

Wendy's Generic Toe-Up Sock

Warning! Written in excruciating detail!

Size: women's medium (large)

Note: You can adjust this pattern for any size, any gauge. Measure around the ball of your foot. Multiply the number of inches you get by the number of stitches you get per inch when you do a gauge swatch. Then subtract 10% from that total. Fudge your number so it's divisible by 4. This will make a nice, snug-fitting sock. This pattern is written using 60 stitches around for the sock, with changes for 64 stitches in parentheses.

Gauge: 8st/inch -- I use US size 0 (2mm) needles with sock yarn. Your mileage may vary -- check your gauge!

Start Your Toe

Using a provisional cast-on, cast on 30 (32) stitches (half the total circumference of the sock). I do my provisional cast-on using a crochet chain as follows:

Using waste yarn, crochet a chain that is several chain stitches longer than the number of knit stitches you need. Knit into the center loops of the back side of the chain, 30 (32) stitches. Purl back across stitches.

Row 1: Knit 29 (31) stitches. Move the working yarn as if to purl. Slip the last, unworked stitch from the left needle to the right needle without knitting it. Turn your work so you are ready to purl the next row.

Row 2: Slip the first, unworked stitch from the left needle to the right needle. Purl the next stitch (you will have wrapped the working yarn around the base, or "legs," of that first, unworked stitch) and purl across to the last stitch – 28 (30) stitches total purled. Move the working yarn as if to knit and slip the last, unworked stitch from the left needle to the right needle without purling it. Turn your work so you are ready to knit the next row.

Row 3: You already have one wrapped, unworked stitch on your left needle. Slip this first stitch, and knit across 27 (29) stitches to the last stitch before the unworked stitch (that is, until you have 2 stitches remaining on the right needle). Wrap this second-to-last stitch and turn your work (with the last stitch still on the right needle) so you are ready to purl.

Row 4: You already have 1 unworked stitch on the left needle. Slip the first (unworked) stitch from the right needle to the left needle, then purl across 26 (28) stitches to the stitch before the unworked stitch. Wrap and turn.

Row 5: Slip the first stitch on the right needle to the left needle and knit 25 (27) stitches. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

Row 6: Slip the first stitch on the right needle to the left needle and purl 24 (26) stitches. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

Row 7: Slip the first stitch on the right needle to the left needle and knit 23 (25) stitches. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

Row 8: Slip the first stitch on the right needle to the left needle and purl 22 (24) stitches. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

Row 9: Slip the first stitch on the right needle to the left needle and knit 21 (23) stitches. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

Row 10: Slip the first stitch on the right needle to the left needle and purl 20 (22) stitches. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

Row 11: Slip the first stitch on the right needle to the left needle and knit 19 (21) stitches. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

Row 12: Slip the first stitch on the right needle to the left needle and purl 18 (20) stitches. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

Row 13: Slip the first stitch on the right needle to the left needle and knit 17 (19) stitches. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

Row 14: Slip the first stitch on the right needle to the left needle and purl 16 (18) stitches. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

Row 15: Slip the first stitch on the right needle to the left needle and knit 15 (17) stitches. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

Row 16: Slip the first stitch on the right needle to the left needle and purl 14 (16) stitches. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

You now have 8 stitches wrapped and on left side, 14 (16) stitches are "live" in the middle, and 8 are wrapped and on the right. At this stage, you should be ready to work a right side row. Your toe is half done.

Note: How many stitches you leave unworked in the middle depends on how wide you want your sock toe to be. If you want it a bit wider, do a couple fewer short rows. If you want it a bit narrower, do a couple more short rows.

Now you'll work the second half of the toe:

Note: To make both sides of the toe look identical, you need to pick up and work the wraps as follows:

On the knit side, I slide the wrapped stitch, unworked, from the left to right needle. Then with the tip of my left needle, I pick up the wraps around that unworked stitch and place them on the right needle along with the unworked stitch. Then I slide the tip of my left needle through the 3 unworked loops on the right needle (the stitch and the 2 picked-up wraps) so that the needles are positioned for me to knit 3 together through the back loops, and I work it thusly.

I do the same thing on the purl side, except that when I slide the left needle through the 3 loops on the right needle, it is set up to purl normally. So I purl 3 together normally.

Also note that the first wrapped stitch that you pick up and work on either side of the live stitches will have only 1 wrap instead of two. Some people do not bother double-wrapping the subsequent stitches, but I think you have fewer chances of holes along your toe if you double-wrap.

Row 1: Knit across the 14 (16) live stitches across to the first unworked, wrapped stitch. To work this stitch, pick up the wrap and knit it together with the stitch. Wrap the next stitch (so that it now has two wraps) and turn.

Row 2: Slip the first (double-wrapped) stitch and purl across to the first unworked, wrapped stitch. Pick up the wrap and purl it together with the stitch. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

On subsequent rows you will pick up both wraps and knit or purl them together with the stitch.

Continue until you have worked all the stitches and you once again have 30 (32) "live" stitches.

