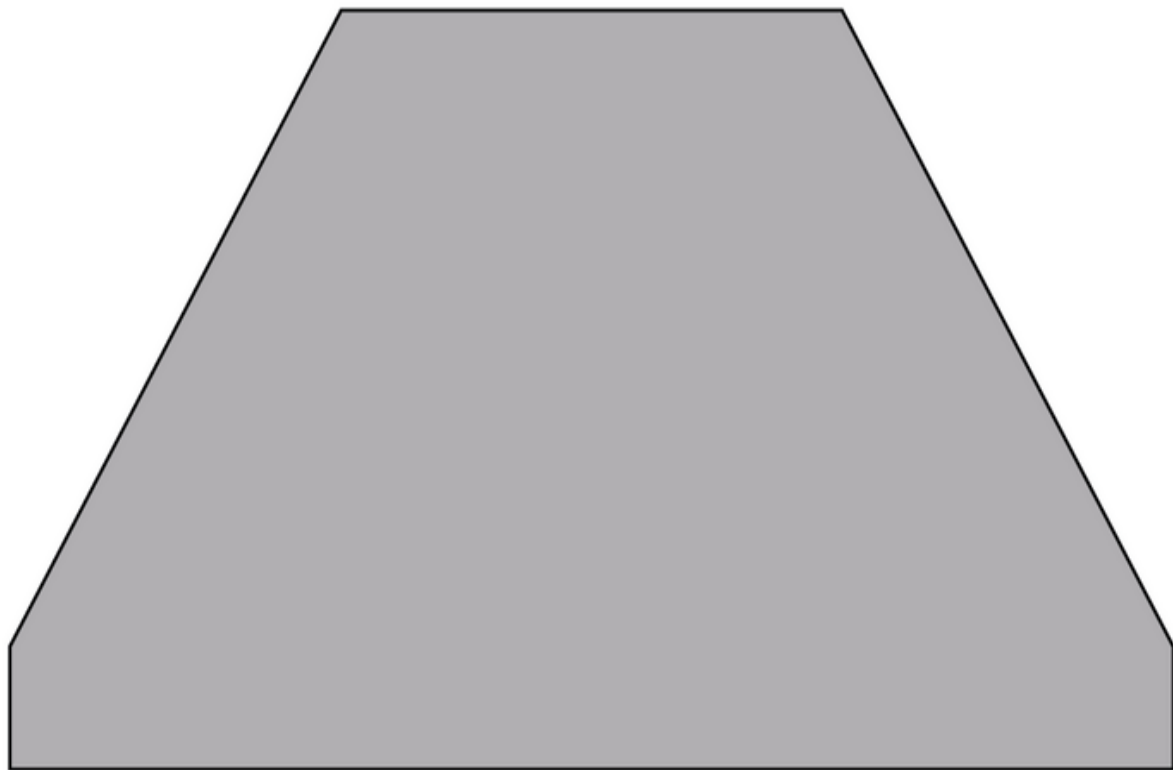


Knitting Socks – Toe Types

Knitting sock toes

In many sock patterns the toe is a trapezoid shape, achieved with four decreases or increases on alternate rounds depending on the direction you are knitting in.



Take a quick look at your toes. Do they really form this shape? Probably not. In a few simple steps this article will guide you on the path towards better fitting toes.

Get to know the shape of your foot

Stand on a sheet of paper and draw around your toes. Look at the shape; consider what you need in a sock toe.

Is it a blunt and square, does your big toe create a pointy shape, or do you have a more rounded shape? How 'tall' do your toes stand from the ground – do you need a deeper toe?

Getting to grips with shaping sock toes

There are three main elements you will need to consider.

1. The number of stitches at the end of the toe. These will either be the number you cast on or the number left at the end of the knitting process, depending on whether you knit top down or toe up.
2. The rate of decreases.
3. The position of the decreases.

The last two elements will control the shape of the foot.

To graft or to cinch your sock toe?

