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Knitting two socks on the Magic Loop

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Knitting two socks on the magic loop is not particularly difficult. There are two ways to get your socks cast on so that the stitches are distributed properly to start knitting.

The easiest method is to cast on half of the stitches for one sock, then all of the stitches for the second sock. Pull out a loop of cable in the middle of the second sock, then the needle may be brought close to the yarn of the first sock, and the rest of the stitches for this sock may be cast on.

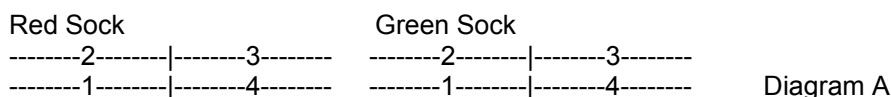
If you like to close the top of your sock by exchanging stitches, you would begin by casting on all the stitches for one sock and exchanging the first and last cast-on stitches for this sock. Then you would cast on half the stitches for the other sock. Transfer these stitches to the other end of the needle by slipping each stitch purlwise. Your yarn from the ball is now at the right place to cast on the rest of the stitches for this sock so that they positioned on the needle in the same way as the stitches for the first sock. When all these stitches have been cast on, you will be able to close the top of this sock by exchanging stitches as well.

When you are knitting two socks on the magic loop, you will ordinarily start to knit with the front of the leg on one side of the loop, and the back of the leg on the other. This lets you knit all the way to the end of both heel flaps on both socks at the same time.

I have illustrated this with one green sock and one red sock. In my descriptions I have also numbered the quarters of the sock the way they would be numbered in a pattern for 5 dpn's. By using the familiar numbering, I hope to prevent confusion for those who have been used to knitting this way. As a bonus, you can use this information to see how to adapt any sock pattern to the Magic Loop method!

I would like to thank Dorothy Daybell on the 2CircsSockList yahoo group for the first hint as to how this would be done. She talked about shifting stitches to knit in profile, and said it is easily done. The "secret" turned out to be the use of an extra needle. During our correspondence about this, she even experimented with using only the spare ends of the 2 circular needles to do this, and discovered that it can be done, but it is much clumsier than using an extra needle. On the Magic Loop, of course, there are no spare ends dangling around, so you would have to use the extra needle! So here is my final result.

When both heel flaps have been knit, and you are at the end of a purl row, you have the stitches distributed like this with the yarn from the ball between "needles 3 and 4" of each sock.



The vertical line is a stitch marker. “Needles 2 and 3” are the instep stitches, which have been resting patiently while you knit your heel flaps.

Green Sock

Turn the heel on the Green Sock, knit to the end of "needle 1" and pick up the gusset stitches along the side of the green heel flap. You can leave a loop between "needle 4" and "needle 1" on the Green Sock now, or make it later.

Red Sock

Then turn the heel on the Red Sock. When you have turned the heel, you use the extra needle and knit the stitches of "needle 4". Then you knit the stitches of "needle 1" of the Red Sock on the ML needle and pick up gusset stitches along the side of the heel flap of this sock.



Illustration 1

What you have now looks like this. The coiless safety pin was my stitch marker at the center of the heel, between “needle 4” and “needle 1”. A loop has been made here already, but you can still see where the loop used to be between the instep stitches and the heel flap.



Illustration 2

The socks have now been turned over, ready to knit instep stitches. There are white plastic stitch markers at the center of each instep between “needles 2 and 3”.

Now you knit the stitches on "needle 2" and "needle 3" of the Red Sock, leaving a new loop between them, pick up stitches for the other side of the gusset and knit the stitches of "needle 4" off the extra needle.

The rest of the Green Sock

Knit the stitches of "needle 2" of the Green Sock onto the extra needle and finally the stitches of "needle 3" onto the ML needle.

Now you can pick up the stitches for the other side of the gusset on the Green Sock and knit the stitches of "needle 4".



Illustration 3

What you have now looks like this. I left the stitch marker at the center of the instep stitches on the red sock so you could see the new loop that has been made there.



Illustration 4

The socks have now been turned over, ready to continue knitting.

The socks are now arranged as follows (see Illustration 4)

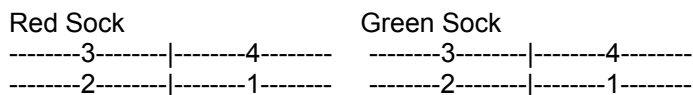


Diagram B

with the stitches of "needle 2" of the Green Sock on the spare needle.

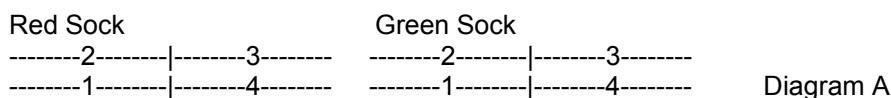
You are at the center of the heel, which now is the beginning of the round. As you knit this round, you will want to add stitch markers between gusset stitches (on “needles 4 and 1”) and instep stitches (on “needles 2 and 3”) to make it easier to see where decreases should be made. In diagram B above, these stitch markers are shown. You can see that the stitches on the spare needle should be knit onto the ML when you come to the end of the gusset stitches on the Green Sock. This is where your first stitch marker should be added.

Your pattern will tell you whether this round should be knit straight, or whether you will have made your first gusset decrease before placing this first stitch marker (since gusset decreases are made at the end of “needle 1” and at the beginning of “needle 4”).

Some time between finishing the gussets and starting the toe, you may want to rotate the stitches on the needles again, so that the top of each foot is on one length of needle and the bottoms are on the other. (This time you will knit “Red needle 1” onto the extra needle, and afterwards “Green needle 3”.)

If you do not want to rotate to profile to do your heels, you would turn the heel as in lesson 3 of the Socknitters cyber tutorial for knitting 2 socks on 2 circulars at <http://www.socknitters.com/2circs/index.htm>

Referring to our diagram, this is how she does it:



Green Sock

Turn the heel on the Green Sock, knit to the end of "needle 1" and pick up the gusset stitches along the side of the green heel flap

Red Sock

Then turn the heel on the Red Sock, knit the stitches of "needle 1" of the Red Sock and pick up gusset stitches along the side of the red heel flap.

Turn your work and knit all the instep stitches. Turn.

Green Sock

Pick up the gusset stitches along the side of the Green heel flap, then knit the stitches of "needle 4" and "needle 1". If your pattern begins decreases on the first round of the gusset, your first decrease will be at the end of "needle 1". Your decrease on the other side of the sock will be made the next time you come to the beginning of "needle 4".

Red Sock

Do the same as for the Green Sock.

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Comments:

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