

Sweet Spot Socks

Home Ec Knits



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YARN: Any weight yarn from light fingering to worsted. The ribbing in the Sweet Spot socks provides stretch, so feel free to use the yarn of your choice with or without nylon.

NEEDLES: DPNs or one 32" or longer circular needle, in a size appropriate to the weight of your yarn. Try using the smallest suggested needle size: a tightly knit fabric will provide a more secure fit over time and longer lasting socks.

NOTIONS: One tapestry needle for weaving in ends.

GAUGE: Not applicable, since you will be using your choice of yarn and tailoring the sock to fit its wearer.

SPECIAL NOTES: This design uses Judy's Magic Cast On, short row heels, loop increases, and Jeny's Surprisingly Stretch Bind Off; the directions provide detailed descriptions of these techniques for sock making novices. These methods were chosen for their speed, simplicity, and results; however, you can of course substitute any of your preferred methods.

CASTING ON: Using Judy's Magic Cast On, cast on about 20 stitches in total (10 on each needle), casting on a little more or less depending on the size of the foot and the weight of your yarn. The resulting cast on should stretch to cover, say, about two toes. Importantly, you should have an even number on *both* needles (e.g. 10 or 12 on each needle, not 11). For those unfamiliar with this cast on:

1. Make a slip knot, and place it on one needle. Leave a tail of about 8 or 9 inches – enough to weave in, plus a small amount to finish the cast on.
2. Take your second needle (either a 2nd DPN, or the other end of your circular), and hold both needles parallel in your right hand, pointing leftward: hold them as if you were about to start a long tail cast on. They should be almost touching each other, with the needle holding the slip knot held furthest from you.
3. Hold the yarn in the same way as for a long tail cast on, except that the tail goes over your index finger and the yarn from the skein goes over your thumb.
4. Still holding the needles parallel, and the yarn away and slightly down from the needles, swing your thumb and index finger toward you, under both needles. Pull the strand that is over your index finger toward you, then over the needle without a slipknot, and down between both needles. You have just made the first stitch on this needle. You now have two stitches in total, counting the slipknot on the other needle.
5. Swing your two fingers away from you under both needles, so that the yarn is held away from you, under the needle with the slip knot. Using the strand that is over your thumb, bring this strand up and over the needle with the slipknot, and then pull this strand down between both needles. You have just made a second stitch on this needle, for a total of 3 stitches all together.
6. Continue creating stitches in this manner, swinging the index finger strand under and over the needle held closest to you, and the thumb strand under and over the needle held furthest from you, until you have enough for your cast on. Cast an equal number of stitches on both needles.
7. When your cast on is done, leave the tail hanging between the needles. Making sure that the tail does not unwind its last stitch, turn the two needles so that you can knit down the row of stitches from the needle that did *not* have the original slipknot. Since the first stitch has a loose hanging tail, you may find it helpful to hold the tail while knitting this stitch. If you are using DPNs, use a 3rd DPN to knit this row; if you

are using magic loop, pull out the other end of the circular to use as your right hand needle.

8. When you have finished knitting this row, begin knitting down the row of stitches on the needle that had the original slipknot, **but knit these stitches through their back loops**. This instruction applies only to this row: hereafter, knit your usual way.

SHAPING THE TOE

The stitches for the top/front and bottom/back of the sock are already divided on the 2 needles from the cast on.

You must now begin increasing by 4 stitches (an increase on each side of both the top and the bottom) on every other round. The suggested loop increases are created by simply picking up the working yarn with your left hand, twisting it once to form a loop, and placing the loop on your right needle.

To increase with a slant to the right (**M1R**), turn the yarn clockwise. The working yarn will emerge from *under* the strand connecting the loop to your knitting. To increase with a slant to the left (**M1L**), turn the yarn counterclockwise. The working yarn will emerge over this strand.

On your next row, just knit these loops. M1L loops can be difficult to knit through the front loop: you may find it much easier simply to knit these stitches through their back loops.

TIP: I find a helpful way to remember which way to turn the yarn is to think of the words "leftover" and "underwrite". With these words in my head, it is easy to remember which way I need to twist the yarn in order for the working yarn to go either under or over the loop.

Working in stockinette (K every stitch), increase on the 1st round as follows:

K1, M1R, K to 1 st before end of first needle, M1L, K1 rep on 2nd needle.

