

# The Yarmando Mash-Up Sock: Toe-Up Socks on Magic Loop

## Techniques

- Magic Loop
- Turkish cast-on
- Queen Kahuna Rounded Toe
- Yarnover increases
- Two socks at the same time
- Patricia Gibson-Roberts' short-row heel
- Stretchy bind-off

## Magic Loop

I like to knit socks using one long circular needle -- 40 inch or longer. When knitting, the back half of your sock will hang in the middle of your needle cable. There will be two big loops of cable on either side, and you'll work across the front of your sock with the ends of the circular needle.

**Yarn:** One skein Cider Moon Glacier

**Needle:** Circular needle at least 40 inches long  
Size 5 (or size for correct gauge)

**Gauge = 6 stitches per inch**

**Size = Women's medium (Men's medium)**



## Turkish Cast-On

Starting these socks couldn't be easier. Hold the ends of your needle together, and wrap the yarn.

- Hold your circular needle so that both ends are together, pointed to the right.
- Pull the bottom needle to the right, and hold your top needle together with the bottom cord.
- Start your yarn in back of the needles, leaving a 12" tail hanging.
- Wrap the yarn over toward you, down across the front and up the back of the needles.
- Repeat until you've made 6 loops around your needles.
- You'll use the bottom needle as your working needle to knit the stitches which are wrapped around the top (or "left") needle.



## Rounded Toe (Queen Kahuna Inspired)

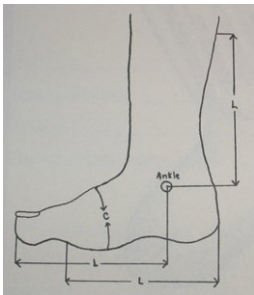
[[queenkahuna-creations.com](http://queenkahuna-creations.com)]

- Knit across the 6 stitches on the "top" needle. Be sure to keep your stitches snug on the "bottom" needle.
- Hold working yarn and tail together, and work 1 round. (There are now 12 stitches on each side, 24 in all.)
- Drop tail and knit one round (24 stitches total).



## Toe Increases

- Knit 2, YO, knit until 2 stitches remain on that side, YO, knit 2. Repeat for other side.
- Knit round, making sure to twist the yarnovers by knitting into their backs. (Note: You can "mirror" the increases by twisting them in different directions).
- Repeat these two rounds until you have 48 (52) stitches total, 24 (26) on each side.



## Knitting the Foot

Now you just keep knitting around until you've reached the desired length (to the middle of the ankle bone protrusion on the outside of the foot, or perhaps just a little longer). That's about 7 inches for a medium-sized woman's sock, 8 inches for a medium-sized man's.

If you wish, you can work ribbing or some other pattern across the instep.

**Bonus advice:** It's only slightly trickier to do both socks at the same time. The tubes sit side by side on your needles. You knit across the front stitches of one tube, drop the yarn, then knit across the front stitches of the other. No more second sock syndrome!

My advice is to make one toe, set it aside, make the second toe, and then work on both socks at the same time. I do the same thing when I come to the heel, making one at a time. It's too much trouble to try and do both at once.

## Homework Assignment: Complete the Feet

Knit to the point that you're ready to make the heel on at least one sock. If you're making both socks at once, put one sock on stitch holders before coming to class.



Put a safety line in your sock before attempting the heel. Thread a line of dental floss or other strong thread through your stitches. If you make a mistake (and I made *plenty* as I learned how to knit this heel), you can easily rip back and try again.

You may want to bring different yarn and needles to the next class so you can practice the short-row heel before trying it on your "live" sock.

Email me at any time with questions:  
[yarmando@gmail.com](mailto:yarmando@gmail.com).



## Begin Short Row Shaping

The heel is worked on one side only; instep stitches hang dormant while you work back and forth to make the heel.

- Knit 23 (25) stitches. (One loop remains). Turn.
- Yarnover and purl 22 (24) stitches. Turn.
- Yarnover and knit 21 (23) stitches. Turn.
- Yarnover and purl 20 (22) stitches. Turn.

Repeat until there are 10 purl stitches after the yarnover.