When all 30 (32) stitches are once again "live," divide those stitches over 2 needles. Unzip your provisional cast-on and divide those 30 (32) stitches over 2 more needles. On your first round, you may want to pick up an extra stitch or two between the "live" stitches and the stitches you've picked up from the cast-on, to close up any holes there might be there. On the next round remember to decrease back down to 15 (16) stitches per needle.

Note: Insert the tip of your needle into the stitch you knit up from the provisional cast-on before you unzip the chain – this will make it much easier to pick up the loops of the stitches. I usually insert my needle through four or five loops at a time, unzip the chain from them, do the next four or five loops, unzip, until I've picked them all up. When you unzip your provisional cast-on, you will have one less stitch than the total you picked up and knit. You can create that extra stitch at the end, by picking up the loop between the last stitch created with the provisional cast-on and the first live stitch.

You now have a total of 60 (64) stitches.

Work straight until the foot is about 2 inches shorter than the desired finished length. Place the 30 (32) instep stitches on one needle and put the 30 (32) heel stitches on another needle. Work a short row heel on the 30 (32) heel stitches as for the toe, as follows.

Short Row Heel

Row 1: Knit 29 (31) stitches. Move the working yarn as if to purl. Slip the last, unworked stitch from the left needle to the right needle without knitting it. Turn your work so you are ready to purl the next row.

Row 2: Slip the first, unworked stitch from the left needle to the right needle. Purl the next stitch (you will have wrapped the working yarn around the base, or "legs," of that first, unworked stitch) and purl across to the last stitch – 28 (30) stitches total purled. Move the working yarn as if to knit and slip the last, unworked stitch from the left needle to the right needle without purling it. Turn your work so you are ready to knit the next row.

Row 3: You already have one wrapped, unworked stitch on your left needle. Slip this first stitch, and knit across 27 (29) stitches to the last stitch before the unworked stitch (that is, until you have 2 stitches remaining on the right needle). Wrap this second-to-last stitch and turn your work (with the last stitch still on the right needle) so you are ready to purl.

Row 4: You already have 1 unworked stitch on the left needle. Slip the first (unworked) stitch from the right needle to the left needle, then purl across 26 (28) stitches to the stitch before the unworked stitch. Wrap and turn.

Row 5: Slip the first stitch on the right needle to the left needle and knit 25 (27) stitches. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

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You now have 8 stitches wrapped and on left side, 14 (16) stitches are "live" in the middle, and 8 are wrapped and on the right. At this stage, you should be ready to work a right side row. Your heel is half done.

Note: How many stitches you leave unworked in the middle depends on how wide you want your sock heel to be. If you want it a bit wider, do a couple fewer short rows. If you want it a bit narrower, do a couple more short rows.

Now you'll work the second half of the heel:

Note: To make both sides of the heel look identical, you need to pick up and work the wraps as follows:

On the knit side, I slide the wrapped stitch, unworked, from the left to right needle. Then with the tip of my left needle, I pick up the wraps around that unworked stitch and place them on the right needle along with the unworked stitch. Then I slide the tip of my left needle through the 3 unworked loops on the right needle (the stitch and the 2 picked-up wraps) so that the needles are positioned for me to knit 3 together through the back loops, and I work it thusly.

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Also note that the first wrapped stitch that you pick up and work on either side of the live stitches will have only 1 wrap instead of two. Some people do not bother double-wrapping the subsequent stitches, but I think you have fewer chances of holes along your heel if you double-wrap.

Row 1: Knit across the 14 (16) live stitches across to the first unworked, wrapped stitch. To work this stitch, pick up the wrap and knit it together with the stitch. Wrap the next stitch (so that it now has two wraps) and turn.

Row 2: Slip the first (double-wrapped) stitch and purl across 15 (17) live stitches to the first unworked, wrapped stitch. Pick up the wrap and purl it together with the stitch. Wrap the next stitch and turn.

On subsequent rows you will be working 1 more stitch per row to get to the first unwrapped stitch. When you get to that wrapped stitch, pick up both wraps and knit or purl them together (depending on whether you are on a knit or purl row) with the stitch.

Continue until you have worked all the stitches and you once again have 30 (32) "live" stitches.

When you have all stitches live again, divide the stitches as you did for the toe. Once again, on your first round, you may want to pick up an extra stitch or two between the "live" stitches and the stitches you left on a needle for the instep, to close up any holes there might be there. On the next round remember to decrease back down to 15 (16) stitches per needle, unless you want the extra stitches to accommodate a heavier leg.

Work until the leg is the desired length to the ribbing, then work in ribbing to the desired finished length.

Note: Individuals with wide feet and/or heavier legs might find it difficult to get socks on and off. I sometimes increase stitches when I start the ribbing for the cuff. If I start out with 15 stitches per needle, I'll increase to 16 stitches per needle, and do a k4 p4 rib. If I start out with 16 stitches per needle, I'll increase to 18 stitches per needle, and do a k3 p3 rib. As you can see, it's not an exact science – you can fudge wherever you feel the need to, to suit the sock's recipient.

Cast off loosely. You might want to use the Elizabeth Zimmermann stretchy sewn cast-off. Alternatively, you can employ a lace cast off, or any other cast-off technique that results in a stretchy edge.

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