Universal sock pattern

(All these strings of numbers in parentheses making your eyes glaze over? Try the algebraic version, which works off of proportions. Need something you can print out and stick in your pocket? Try the pocket reference, with all the excess words cut out. Prefer to work with two circular needles instead of DPNs? Try the Two Circular Needles Adaptation, courtesy of Jo Gerrard.)

Materials: approximately 100 grams or 4 ounces of yarn of any weight; heavier yarns will need a bit more, lighter yarns will need a bit less.

Needles: A set of five double point needles suitable to the yarn, as follows:

- Lace weight yarn: size 0 (10 st/in)
- Sock weight yarn: size 0, 1, or 2 (7-9 st/in)
- Fingering weight yarn: size 2 (8 st/in)
- DK or sport weight yarn: size 2 or 3 (7 st/in)
- Light worsted yarn: size 4 (6 st/in)
- Worsted yarn: size 4 or 5 (5.5 - 6 st/in)
- Heavy worsted yarn: size 5 or 6 (5 st/in)
- Chunky yarn: size 7 (4 st/in)

Gauges given are approximate. The idea behind this pattern is to enable you to pick up some yarn and think "oooh, this would make some lovely socks" and be able to just go to it. If you need to adjust the stitch numbers to get an even pattern repeat, a good rule of thumb is that you can usually go up or down 5% without much difficulty. Cable or twist-stitch patterns will need more stitches cast on since they draw in, while lace patterns will need fewer stitches; experiment!

Instructions are given for size 2 needles, with (size 7, size 6, size 5, size 4, size 3, size 1, size 0) instructions in parentheses.

Abbreviations:
K: knit
P: purl
Sl: Slip a stitch by passing it from one needle to the other without knitting it.
K2tog: knit two stitches together as though they were one stitch
SSK: Slip Slip Knit - slip one stitch as if to knit, slip one stitch as if to purl, put the tip of
the non-working needle back into the FRONT of these two stitches, and knit together
through the back loop.
K2tog tbl: Knit two stitches together through the back loop or leg of the stitch.

CASTING ON: using a needle 2-3 sizes larger, cast on 64 (40, 44, 44, 48, 56, 72, 80)
stitches. Divide between four needles of the appropriate size and join, being careful not to
twist the stitches.

CUFF: Work a k1, p1 rib for 16 (10, 11, 11 12, 14, 18, 20) rounds.

LEG: This is where you pick up your pattern. If you don't have a specific pattern in
mind, I suggest either a (k2, p2) rib or a (k3, p1) rib. Either looks good, is easy, and fits
beautifully. In any case, for shorter (ankle) socks, work 48 (30, 33, 33, 36, 42, 54, 60)
rounds; for longer (calf-length) socks, work 64 (40, 44, 44, 48, 56, 72, 80) rounds OR a
number of rounds to give you an even pattern repeat.

HEEL: These instructions are for a gusset heel. You're going to start by knitting two
needles' worth of stitches onto one needle; be sure to put the extra needle somewhere
where you can find it again! (I usually weave it through the cuff of the sock.)
*Sl 1, k 1*; repeat across 2 needles worth of stitches, using the same needle as your
working needle the whole time. When you're done with that, you should have 32 (20, 22,
22, 24, 28, 36, 40) stitches on one needle. Turn the work around and slip the first stitch,
then purl the rest across.
Repeat these two rows (right side: *sl 1, k1*; wrong side, sl 1, p remaining stitches) until
you have 32 (20, 22, 22, 24, 28, 36, 40) rows altogether; this will be 16 (10, 11, 11, 12,
14, 18, 20) slipped stitches up the side of the heel flap. Be sure to end on a wrong side
row.

Now you're going to turn the heel. If you've never done this before, it will be confusing.
Just trust the pattern and it will work out.

ROW 1: Sl 1, k 18 (11, 12, 12, 13, 15, 20, 22), k2tog, k1, turn.
Row 2: Sl 1, p7 (5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 7, 7), p2tog, p1, turn.
Row 3: Sl 1, k to within one stitch of gap, k2 tog across gap, k1, turn. (look at your
needles. See the gap in between the stitches you've worked in this short row in the middle
and the stitches that still need to be worked ? That's the gap I'm talking about.)
Row 4: Sl 1, p to within one stitch of gap, p2tog across gap, p1, turn.