### A Note about Yarnovers

These yarnovers may be a little different than you're used to, especially on the purl side. To make them, first take the working yarn between the needles to the other side.

When you work the stitch, bring the yarn up over your working needle, creating a snug yarnover/stitch pair.

## Reverse Short Row Shaping

Now for the hard part: you'll knit gradually *longer* rows, separating the yarnover/stitch pairs and joining the yarnovers with the next stitches.

- YO and knit 9 (up to the first YO/stitch pair)
- Knit the stitch, leaving the YO on the needle (notice that it's mounted the wrong way)
- Correct the stitch mount, then **K2tog**, separating the next stitch from its own paired YO). Turn.
  
- YO and purl 10 (up to the first YO/stitch pair)
- Purl the stitch, leaving the YO on the needle
- Awkward move: **SSP**
  - Slip the YO as if to knit
  - Slip the next stitch as if to knit
  - Transfer both stitches back to the left needle
  - Take the right needle *behind* these two stitches and enter them from left to right, through the backs of their loops. The tip of the working needle should poke out so you can purl the two stitches together. Turn.

Take a moment to make sure you understand what we're doing: joining the yarnovers with the *next* stitches helps close the gap made by the short rows. If you don't do this right, there will be holes.

Do you get how the SSP works? Soon you'll have to do a SSSP, which is even more awkward.

- YO and knit 11 (or up to the YO/stitch pair)
- Knit the stitch. The next two loops on the needle are yarnovers, mounted backwards.
- Correct the stitch mounts, then **K3tog**. Turn.
  
- YO and purl 12 (or up to the YO/stitch pair)
- Purl the stitch. The next two loops on the needle are yarnovers.
- Very awkward move: **SSSP**
  - Slip the next three stitches, one at a time, as if to knit.
  - Transfer all three stitches back to the left needle.
  - Take the right needle *behind* these three stitches and enter them from left to right. Purl all three together through their back loops. Turn.

Repeat these last two sets of steps, working longer rows each time, until all YO's have been worked, and you're back with your original number of stitches. Remember: **every time you turn to work back the other way, you begin with a YO.**

### Approaching the end of the heel: the last two rows

At some point, your K3tog will join two yarnovers and the last stitch on your needle.

#### Last purl row

- Before purling, loop the working yarn around the cord, next to the dormant instep stitches.  
*This takes the place of the yarnover.*
- Purl 23; SSSP. Turn.

#### Last knit row

- Loop the working yarn around the cord like you did before.
- Knit 24.

You have the 24 stitches on the heel side of the sock, and 26 stitches on the instep side -- 24 stitches plus the loops you just made at either end.

The heel is complete, and you're ready to begin knitting the ankle. **If something isn't right, it's best to rip back to your safety line and try again.**



On the next round, remember to knit the first two stitches (a stitch and the extra loop) and the last two stitches together on the instep side. (To be perfectly correct, you should join the last two stitches with a SSK).

Knit a few rounds plain, then begin knitting your favorite ribbing or pattern for the ankle. (My standard is K2P2).

### Homework Assignment: Practice Practice Practice

Practice the short-row heel on other yarn and needles until you're comfortable.

You may find it helpful to look at other instructions. I recommend the book *Simple Socks, Plain and Fancy* by Priscilla Gibson-Roberts. I learned this short row technique from that book, and her explanation is more thorough and technical. The book also has great charts for making any size sock with any gauge. Fundamentally, this sock pattern is from that book -- I've just simplified the toe, and added the Magic Loop and Turkish Cast-On techniques.

Alternate, step-by-step instructions with pictures are available from Purlwise at <http://avocations.blogs.com/ShortRowHeels/index.htm>.

The heel is the trickiest technique to learn. We'll review it again next week, so don't despair. You'll be an expert before we're through.

Email me at any time with questions: [yarmando@gmail.com](mailto:yarmando@gmail.com).

## Stretchy Bind-Off

Nothing ruins your work on a pair of socks like binding off too tightly. There are a few techniques you can use to make sure socks aren't too tight at the top. I've used them all, and my current favorite is **option D** below.

