOUR SIZES

A knitting pattern

© Kim Salazar, 1998, 2001, 2012; <http://www.string-or-nothing.com>



The socks in the picture are all the smallest size, and show some of the infinite treatments you can do on the foot and ankle. I made all of these for my daughter, Alex. They are mostly knit from Lion Brand WoolEase, Plymouth Encore, or from scraps of assorted DK-weight acrylic/wool blend yarns. Anything of comparable weight will do, although I'd suggest not mixing brands in a single sock unless you are very confident that they knit to the same gauge, and can be washed in the same way.

The medium blue pair is in a Cleckheaton DK, and has an rib and eyelet pattern (Row1: K2, K2tog, YO; Row 2: Knit). The blue and red pair is in Encore and has a mosaic stitch pattern from B. Walker's *Charted Knitting Designs* (page 207). Its companion sported the matching dancing boy. The third and fourth pairs are both in WoolEase scraps left over from other sock projects. Companions of each of these reverse the striping sequence, so that they are pairs, yet are not exactly alike. The point is that this pattern is extremely flexible and can be used as a launching point for your own creativity. Experiment! Have fun!

Instructions are given for women's small (women's large, men's regular, men's large)

## Materials

Heavy double-knitting or light worsted weight yarn

- For men's socks shoe size 13+ - approx. 360 to 400 yards
- For men's socks shoe size 7-12.5 - approx. 250-340 yards
- For women's socks shoe size 8-11 - approx. 200-240 yards
- For women's socks shoe size 4-7 - approx. 150-190 yards
- US #5 double pointed needles - one set of five
- US #4 double pointed needles - one set of five (optional, only use if you like snug ankle ribbing)
- Tapestry or yarn needle for weaving in the ends
- A safety pin or scrap of yarn for marking

## Gauge:

6 st = 1 inch in stockinette on US #5 needles

# Simple Toe-Up Socks in Four Sizes

## Special Instructions

These abbreviations and symbols are used in this pattern.

**M1** Make One - Pick up the bar running between the stitches on each needle, knit through the back of this new "loop" to make an invisible no-hole increase.

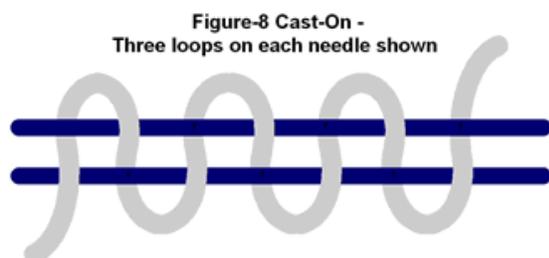
**yf** Yarn Forward - bring the yarn to the front of the work WITHOUT making a loop over top of the needle.

**YO** Yarn Over - Make a one-stitch eyelet increase by passing the yarn over the top of the needle.

**K2tog** Knit two together - Make a decrease that slants to the right by knitting the next two stitches together.

## No-Sew Toe Cast-On

Take two of the needles and wrap the yarn around them, figure-eight style. The yarn should loop around the bottom needle and cross to the opposite side of the top needle. Loop over it and then return between the two. The result should look something like this:



Continue wrapping the yarn this way until you have 8(8,8,10) loops on each needle. Let the end dangle free with no knots or other securings - you'll need to work looseness in the first row out towards the end later. Knots will interfere with this in-flight adjustment.

Take a third dpn and knit across the top needle. Take the fourth dpn and knit across the bottom needle. Be careful not to twist stitches - one needle's loops will be "backward" with the leading edge of the loop on the rear side of the needle. Make sure you knit into the rear side of these "backward" loops.

You now have a very narrow and slightly awkward strip of knitting suspended between two needles. There should be 8(8,8,10) stitches on each needle. Don't worry if the stitches running down the center are loose, in a couple of rows you can tighten them up by carefully working the excess down towards the dangling tail end.

## Toe Shaping

**For women's small through men's regular (men's large follows after this instruction set):**

- **Row 1:** k1, M1, k3. Using another dpn, k3, M1, k1. Using a third dpn, k1, M1, K3. Using the fourth dpn - K3, M1, K1. You should now have 4 live needles in your work, each with 5 stitches on it.
- **Row 2:** Knit all stitches on the first needle. Mark the first stitch on the second needle by inserting a scrap of yarn or safety pin in it as you knit it. This marks the center bottom of the sock. Knit all stitches on remaining needles.
- **Row 3:** \*k1, M1, k4. K4, M1, K1\* repeat
- **Row 4:** Knit
- **Row 5 and subsequent odd rows:** Continue adding one stitch after the first stitch of the first and third needles, and one stitch just before the last stitch of the second and fourth needles.
- **Row 6 and subsequent even rows:** Knit.

