



# Glossary of Sock Terms

**AFTERTHOUGHT HEEL:** worked by cutting into the sock tube at the location where you want the heel. Stitches are picked up and decreased as for a wedge toe, then grafted at the end.

**CINCH TOE:** like closing the top of a hat, a length of yarn is threaded through a small amount of live stitches and pulled tight. Not very durable but may work for heavier weight socks/slippers.

**CUFF:** the very top of the sock, usually worked in ribbing. It is important to make sure that the cuff is stretchy in order for the sock to go on but not so stretchy that it gaps.

**DPNs:** typically 4 (but sometimes 5) needles used to knit small circumference in the round. Some patterns written specifically for DPNs may be challenging to convert to other methods, especially for newer sock knitters.

**DUTCH HEEL:** a square heel turn that can be good for wider feet, it maintains a consistent number of heel stitches

**EYE OF PARTRIDGE HEEL:** a decorative heel flap that incorporates slipped stitches, it is durable and a nice alternative to a traditional slipped stitch heel flap.

**FINCHLEY GRAFT:** an alternative to Kitchener stitch, worked with the right sides facing. Grafts live stitches more easily but requires the sock to be turned inside-out.

**FISH LIPS KISS HEEL:** may be best for narrow feet/heels. Similar to short-row heel but some say easier, works well with variegated yarn.

**FLEEGL HEEL:** may add height to sock as well as width to the ankle. Creates a gusset and short-row heel on toe up socks. Known as a strong heel when worked cuff-down

**FORETHOUGHT HEEL:** similar to the afterthought heel but utilizes waste yarn to mark the placement of the heel and hold the stitches

**FLEXI-FLIPS:** shorter needles with a bend in them allowing for small circumference knitting with 3 total needles. One end is pointy and the other more blunt.

**FOOT:** The length of the sock between the heel and the toe.

**GERMAN SHORT ROW:** a method of working short rows for the heel that involves pulling the yarn over the top of the needle to create a "double stitch" which is resolved on the next pass by knitting the two legs of the double stitch together

**GUSSET:** typically used in cuff-down sock patterns to increase the amount of fabric over the heel diagonal then decrease back down for the foot. Sometimes a modified or mini gusset will be incorporated to improve the fit of short row or other heels

**HEEL FLAP:** a square or rectangular piece of fabric knit flat that sits at the back of the ankle/heel. The heel flap is typically worked over 1/2 the total stitches and often includes slipped stitches to make it more durable.

**HEEL TURN:** The portion of the sock that creates a "cup" for the heel, typically utilizing short rows.

**INSTEP:** the portion of the sock that covers the top of the foot between the toe and the ankle.

**JENY'S SURPRISINGLY STRETCHY BIND-OFF:** a very stretchy bind off for cuffs, it involves "processing" a knits and purls in addition to binding them off normally, which creates more slack

**JUDY'S MAGIC CAST-ON:** a seamless cast on for toe-up socks which can be worked with two needles held parallel using dpns, two circulars, or magic loop. A small amount of stitches are "loaded" onto each needle. During the first round half the stitches will be mounted backwards and need to be knit through the back loop.

**KITCHENER STITCH:** a method of grafting live stitches that is worked with the wrong sides facing one another. Typically used to close the toes of cuff-down socks.

**LEG:** the portion of the sock between the cuff and ankle/heel.

**LONG TAIL CAST-ON:** the most common and versatile cast-on often used for cuff-down socks. Can be worked on a larger needle to avoid the cuff being too tight.

**MAGIC LOOP:** method of knitting small circumference using one long (at least 32") where half the stitches are held on the cable while the other half are worked. Flexible cables are a must for this technique.



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**9" CIRCS:** a way to knit small circumference, needles may be as short as 2.5". Sometimes one needle is longer to decrease hand strain.

**NYLON:** commonly included in sock yarns, typically 10%-30% of the total fiber content. More nylon is associated with increased durability

**NEGATIVE EASE:** when the circumference of a knit item is less than the item it's meant to fit, meaning a sock should stretch to fit the foot. A sock without negative ease will sag and bunch on the foot.

**OLD NORWEGIAN CAST-ON:** similar to the long-tail but uses an extra twist to create a bit more stretch and looks a little neater. Also called "Twisted German".

**REINFORCEMENT THREAD:** a thin, durable thread held with the main yarn in high-wear areas to create longer lasting socks. May be nylon, silk, mohair, wool or a blend of these. Should not alter the gauge or look of the stitches unless that is the desired effect (as with mohair).

**ROUND TOE:** decreases are evenly distributed, similar to working the crown of the hat. Fewer plain rounds are worked as you get closer to the toe, creating a dome shape. Closed with a cinch or graft.

**SELF-STRIPING YARN:** yarn dyed to automatically create stripes as you knit. If using self-striping yarn take care to choose a pattern, especially a heel, that will not pool or break up the stripe pattern and negatively impact overall look.

**SEWN BIND OFF:** stretchy bind off worked using a tapestry needle and a tail three times the length of the bind off. Very neat and stretchy but can flare if tension isn't even.

**SHADOW WRAP HEEL:** a short row heel method that does not require resolving wraps and therefore may appear more seamless. A "twin stitch" is created by knitting or purling into the stitch below the turning stitch then working those together on the next pass.

**SHORT ROW HEEL:** any technique where half (usually) of the stitches are worked back and forth to create progressively shorter rows using wrap and turn, german or other short row techniques. They are not as durable as a heel flap but some prefer the smooth look, especially when using contrast color yarn.

**SOCK BLOCKERS:** plastic, wooden, or metal foot shape for drying damp socks. Not necessary but especially good for socks with lace or colorwork. Can be one size or adjustable.

**SOLE:** the bottom part of the sock that covers the sole of the foot from heel to toe, including the arch.

**STAR TOE:** looks a little strange but fits well. Stitch count needs to be divisible by 4. No graft required but not as durable if cinched.

**TURKISH CAST-ON:** an invisible seamless cast-on often used for toe-up socks, also called the "figure 8". It is worked differently from Judy's magic cast-on and the first row is often noticeably taller than all the rest.

**TWISTED GERMAN CAST-ON:** similar to the long-tail but uses an extra twist to create a bit more stretch and looks a little neater. Also called "Old Norwegian"

**VARIEGATED YARN:** yarn that utilizes different colors without striping, may look speckled or have short color repeats. Great for adding interest to plain patterns. Subtly variegated yarns can look good with more intricate patterns but highly variegated yarns will obscure complex stitchwork.

**WEDGE TOE:** classic toe for both toe-up and cuff-down, can be easily customized for toe depth and width by varying the rate of decreases.

**WRAP AND TURN:** a short row method often used for heels in which stitches are wrapped with the working yarn and "resolved" by knitting or purling the yarn with its wrap on the next row.