

Push-me-pull-you socks

By Liz Triskellian • triskellian.com/blog • @triskellian • Ravelry: triskellian • liz@triskellian.com

Two at a time doubleknit socks, worked inside out to produce harlequin socks

I'd been put off double knitting by the need to be constantly moving the yarn backwards and forwards so it could be in the right position for the stitch but not twisted with the other strand. Then I learnt to knit continental, and had a sudden revelation: if I knit two socks together wrong-side-out, I could purl the outer sock English-style with yarn in the front from my right hand, and I could knit the inner sock continental with yarn at the back from my left hand. No more moving yarn around = much quicker (and less likely to get tangled) double knitting! You can't see the right side at all during the knitting, which I find quite motivational.

Because you're knitting both socks at the same time, they'll match perfectly in shape – no need here for keeping track of what you did in the first sock to make sure the second sock is the same, and no Second Sock Syndrome.

The setup is a bit tricky, but once you're going there's nothing to remember and nothing to think about, but the knitting is still interesting enough to be much more fun than plain stockinette stitch.



Yarn: 50g sock yarn in each of C1 and C2. Sample pair were knit with fivemoons Luna Plus 4 ply in Sweet Violet and Deep Water

Needles: 2.25mm needles for working small circumference circular knitting

Spare set of matching or smaller needles, or stitch holders

Notions: two different stitch markers

Gauge: 36 sts and 50 rows = 4 inches in stocking stitch worked as inside-out double knitting

Size: S (M, L)

To fit foot circumference 7(8,9) inches; foot length 9(10,11) inches

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Inside-out double knitting

Ordinary double knitting uses two strands of yarn to produce two layers of knitted fabric at a time, with the right side (knit) facing out on both sides. Inside-out double knitting (IODK) produces two layers of fabric with both wrong sides facing out while knitting: the right sides only appear after the work is finished.

Both kinds are easiest to work if you hold one strand of yarn in each hand, but ordinary double knitting requires moving the strands

of working yarn backwards and forwards to keep the strands untangled and to prevent floats from appearing on the right side of the fabric. Working double knitting inside out, with the near side purled from your right hand (yarn always held in front) and the far side knit continental style from your left hand (yarn always held at the back) is quicker, and means you're less likely to twist the strands.

IODK stitches come in pairs – a purl stitch from the near side (wrong side facing you) and a knit stitch from the far side (wrong side facing away from you). All stitches are always worked in pairs: whatever you do to the first stitch in a pair, you also do to the second stitch in a pair (in this pattern this means in the toe section, you always increase both stitches in a pair, and in the heel section you always wrap both stitches in a pair).

Continental knitting

The continental method of knitting holds the working yarn in the left hand. Instructions can be found here: <http://www.knittinghelp.com/video/play/the-knit-stitch-continental-continental>

Only the ribbing uses continental purl; if you use the Norwegian purl method, you can purl with yarn held at the back in your left hand, which saves having to bring the yarn forward to purl and makes the ribbing go quicker. Instructions here: <http://www.knittinghelp.com/video/play/the-purl-stitch-norwegian-continental>

English-style knitting

English-style purling holds the working yarn in the right hand. Instructions can be found here: <http://www.knittinghelp.com/video/play/the-purl-stitch-english-english>

Only the ribbing uses the English knit stitch. Instructions here: <http://www.knittinghelp.com/video/play/the-knit-stitch-english-english>



Abbreviations

NS: near side: the layer of fabric with its wrong side facing you. All NS sts are worked with yarn from the right hand.

FS: far side: the layer of fabric with its wrong side facing away from you. All FS sts are worked with yarn from the left hand.

[Note that NS and FS refer to the *current* orientation of the work]

ke: knit English style, with yarn from the right hand

pe: purl English style, with yarn from the right hand

kc: knit continental, with yarn from the left hand

pc: purl continental, with yarn from the left hand

m1k: increase one knit: using the right needle, pick up the strand between sts on FS, twist and put it on the left needle, kc

m1p: increase one purl: using the right needle, pick up the strand between sts on NS, twist and put it on the left needle, pe

iodk: inside-out double knitting: hold the NS working yarn at the front in your right hand, hold the FS working yarn at the back in your left hand, pe1 with right hand yarn, kc1 with left hand yarn [two stitches worked, one from each sock].

iodk1: work 1 pair of sts in inside-out double knitting

w2&t: wrap 2 and turn: bring NS yarn to back, sl next NS st to right needle, bring NS yarn to the front (one wrapped NS st on right needle). Bring FS yarn to the front, sl next FS st to right needle, and bring FS yarn to the back (one wrapped FS st on right needle). Sl both wrapped sts back to left needle. Turn the work and rearrange working yarn so that the new NS yarn is at the front in your right hand and the new FS yarn is at the back in your left hand.

uw2&t: unwrap 2 and turn: lift the wrap on the NS st with the tip of the right needle and put it onto the left needle next to the stitch it was wrapping. With the NS yarn, pe the stitch and its wrap together. In the same way, lift the FS wrap and put it on the left needle, and kc the stitch and its wrap together. Turn the work and rearrange working yarn so that the new NS yarn is at the front in your right hand and the new FS yarn is at the back in your left hand.