**For women's small** – when you have 11 stitches on each needle (44 stitches total) you have finished your toe.

**For women's large** - when you have 12 stitches on each needle (48 stitches total) the toe is done.

**For men's regular** - when you have 13 stitches on each needle (52 stitches total) the toe is done.

**For men's large only:**

- **Row 1:** k1, M1, k4. Using another dpn, k4, M1, k1. Using a third dpn, k1, M1, K4. Using the fourth dpn - K4, M1, K1. You should now have 4 live needles in your work, each with 6 stitches on it.
- **Row 2:** Knit all stitches on the first needle. Mark the first stitch on the second needle by inserting a scrap of yarn or safety pin in it as you knit it. This marks the center bottom of the sock. Knit all stitches on remaining needles.
- **Row 3:** \*k1, M1, k5. K5, M1, K1\* repeat
- **Row 4:** Knit
- **Row 5 and subsequent odd rows:** Continue adding one stitch after the first stitch of the first and third needles, and one stitch just before the last stitch of the second and fourth needles.
- **Row 6 and subsequent even rows:** Knit.

When you have 14 stitches on each needle (56 stitches total) you have finished your toe.

## Foot

Continue knitting around with 11(12,13,14) stitches on each needle. For my women's size 10 feet I knit until my sock foot measures 6.75 inches (approx. 16.25cm) from the tip of the toe. People less

## Simple Toe-Up Socks in Four Sizes

endowed in the foot department should knit until the growing foot when tried on is long enough to generously reach to the point where their ankle meets their foot. The sock foot should not be tightly stretched when measuring. Once you have enough foot length you can begin the heel.

### Heel

Find the column of the stitch you marked as the center bottom of your foot. The needles to the right and left of it (needles #1 and #2 respectively) will be the ones on which you work your heel. The other two needles (#3 and #4) will lie dormant until the heel is finished. If you like you can move the stitches from #3 and #4 onto a stitch holder or spare piece of string if you are more comfortable working that way.

Start the heel with needle #1 and work the following directions across both needles as if they were a single unit. I prefer NOT to move these stitches onto one needle because using two creates less stress at the ends and tends to minimize any top-of-gusset holes when the foot top stitches are rejoined to the heel.

If you are using nylon to reinforce the heel, introduce it on the next row.

- **Row 1 of decrease:** K21(23,25,27), yf, slip next stitch purlwise onto right needle. Turn work.
- **Row 2:** Yf (wrapping the yarn around the base of the stitch that was just slipped - it should look like it has been lassoed by a noose), slip this just-wrapped stitch purlwise back onto the right hand needle, p20(22,24,26), slip the next stitch purlwise keeping the yarn in front of the work. Turn work.
- **Row 3:** Yf (wrapping the yarn around the stitch you just slipped and returning it to the right-hand needle without knitting it), K19, yf, slip the next stitch knitwise onto the right needle. Turn work.
- Continue in this manner described in rows 2 and 3, working one less stitch per row before doing the yf/wrap/turn. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE 11(12,13,14) STITCHES ON EACH NEEDLE.

Each row the number of wrapped and retained stitches (as opposed to "live" stitches) will grow by one. Eventually you will have only 8(10,10,12) "live" stitches - 4(5,5,6) on each needle. The remaining 7(7,8,8) stitches on each needle will each have a wrap around them. At this point the heel will look triangle with the top cut off. Along the left and right sides of the triangle will be the wrapped stitches, evenly placed.

The last row before you begin increasing again is the row in which you purl 8(10,10,12) live stitches. When that's completed it's time to begin increasing.

- **Row 1 of increase:** K8(10,10,12), knit the next stitch through the back along with the wrapped

loop around its base. (I do this by picking up the loop on the point of my right hand needle, then knitting the loop and the stitch together), yf, slip next stitch knitwise onto the right needle. Turn work.