Grafting or Kitchener stitch is a way of joining the toe in a seamless fashion. Typically you would have between 20% and 30% of the total number of stitches remaining when you graft the toe. This is easily adjustable to get a good fit.

Cinching is when you take the remaining stitches, thread the yarn through and pull to close the gap. This creates a narrower, pointy toe.

Which method you choose is very much a matter of personal choice, and will be linked to the shape of your toes. If you have wide broad toes, it is unlikely that you will want to cinch the toe as this will result in a pointy toe.

Conversely, if you have longer pointy toes you might not want to graft. Experimentation is the best way to work out what is best for you.

When do I start my toe if I am knitting top down?

Many patterns are based on a toe about 5cm/2in long, and while this is okay as a rough guide I would recommend doing a bit of maths to make sure you get the best possible fit for your own foot. You'll need a few pieces of information and a calculator.

1. Row gauge. Work in either centimetres or inches; you need to know how many stitches are in each unit.
2. Total number of rounds worked for the chosen toe.

Next, divide the number of rounds by the number of rounds per centimetre; this will give you the total number of centimetres or inches worked for the toe.

I always err on the side of caution and make the foot slightly shorter rather than longer. You want to avoid saggy toes, so you're aiming to achieving negative ease.

Armed with the information about shaping and your foot sketch, look through the examples of toes shown here and decide which best suits your needs.

Remember, you can always adapt elements within a toe style to get the perfect fit.

Knitted sock toe variations

We have divided these toe methods into top-down and toe-up options, and four broad categories: square, pointy, rounded, and anatomical. Unless otherwise indicated, the marker placement divides the sock in half, splitting the top and bottom of the toe.

The patterns given below uses standard knitting abbreviations.

Here are all the knitted sock toe variations you'll find below:

Top down sock toes

1. Wedge (square)
2. Wedge variation (square)
3. Rounded/Pointy
4. Alternate rounded toe (pointy)
5. Star toe (pointy)
6. Rounded toe (rounded)
7. French toe (rounded)

Anatomically correct toes

1. Anatomical toes

Toe up sock toes

1. Wedge (square)

Top down sock toes

1. Wedge (square)

Rnd 1: *K1, SSK, knit to last 3 sts before mrk, K2tog, K1; rep from * to end of rnd.

Rnd 2: Knit.

Work until the desired number of stitches remains – usually about 25% of the total number of stitches used for the sock – then graft. You can make this wedge

blunter by ending with more stitches on your needles; between 30% and 40% depending on how square you want the toe to be.



2. Wedge variation (square)

(Wide toe with added depth)

Rnd 1: *K2, SSK, knit to last 4 sts before mrk, K2tog, K2; rep from * to end of rnd.

Rnd 2: Knit.

Work until desired number of stitches remains, then graft.

3. Rounded/Pointy

While this method is often referred to as a rounded toe, the resulting sock is actually rather pointy.

Work decrease round as per standard toe and use following decrease pattern:

Rnd 1 (decrease): *K1, SSK, knit to last 3 sts before mrk, K2tog, K1; rep from * to end of rnd.

Rnds 2 to 4: Knit.

Rnd 5: Decrease.

Rnds 6 and 7: Knit.

Repeat rnds 5 to 7 once more.

Rnd 11: Decrease.

Rnd 12: Knit.

Repeat rnds 11 and 12 twice more.

Rnd 13: Decrease.

Repeat this round until desired number of stitches remains – usually between 12% and 20% of total stitch count – then graft or cinch.



The so-called ‘rounded’ method actually produces a relatively pointed toe shape.

4. Alternate rounded toe (pointy)

Rnd 1: *K1, SSK, knit to last 3 sts before mrk, K2tog, K1; rep from * to end of rnd.

Rnd 2: Knit.

Repeat these two rounds until you have halved your total stitch count. Then repeat rnd 1 until desired number of stitches remains, and graft or cinch to close.