2nd round: K

Repeat these 2 rounds until the sock tip fits the wearer's toes comfortably. Count your stitches to make sure you have an even number. **DPN users:** divide your stitches among 3 or 4 needles as you prefer.

CREATING YOUR UNIQUE RIB ARRANGEMENT

Because the sock is customized to your unique gauge, yarn, foot size, and aesthetic judgment, the number and placement of the twisted ribs is not standardized. The ribs consist of a 2 stitch rib (see **Chart A**) and a 6 stitch rib (see **Chart B**), separated by at least 2 stitches of reverse stockinette (purl stitches), which you will arrange.

When you work out the number and placement of ribs, remember that at this point, the stitch pattern is worked on only the top of the foot. The bottom of the foot and the heel are worked in stockinette until the heel is completed. Since the bottom of the foot has the same number of stitches as the top of the foot, when it is ready for the pattern it will simply replicate what you have worked out for the top of the foot.

So, using the number of stitches that you have for the top of your foot, work out a symmetrical pattern of ribs. For example, if the top of your foot has 22 stitches, you could use a pattern of (P1, 6 stitch rib, P3, 2 stitch rib, P3, 6 stitch rib, P1), or a pattern of (P3, 2 stitch rib, P3, 6 stitch rib, P3, 2 stitch rib, P3). A 30 stitch rib might have a pattern of (P2, 2 stitch rib, P2, 6 stitch rib, P2, 2 stitch rib, P2, 6 stitch rib, P2, 2 stitch rib, P2). **TIP:** Be sure to start your arrangement with at least one purl stitch, rather than a rib. Since you will eventually work both sides of the leg in pattern, you will want the background purl stitches joining on the sides, rather than the twisted ribs.



HOW TO MAKE THE RIGHT TWIST

The right twist stitch (RT) is worked over 2 stitches: knit 2 stitches together as for k2tog, **but leave both stitches on the left needle** after you have drawn a stitch on your right hand needle. Insert the right hand needle back into the *first* of these 2 stitches (the one closest to the tip of the needle) and knit one more stitch. Now discard the 2 stitches from your left hand needle.

LEGEND

	Knit
-	Purl
↗	Right twist, worked over 2 stitches

CHART A – 2 STITCH TWIST RIB

-	↗	-	2
-			1

CHART B – 6 STITCH TWIST RIB

-		↗	↗		-	4
-						3
-	↗	↗	↗	-	-	2
-						1

WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS

2 stitch right twist rib

(Row 1) P, K, K, P.

(Row 2) P, RT, P.

Rep these 2 rows.

6 stitch right twist rib:

(Row 1) P, K, K, K, K, K, P.

(Row 2) P, RT, RT, RT, P.

(Row 3) P, K, K, K, K, K, P.

(Row 4) P, K, RT, RT, K, P.

Rep these 4 rows.

As you can see, both ribs are worked with twists on every other round, with the alternative rounds knit. **TIP:** Novice knitters may have trouble recognizing whether they are supposed to work a twist round or a knit round – recently twisted stitches slant in opposite directions to each other, while recently knit stitches all slant neatly in the same direction.

The 2 stitch rib is simple – with each round you are either twisting the 2 stitches or knitting them plain. The 6 stitch rib requires a little more attention, since rows 2 and 4 feature different stitches being twisted. **TIP:** If you have lost track of which row you are supposed to work next, look at the *last* stitch of the 6 stitch rib. If it is the second stitch up from the start of a diagonal created by the twists, then work row 4. If it is the 4th stitch, work row 2.

WORKING THE FOOT

Continue working the foot, using your pattern on the top and stockinette on the bottom, until the sock is long enough to just touch the front of the wearer's leg. You will begin working the heel now, so the next time the top of the foot stitches are used will be to begin the leg – make sure you have made the sock long enough to begin going up the leg comfortably. When you work these stitches again, you will also work the back of the leg at exactly the same point in the stitch pattern. The twisted rib pattern is very forgiving and really can be begun on any row; however, if you are very detail oriented, you may prefer to start the back of the leg on the first row of chart B. If that is the case, ensure that the last row of the top of the foot worked before beginning the heel features the last row of chart B.