- A. Bind off with a needle a few sizes larger.
- B. Add yarn-over stitches to your binding, about every third stitch. For example, in K2P2 ribbing:
  - 1. Knit two stitches. Pass first stitch over second.
  - 2. Yarn-over. Pass knit stitch over yarn-over stitch.
  - 3. Purl one stitch. Pass yarn-over stitch over purl.
  - 4. Purl one. Pass first purl stitch over second.
  - 5. Yarn-over. Pass purl stitch over yarn-over.
  - 6. Knit one. Pass yarn-over stitch over.
- C. Elizabeth Zimmerman's Sewn Cast-off: With yarn about 4 times the length of your circumference, sew forward (right to left) through two stitches, leaving them on the needle. Sew backward (left to right) through the first stitch and remove it.
- D. Work two stitches in pattern, then slide them both back over to the left needle and knit them together through the back loops. Work the next stitch, slide the two active stitches back to the left hand needle and knit *them* together through the back loop.



**Continue until finished. Break yarn, weave in the ends, and enjoy your perfect socks.**



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## Bibliography -- Other Toe-Up Sock Patterns

Kim Salazar's Patterns

<http://www.wiseneedle.com/sock-patterns.asp>

Salazar's sock method is virtually the same as this one, with variations in casting on, shaping the toe, and working shortrow heels.

Wendy Johnson's "Generic Toe-Up Sock Pattern"

<http://www.wendyjohnson.net/blog/sockpattern.htm>

Uses both short-row heels and toes. A similar, but more detailed pattern, the "Universal Toe-Up Sock Formula," was created by Amy Swenson for Knitty.com, <http://www.knitty.com/issuesummer06/PATTuniversalsock.html>.

Judy Gibson's "You're Putting Me On" Socks.

<http://tiajudy.com/putmeon.htm>

This was the first toe-up sock pattern I ever encountered, and it's a good one. Its one flaw is that you pick up stitches under the heel, and you can feel that ridge when wearing them. But the gussets help improve the fit for some people.

Brook Chenoweth Creel's "Widdershins" Socks.

<http://www.knitty.com/issuesummer06/PATTwiddershins.html>

Very similar to Gibson's pattern. Heel is better, but trickier. For a generic version with different sizing options, see <http://cabezalana.blogspot.com/2007/01/widdershins-generic-version.html>.

Kelly Petkun's "Two at Once, Toe-Up Sock"

<http://www.knitpicks.com/kpimages/pdf/50417220.pdf>

This sock uses an "Afterthought Heel," which is extremely easy and very attractive with self-patterning sock yarns. However, I think the heel cup in these instructions is too shallow. Dawn Brocco's adaption fits much better, <http://www.dawnbrocco.com/techniques.html#heels>.

Mary Lycan's "Sherman Sock"

<http://www.knitlist.com/2002/ToeUpSock.htm>

Another short row heel method, using stitch "encroachment." Better instructions are at <http://cabezalana.blogspot.com/2007/04/sherman-short-row-sock-pictorial-tour.html>.

Strong Heel Socks

Published in *Knitter's* (72, Fall 2003). A toe-up variation is used in these patterns:

- <http://mysite.verizon.net/vze8mnp/lollipopsocks.html>
- <http://mysite.verizon.net/vze8mnp/amyssocks.html>

## Short Rows

There are many methods for closing the gaps that form when you knit short rows. Véronik Avery wrote a great article for *Interweave Knits* (Winter 2004, p96) that describes them in detail. I thought the Japanese Method -- using a safety pin to mark the turning yarn -- looked the best, but all those pins hanging there make it cumbersome to do. Some online instructions:

- [http://nonaknits.typepad.com/nonaknits/2005/04/japanese\\_short\\_.html](http://nonaknits.typepad.com/nonaknits/2005/04/japanese_short_.html)
- <http://www.knittinguniverse.com/xrx/athena/tipdetail.php?ID=3310>
- [http://www.purlwise.com/2004/08/japanese\\_shortr.html](http://www.purlwise.com/2004/08/japanese_shortr.html)

## Other Toes

- Patch Toe, <http://fiberqat.blogspot.com/2006/05/patch-toe-for-knitted-socks.html>
- Star Toe, <http://yarmando.blogspot.com/2006/04/oh-yeahi-still-knit.html>