5. Star toe (pointy)

A pointy toe that looks rather strange but fits surprisingly well.

Divide the foot into four sections. Using markers will help you keep track of decreases (find our favourite [stitch markers](#) here).

Rnd 1: *Knit to 2 sts before mrk, K2tog; rep from * to end of rnd.

Rnd 2: Knit.

Repeat these two rounds until you have about 8 sts remaining, ending with a decrease round. Then cinch to close.



6. Rounded toe (hat style decreases)

The decreases in this toe are worked in a very similar way to a typical hat crown. The resulting shape is fairly rounded.

Divide the toe into eight sections; using markers will help you keep track of your decreases.

Rnd 1: *Knit to 2 sts before mrk, K2tog; rep from * to end of rnd.

Rnds 2 and 3: Knit.

Repeat rnds 1 to 3 until half of total original stitches remain. Then decrease on alternate rounds until 8 sts remain, and cinch to close.



7. French toe (rounded)

A rounded toe with a pleasant shape and decrease pattern. The positioning of decreases sometimes requires you to move the start of the round to centre the top decrease panel.

Divide the total stitches into three equal sections, or two equal sections and a third section with slightly more or less stitches, depending on stitch count.

Rnd 1: *K1, skpo, knit to 3 sts before mrk, K2tog, K1; rep from * to end of rnd.

Rnd 2: Knit.

Repeat these two rounds until you have about 12% of sts remaining, ending with a decrease round, then cinch to close.



Anatomically correct toes (anatomical)

These are toes that are shaped for your left and right foot, and are especially helpful if you have longer big toes. Decreases are worked on the outer edge of the foot first (two decreases every alternate round) and then at the very end decreases are worked on both sides to finish the toe.



The toe decreases on these two socks have been adapted to suit the shape of the right and left foot.