JSSBO: Jeny's Surprisingly Stretchy Bind Off. Instructions can be found at: <http://knitty.com/ISSUEfall09/FEATjssbo.php>



Toe

Using C1, cast on 24 stitches using Judy's Magic Cast On (<http://www.knitty.com/ISSUESpring06/FEATmagiccaston.html>) (that's 12 stitches per needle if you're using two circulars), knit one round. Transfer these stitches to stitch holders or spare needles.

Using C2, cast on 24 stitches using Judy's Magic Cast On, and knit one round.

Hold the two pieces of knitting right sides together (ie with the wrong sides showing), with both strands of working yarn at the same end, and with C1 on the bottom. Slide the stitches onto another set of needles, first a st of C1 and then one of C2. Continue alternating one st from each needle until all sts are on the same set of needles.

You now have two pieces of knitting on one set of needles and you're ready to start inside-out double knitting. Hold C1 at the front in your right hand, and C2 at the back in your left hand.

Round 1: pm for start of round * iodk1, m1p with C1, m1k with C2, iodk10, m1p with C1, m1k with C2, iodk1. Pm for middle of round. Repeat from * (4 pairs increased)

Round 2: iodk

Round 3: * sm iodk1, m1p with C1, m1k with C2, iodk to 1 pair before m, m1p with C1, m1k with C2, iodk1, rep from *

Repeat rounds 2 and 3: 7(9,11) more times. 56(64,72) pairs of sts.

Foot

Break yarn and swap yarn positions – you are now knitting the NS sock with C2 and the FS sock with C1.

You might want to use Meg's jogless jog (<http://www.socknitters.com/kickback/joglessjog.htm>) on the first stitch of the second row of each new stripe to make the line where the colours meet smoother.

Work iodk until knitting measures 7½(8½,9½) inches, or

1½ inches shorter than desired foot length.

Wrapping heel stitches

Break yarn, and swap yarn positions. The first half of the heel is worked with C1 on the outer sock and C2 on the inner sock, working back and forth across the first 28(32,36) sts.

Row 1: (C1 on NS, C2 on FS) iodk 27(31,35), w2&t

Row 2: (C2 on NS, C1 on FS) iodk 26(30,34), w2&t

Row 3: (C1 on NS, C2 on FS) iodk to the last pair of unwrapped sts, w2&t

Row 4: (C2 on NS, C1 on FS) iodk to the last pair of unwrapped sts, w2&t

Repeat rows 3 and 4 until you have wrapped 9(10,12) stitches on each side. 10(12, 12) unwrapped stitches in the middle. C1 facing.

Unwrapping heel stitches

Break yarn, and swap yarn positions. The second half of the heel is worked with C2 on the outer sock and C1 on the inner sock.

Row 1: iodk to first wrapped pair, uw2&t

Row 2: sl one pair of sts, iodk to first wrapped pair, uw2&t

Repeat row 2 until all sts have been unwrapped.





Leg

Break yarn and swap yarn positions – you are now working the NS (outer) sock with C1 and the FS (inner) sock with C2.

Work iodr until work measures 3.5 inches from the heel, or desired distance to ribbing.

Cuff

Break yarn and swap yarn positions – you are now working the NS (outer) sock with C2 and the FS (inner) sock with C1.

Work one round of iodr (this avoids the visible bump of the old colour in the purl columns).

Ribbing: * pe1 on NS with C2, kc1 on FS with C1, ke1 on NS with C2, pc1 on FS with C1. Repeat from *

Work until ribbing measures 1½ inches, or desired length.

Finishing

You can either separate the socks to bind them off, or (slightly more fiddly) bind them off without separating them.

Bind off by separating

Separate the socks by alternately sliding C1 sts onto one needle, and C2 sts onto another. Bind off using JSSBO.

Bind off without separating

Using JSSBO, bind off the next NS st. Stick the right hand needle end into the outside of the knitting to keep it out of the way, and prevent dropping the NS st while you work the next FS st.

Take a spare needle (if you're using two circulars, you can use a free end of your resting needle), and bind off the next FS st. Stick this needle into the inside of the knitting while you work the next NS st.

Continue to bind off, using a separate needle tip for each sock, and anchoring the resting needle in the knitting while you work the other.

Separate the socks, and weave in the ends.



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