Repeat rows 3 and 4 until all stitches have been worked. You may not be able to work the
final k1 after the decrease on the last row. That's fine. 18 (12, 14, 14, 14, 16, 22, 24)
stitches remain. If you ended on a right side row, proceed with the gusset; if you've ended
on a wrong side row, K across plain.

Now you should have a tube with a flap hanging off of it, and the flap sort of curves
around and has a little floor at it at the bottom. The needle in the end of the heel flap is
needle #1 (N1), the needles in the instep stitches (the ones you've been ignoring all this time) are needles #2 and #3 (N2 and N3). The needle in your hand is #4 (N4). The needle in the cuff of your sock or wherever you stuck it is #5 (N5).

Using N1 as your working needle, pick up 16 (10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20) stitches along the side of the heel flap. You can either do this by sticking N4 through the big loop made by the slip stitch on the side of the heel and then knitting that loop off N4, or you can go to the purl stitch just inside the big loop, pick that one up with N4, and then knit it off N4.

Knit across N2 and N3, either plain or in pattern depending on whether or not you want the pattern to continue down the instep.

Using N4 as your working needle and N5, pick up 16 (10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20) stitches along the OTHER side of the heel flap. Still using N4 as the working needle, knit 9 (6, 7, 7, 8, 11, 12) stitches off of N1. You should now have 4 needles in the work, with 16 (10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20) stitches on N2 and N3, and 25 (16, 18, 19, 22, 29, 32) stitches on N1 and N4. The join between N1 and N4, at the bottom of the heel, is now the beginning of the round.

**Gusset:** This is the part where the sock decreases as your foot gets narrower over the instep.

Round 1: K to 3 stitches before end on N1, K2tog, K1. K across N2 and N3 in pattern. On N4, K1, SSK (or k2tog tbl), and knit to end.
Round 2: Knit plain (instep stitches in pattern, if you're doing that)
Repeat these two rounds until the foot needles (N1 and N4) have 16 (10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20) stitches each on them.

**Foot:** Continue to knit the foot with no further decreases until the entire foot, including the gusset rows, measures 64 (40, 44, 44, 48, 56, 72, 80) rows. (Sizing note: This is for a women's medium shoe size. If your foot is not a woman's medium foot, measure your foot from the back of the heel to the tip of your big toe, and subtract 2". Knit your sock foot to that length.)

**Toe:** This is a wedge toe. Discontinue the pattern stitch, if you were carrying it down the instep. From here on out, knit plain.

Round 1: K to 3 stitches before end of N1, K2tog, K1. On N2, K1, SSK (or k2tog tbl), K to end. On N3, K to 3 stitches before end, K2 tog, K1. On N4, K1, SSK (or K2tog tbl), K to end.
Round 2: Knit plain.
Repeat these two rounds until there are 9 (6, 6, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11) stitches on each needle, then repeat round 1 only until there are 2 stitches left on each needle. Cut the yarn, leaving about an eight-inch tail. Thread a blunt needle with the yarn, and run it around through all 8 remaining stitches twice. Pull tight, tie off, and weave in the ends. *(If you choose, you may leave 3 stitches on each needle and close the toe by the Kitchener stitch or grafting. Instructions on how to do so are beyond the scope of this document, at least until I get up off my lazy behind and write them.)*
Knit another sock to match, and you're done!

**Addendum for 4 needles:**

Hmmmm, let me think about it.
For the leg of the sock, I would split the stitches so that there are:
- size 7: 13 13 14 (40 overall)
- size 6 or size 5: 14 15 15 (44 overall)
- size 4: 16 16 16 (48 overall)
- size 3: 19 19 18 (56 overall)
- size 2: 21 21 22 (64 overall)
- size 1: 24 24 24 (72 overall)
- size 0: 27 27 26 (80 overall)

When you get to the heel, split the stitches as follows:
- size 7: 20 10 10
- size 6/5: 22 11 11
- size 4: 24 12 12
- size 3: 28 14 14
- size 2: 32 16 16
- size 1: 26 18 18
- size 0: 40 20 20

Knit the heel stitches on the needle with the large number of stitches on it.
When you get to the gusset, pick up stitches with N1 as described, then knit N2 and N3 (instep needles) onto one needle, then pick up with N4 to form the other side of the foot. Decrease until the foot needles have the number of stitches on them in the instructions.

For the toe decreases:
- N1: K to 3 before end, K2 tog, K1
- N2: K1, SSK, K to3 before end, K2tog, K1
- N3: K1, SSK, K to end

Et voila.

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