

P O N Y E X P R E S S

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By Audrey Paquin

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These socks were designed for Catherine of [Mama Llama knits](#), and inspired by her beautiful “Cowboy” sock yarn. The name of the color itself strikes the imagination with so many images; I just had to use something from them in the design. I thought of the cowboys who were the first mail men in North America: the dedicated cowboys of the Pony Express. Hence I used a “horseshoe” cable on the side of the leg to represent the horses and a series of askew eyelets to represent the many roads these poor fellows had to race down to get their goods and messages delivered. It was a life of hardship and danger, but the scenery must have been amazing.

I knit these socks using two circular needles. Also, the construction of the sock is such that once the heel has been reached, the stitches are rearranged to position the cable on the side of the leg (because no one wants a cable on their foot).

Material: 1 skein Mama Llama fingering weight

basic sock yarn, color Cowboy (approx. 411 meters/450 yards), two circular needles 2.5 mm (US #2), 1 cable needle

Tip

- ❖ I like to use larger needles to cast on to make sure that the edge of the sock is flexible enough for the foot to slip in easily. If you like, you can cast on holding two needles together also and taking the second needle out before dividing the stitches and knitting the first round.

Gauge: 8 stitches per inch (2.5 cm) in 2 x 2 ribbing.

Stitches used

K = Knit

P = Purl

Yo = yarn over – bring yarn to front of work before knitting next stitch

K2tog = knit two stitches together

SKPO = slip one stitch, knit the next stitch, pass the slipped stitch over the knit stitch (equals one decrease)

SSK = slip one stitch, slip the next stitch, insert left needle into front of 2 slipped stitches, knit together (equals one decrease)

C3B = six stitches cable – slide 3 stitches on cable needle, leave to back of work, knit 3 stitches from left needle, knit 3 stitches from cable needle

C3F = six stitches cable – slide 3 stitches on cable needle, leave to front of work, knit 3 stitches from left needle, knit 3 stitches from cable needle

Directions

Loosely cast on 68 stitches. Place 34 stitches on each of your two circular needles. Join and start knitting in the round being careful not to twist the first stitches. Place a marker on N1. You can also use a set of five double pointed needles and place 17 stitches on four needles. You will need to be careful when following the charts though.

Rib K2, P2 for 1 inch (2.5 cm), or more if you like.

Start knitting leg of sock using Chart I. Continue with this chart until your leg is the length you like. Don't forget to note on which row you ended the leg on so you can pick up with the appropriate row when you are ready to knit the top of the foot.



Heel Set-Up Row*

In order for the cables to appear on the side of the leg, you need to shift the stitches around a little before knitting the heel. * I used an extra needle to do this more comfortably.

- Slip 17 stitches from beginning of N1 to an empty double pointed needle.
- With N1, transfer 17 stitches from N2 to N1
- Holding N2, knit the 17 stitches waiting on the double pointed needle.
- The stitches on N2 will be used to knit the heel and gusset. Those on N1 will be used to knit the top of the foot

Heel flap

Row 1 – slip 1 stitch purlwise, purl remaining stitches

Row 2 – *slip 1 stitch as if to knit, K1, repeat from * to end of row

Repeat these two rows until heel measures 2 1/2" (6.35 cm) – end on a knit row

Gusset

Row 1 – slip 1 purlwise, P18, P2 tog., P1, turn

Row 2 – slip 1 knitwise, K5, SSK, K1, turn

Row 3 – slip 1 purlwise, P6, P2 tog., P1, turn

Row 4 – slip 1 knitwise, K7, K2 tog., K1, turn

Continue this way until you reach the last row (slip 1 knitwise, K17, SSK, K1), you now have 20 stitches left.

We will now get ready to knit in the round again.

Remember that N1 refers to the needle holding the stitches for the top of the foot and N2 to the needle holding the stitches for the bottom of the foot.

– With same needle (N2), pick up and knit into every slipped stitch on the left side of the heel (I got 17)

– With needle 1, knit stitches according to Chart II for the top of the foot. Start with the row you were to use next when you stopped knitting the leg of the sock.

– With N2 again, pick up and knit into every slipped stitch on the right side of the heel (I got 17), knit the rest of the stitches on the needle.

Gusset Decrease Rounds

Round 1 N1 – knit according to Chart II
 N2 – K1, SKPO, knit to last 3 stitches, K2
tog., K1

Round 2 N1 – knit according to Chart II
 N2 – Knit all stitches

Repeat these two rounds until you have 34 stitches left on N2. Continue with row 2 for the rest of the foot length. Allow about 1 1/2" (4 cm) for the toe decrease.

Toe decrease

Round 1 (decrease round)

Needles 1 & 2: K1, SKPO, knit until last 3 stitches, K2 tog., K1

Round 2

Knit all stitches

Repeat rows 1 and 2 until you have a total of 36 stitches left (more or less, depending if you like a wide or narrow toe). Break yarn, graft remaining stitches and weave in ends.

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Chart I - Leg

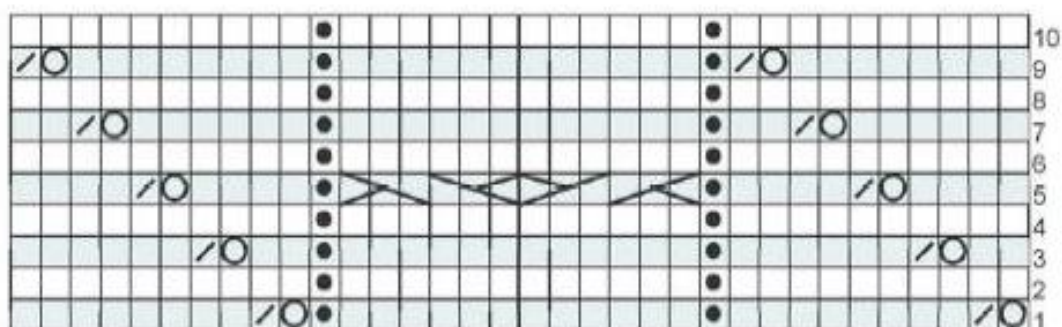


Chart Symbols

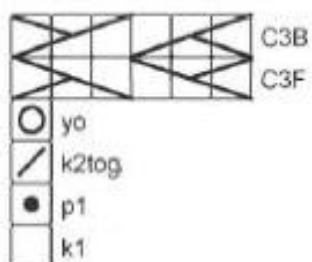


Chart II - Top of Foot

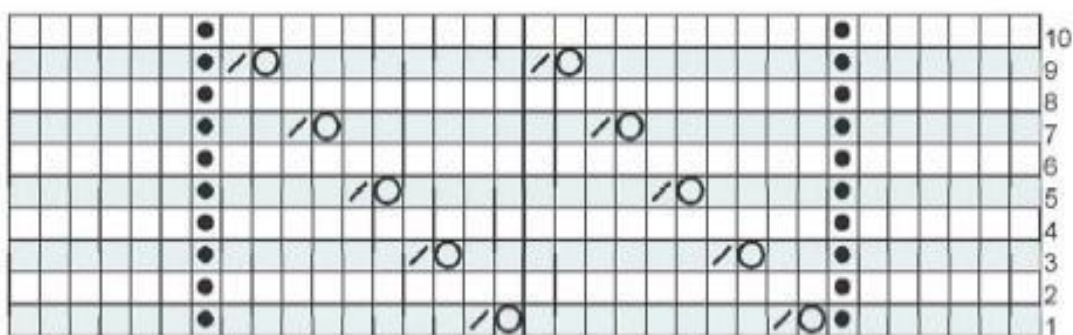


Chart Symbols