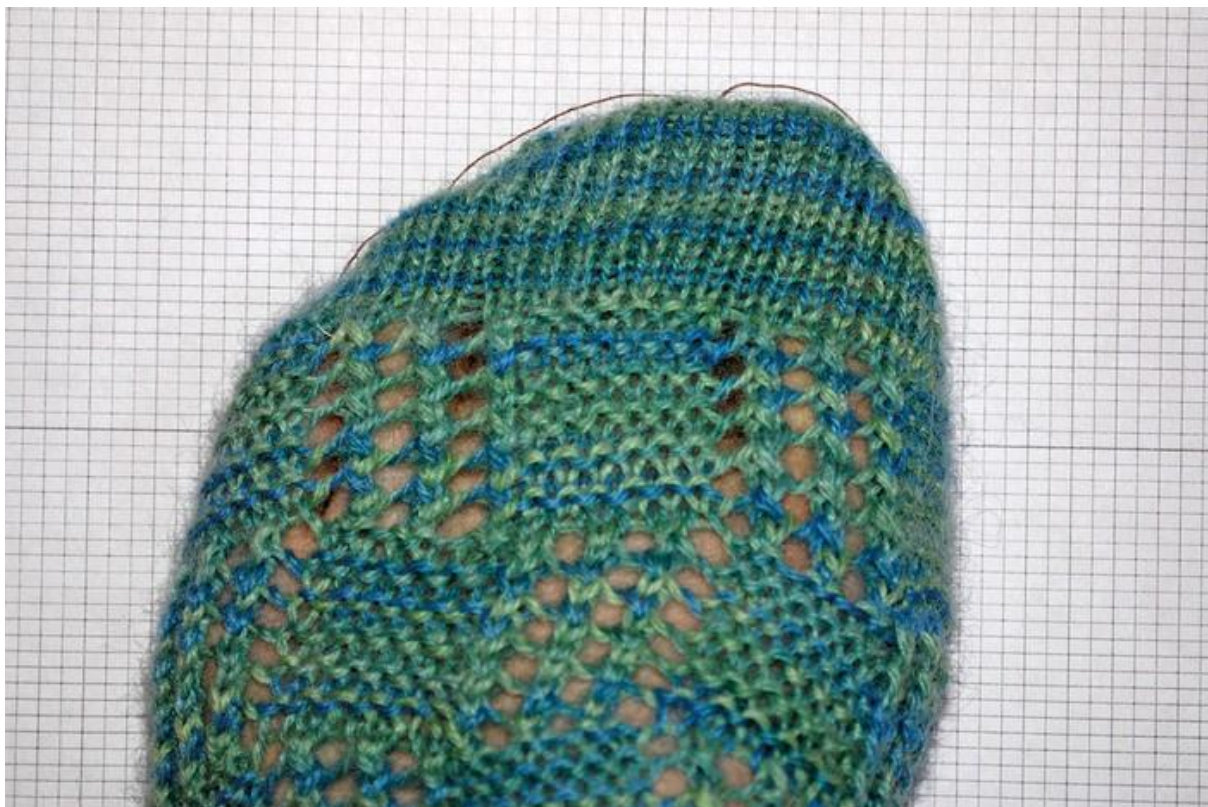
1. Anatomical toes

Adjust your sock toes to fit you perfectly by following these easy steps. You need some paper, a pencil and the number of stitches worked for your sock. Squared paper is best as it allows you to plot your decreases easily.

I highly recommend creating your own knitting graph paper to your exact gauge, as this gives the most precise representation of your knitting. I love this [Japanese website](#) as you can plug in your gauge and print out a sheet of graph paper. It's ideal for charting things like this toe (and also colourwork).

Step 1

Stand on the paper and draw around the toes of your right and left foot. You may choose to mirror the toes or to create a unique set of decreases for each foot; it depends on the shape of your toes.