- **Row 2:** Yf, (wrapping the yarn around the slipped stitch so that there are now TWO wraps at its base), slip the just-wrapped stitch, p8(10,10,12), purl the next stitch along with the loop wrapped around its base, slip next stitch purlwise (keeping the yarn in the front of the work). Turn work.
- **Row 3:** Yf (wrapping the yarn around the base of the slipped stitch), slip the just-wrapped stitch, k14, knit the next stitch through the back of the loop along with the two loops wrapped around its base, yf, slip next stitch knitwise onto right needle, k9(11,11,13), turn work.

Continue in this manner, working across the rows, knitting through the back of the loop (or purling on purl side rows) the next slipped and reserved stitch along with all loops around its base; then slipping and wrapping the stitch after it until you have "reclaimed" all of the reserved stitches and all 11(12,13,14) stitches on each needle are again "live."

When all 11(12,13,14) stitches are "live" the heel is finished and it's time to begin working the stitches on the top of the foot again.

### Ankle Join

If you have been using reinforcing nylon, break it off before starting the ankle join.

Knit one row around all 44(48,52,56) stitches.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** There is a small tendency for a little hole to form at the top of the diagonal line made by picking up the reserved stitches. I counteract this on the first row of my rejoin by picking up a stitch at the top of each of the diagonals, then knitting one of them together with the first stitch on Needle #3 and doing a ssk with the other picked up stitch and the last stitch of Needle #4.

### Ankle and Rib Pattern

#### Simplest sock:

You can handle the ankle patterning any way you wish. I tend not to introduce texture patterns until the heel is completed because I find anything other than a smooth foot uncomfortable inside shoes. However, if textured feet don't annoy you, you could begin your texture pattern on the two needles that form the top of the sock immediately after the toe is completed.

I like stripes and use them a lot. Not only do they use up oddballs and scraps, they take the drudgery out of figuring out if the two socks are the same

## Simple Toe-Up Socks in Four Sizes

length. If you make your stripes a set number of rows, all you need to do is count the big stripes, not the knit rows. That's much, much easier. Sometimes I use a "jogless jog" method to camouflage the stair-step spot where I switch colors, sometimes not. It depends on the yarn, my mood at the time, and the recipient. [grin]

The simplest sock is knit plain in stockinette until the length of the ankle when folded along the heel shaping is approximately 1 to 1.5 inches less than the length of the foot.

If you like tight ribbing, now is the time to switch to the smaller needles. I don't like tight sock tops so I don't bother.

At this point, I usually use a k1, p1 or k2, p2 ribbing and do ribbing for the remaining length. The goal is to make the sock the same length from heel to ankle as it is from heel to toe, or to make it slightly longer by knitting the ankle pattern until the heel to needles measurement is the same as the toe to heel measurement - then beginning the ribbing. Both proportions are pleasing, so it's your choice! Bind off VERY LOOSELY and cast on for sock #2. Counting rows is the best way to ensure that both socks are of uniform length.

When both socks are done, use the tapestry needle to weave in the loose ends at toe and top.

### Alternate treatments:

Any pattern with a repeat divisible by 2 or 4 can be used for all sizes of this sock. K1, p1 rib or k2, p2 rib for the entire length of the ankle both work well.

Purl ribs and traveling ribs (that spiral up the ankle) also work quite well.

### Purl rib in the round -

- Row 1 \*k1, p1\*
- Row 2 knit

Repeat rows 1-2

### Traveling rib in the round –

- Row 1 \*k3, p1\*
- Row 2 \*k3, p1\*
- Row 3 \*p1, k3\*
- Row 4 \*p1, k3\*
- Row 5 \*k1, p1, k2\*
- Row 6 \*k1, p1, k2\*
- Row 7 \*k2, p1, k1\*
- Row 8 \*k2, p1, k1\*

Repeat rows 1-8

Note that the 12-stitch-per-needle women's large can use any pattern with a repeat divisible by 2, 4, 6, or 12. It's lots of fun to comb through knitting books looking for lace or texture patterns with these repeats. I tend to avoid heavy cables and twisted

stitch patterns. While they can be used, I find I have to factor in extra width to make up for the limit they place on stretchiness. These socks have a much narrower instep than do traditional square, box or Dutch heel socks. It can be all too easy to make a pair that is too tight to pull on. Also, unless you are very comfortable with a loose gauge for stranded knitting, Fair Isle style colorwork will tend to restrict stretch. If you plan to use any of these treatments for the ankle, either increase a couple of stitches when you do the two plain rounds after the heel is completed, or knit a larger size sock from beginning to end.

## Finishing

When both socks are done, use the tapestry needle to weave in the loose ends at toe and top