SHAPING THE HEEL

Continuing to work in stockinette, K to the last stitch on the bottom of the foot, and wrap and turn. The wrap and turn is performed by bringing your yarn to the RS through your needles, and slipping the last stitch purlwise. Bring your yarn to the back, and slip your newly wrapped stitch back to the left needle. Do not knit it: instead, turn your work, and begin purling across the WS. Purl to the last stitch on the other side of the sole, and wrap and turn. To wrap and turn on the WS, keep your yarn on the WS, slip the next stitch purlwise, and now bring your yarn to the RS. Slip the stitch back to the left needle, and then turn your work. Bring your yarn around the wrapped stitch and through your needles to the back to begin knitting across.

On the next row, work to one stitch before the wrapped stitch. Wrap and turn this stitch, then purl across to one stitch before the wrapped stitch on this end, and again wrap and turn. Continue to wrap and turn the last unwrapped stitch on every row, until you have wrapped about 2/3 of the total stitches, and have about 1/3 stitches left unwrapped in the middle. Note that I say *about* – there is no hard and fast requirement. If you aren't sure if you have made the sole long enough, try the sock on and decide whether you should wrap and turn a few more rows.

When the heel is long enough, work across to the closest wrapped stitch, and work it together with its wrap. **TIP:** When knitting on the RS, bring your right needle past the stitch you are about to knit, up through its wrap, and then into the stitch. K them together. When purling on the WS, purl up to the wrapped stitch, and use your right needle to go up through the wrap from the RS. Place the wrap on the left needle next to the stitch you are about to work, and purl them together.

Wrap and turn the next stitch: it will now have 2 wraps. Work back to the closest wrapped stitch on this row, work it together with its wrap, and wrap and turn the next stitch on this side; again, this next stitch will now have 2 wraps.

Continue to work back and forth, working the stitches together with *both* their wraps – you will be knitting or purling 3 together, and wrapping and turning each of the next stitches.

After you have picked up and purled the last stitch on the WS, K across the RS of the heel, and pick up and knit any last wrap together with its stitch. There will be a slight gap between the last stitch of the heel and the first stitch of the top of the foot. In order to avoid a small hole at this place, pick up and knit about 2 stitches from this gap. On subsequent rows, **get rid of these picked up stitches by working them together with their neighbouring stitches until you have your original stitch count.**

Work across the top of the foot, continuing where you left the twisted rib pattern. At the end of the top of the foot, pick up and knit about 2 stitches to address the gap on this side. If the first stitch on the heel is wrapped, work this stitch together with its wrap. Work across the heel stitches in the same pattern, and at the same place in the pattern, as the top of the foot.

Continue until the leg is long enough to your taste. I suggest finishing the leg with the first row of Chart B, but this is only a suggestion. Since the twisted stitch ribs are ribbing, the resulting fabric will not roll; therefore, there is no need to do any standard non-twisted ribbing before binding off. However, if you like the look of ribbing, or if you want to make kilt socks with a folded cuff, you may certainly add some 1x1 or 2x2 ribbing if you wish.

BINDING OFF

Assuming that the first stitch you are binding off on the Sweet Spot Socks is a purl stitch, Jeny's Surprisingly Stretchy Bind Off will be performed as follows:

1. Before you purl the first stitch, make a yarnover on your right hand needle (i.e. with the yarn in front, pull the yarn over the top of the right hand needle and out to the front again).
2. Purl the next stitch: you now have 2 stitches on your right hand needle.
3. Pull the yarnover over the stitch you just worked and off the right needle.
4. If the next stitch is a purl stitch, make a yarnover the same way as for step 1, and purl the next stitch. Or, if the next stitch is a knit stitch, make a yarnover by **reversing the usual direction** of the yarn (i.e. with the yarn in back, pull the yarn toward you over the top of the right hand needle and down again to the back).
5. You now have 3 stitches on your right needle. Pull the first 2 stitches over the last stitch. You can pull both off at the same time if you prefer.
6. Continue this way, making a yarnover for every stitch (with all purl stitches worked with a regular yarnover and all knit stitches worked with a reverse yarnover) and binding off by pulling the yarnover off along with the last stitch still on the right needle.

FINISHING

On the last stitch, cut the yarn, and thread it through the last stitch. Weave in the ends. **TIP:** if the last stitch is not flush with the bound off edge, just sew it lightly down before you weave in the end.