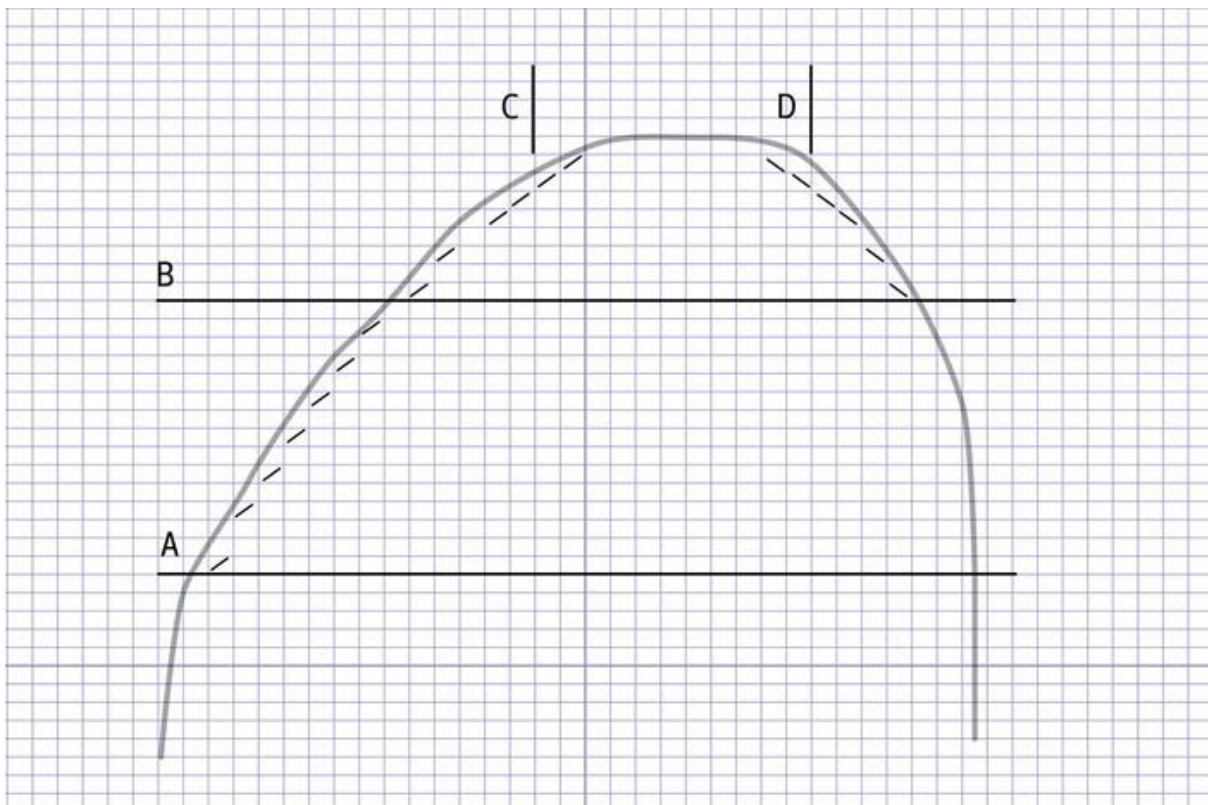
Step 2

To plot the decreases for your toe you need to give careful consideration to the shape of your foot and how you might achieve this shape with the toe decreases. The shape will be controlled by the number of decreases per round

and the rate of these decreases; essentially, how many rounds you work between decrease rounds.

Step 3

Decide where the single toe decreases should start for your foot. This is the spot where the foot starts to narrow. Shown as line A in the diagram.



Step 4

Decide where the double toe decreases should start. This is usually where the big toe curves. Shown as line B in the diagram

Step 5

Decide how wide the toe should be at the very end. Shown here between line C and D.

Step 6

Calculate how many decreases you need to plot within the toe.

Total number of sts – desired number of toe sts remaining at end = decreases.

Step 7

Plot your decreases onto your toe sketch. Remember you can adjust the number of rounds you knit between decreases to increase or decrease the angle created in your knitting.

The example diagram shows the decreases plotted for my left foot based on a gauge of 32 sts and 44 rows per 10cm using knitting graph paper.

- Total sock stitches = 64
- Toe stitches remaining = 22
- Decreases on left side only = 7 (14 sts decreased)
- Decreases on both sides = 6 (24 sts decreased)

Once you have plotted your decreases, work the decrease rounds as follows, placing a marker at the halfway point to help you keep track of decrease positions.

Decreases on left side only: K to 3 sts before mrk, K2tog, K1, slm, K1, SSK, knit to end of rnd. (2 sts dec'd.)

Decreases on right side only: K1, SSK, knit to 3 sts before end of round, K2tog, K1. (2 sts dec'd.)

Decreases on both sides of the toe: *K1, SSK, knit to 3 sts before mrk, K2tog, K1; rep from * to end of round. (4 sts dec'd.)

The proof of your calculations will be in the final knitted toe. Getting the perfect fit might take a little trial and error, but it will be worth the effort when you have beautifully shaped toes.

Toe up sock toes

Many of the top-down sock toe methods can be reversed for toe-up. Just choose a suitable cast-on method and increase instead of decreasing.

1. *Wedge (square)*

Using a suitable cast-on method, cast on your desired number of stitches – usually 25% of the total stitches needed for the sock circumference.

Rnd 1: Knit.

Rnd 2: *K1, M1R, knit to 1 st before mrk, M1L, K1; rep from * to end of rnd.

Repeat these two rounds until you have the desired number of stitches.



A wedge toe, worked toe-up by casting on 25% of the total stitches required for the sock.

2. Blunt wedge



Produce a blunter wedge toe by casting on more stitches then following the same instructions.

3. Short row



A short row toe can also be knitted from the toe up.

Knitting sock toes like a pro

There are two key elements to knitting sock toes that fit your feet like a glove.

First you need to know your feet! Take a good look at their shape by drawing around them on a piece of paper. Would pointy, blunt or rounded toes suit you best?

And the second is experimentation – don't be afraid to try out a few different styles to see what you prefer. With a bit of trial and error you'll soon discover which sock toes work for you.