

Customising Knit Socks Quick Tips

Tension\Gauge\Measurements

Everything begins with swatching! This is especially true if you are using a yarn that's not similar to the one used by the designer in the sample pair, or if you predict that you are going to need to make some modifications to the pattern in order for the socks to fit you perfectly. If you are knitting the socks in the round, remember to also swatch in the round and make sure to use the same stitch pattern in the swatch that is given in the pattern's gauge information. By knitting the swatch in the same main stitch pattern that is used in the socks, you will also quickly see what kind of fabric that stitch pattern produces. For example, a stitch pattern that uses a lot of slipped stitches tends to be a little less stretchy, and this might be something you need to take into consideration when choosing which size to knit and which needles to choose. Use the same yarn and needles you are going to use for the socks and remember to make a big enough swatch to make the most of it!

The second thing to do is to compare your own foot measurements to the measurements given in the pattern. Keep in mind that most sock patterns are written with negative ease, so the measurements for the sock will be a bit smaller than your actual foot measurements.

Perhaps the easiest way of adjusting the sock size is knitting them with either a thicker or thinner yarn than stated in the pattern. For example, if the pattern calls for a fingering weight yarn, you can make larger socks by choosing a sport or DK weight yarn instead. The same also works the other way round: using a fingering weight yarn for a sport weight pattern will result in a slightly smaller sock.

Length

The length of both the leg of a sock as well as the foot are usually quite easy to adapt. However, it really depends on the pattern and if you can make modifications to the leg length without compromising the pattern repeat too much. If you're knitting a sock that has a lace pattern running down the leg and you don't want to add more repeats of the chart (if the chart has very many rows, for example), you can make the leg longer by knitting a longer cuff. If you need to make the leg shorter you can omit some rows from the pattern.

If you need the foot to be longer, you can easily add rows to the toe section which is often knitted in stockinette stitch even if the rest of the instep is knitted following a certain pattern. If one pattern repeat on the instep isn't very long, you can also just add more pattern repeats to make for a longer sock or omit some to make the sock fit better on a smaller foot.

Width

Casting on a different number of stitches is of course the easiest way of making modifications to the sock circumference. If you need more space in the cuff, you can opt to cast on more stitches for the cuff and then just decrease back to the pattern stitch count after it.

Another thing to do is to check how wide the pattern repeat on the sock is. For example if the pattern repeat is four stitches wide, you can usually add or omit pattern repeats easily by just making sure that you have a stitch count that is divisible by four.

If the pattern has a wide pattern repeat, let's say ten or more stitches, and you don't want to add a whole pattern repeat, you can look for ways to add stitches into the pattern repeat. If, for example, there are columns of purl stitches running alongside the pattern, you could add some more purl stitches to these columns.

Remember that changing the stitch count for the leg (or for the foot if working toe-up) will also affect the stitch count for the heel.

You can often also make changes to the number of gusset increases or decreases in order to reach a stitch count that works best for you (keeping in mind how many stitches you need to complete the required pattern repeats).