

## Charybdis

*Simple spiral socks knitted from the toe up*



In Greek mythology, Charybdis was a sea monster who belched out water in a menacing and deadly whirlpool. There's nothing menacing about the toe up construction of these socks or deadly about their simple short row heel, but there are whirlpools- a simple stitch pattern winds its way across each instep and spirals up the leg of each sock.

Originally a beautiful sea nymph and daughter of Poseidon, God of the Sea, Charybdis flooded land to enlarge her father's underwater kingdom, until Zeus turned her into a monster as punishment. Homeric myth has Charybdis lying on one side of a narrow strait of water, while upon a rock on the other side sat Scylla, another equally grotesque and dangerous sea-monster. The two sides of the strait were so close that sailors attempting to avoid Charybdis would pass too close to Scylla and vice versa. Even the legendary hero Odysseus was almost destroyed by Charybdis after narrowly surviving Scylla. Talk about being caught between a rock and a hard place...

**Yarn:** about 360 yards of fingering/4-ply sock weight yarn (depending on how long you want your socks to be). Socks in the pictures are knitted using Socrates Merino Supersock by Violet Green in Kew.

**Gauge:** 8 stitches to one inch.

**Needles:** 2.5mm, or size needed to get gauge. Use your choice of magic loop, two circulars or double pointed needles to work in the round. This pattern is written for the magic loop method for simplicity, but can easily be adapted.

**Size:** Women's medium. The length of the foot and leg are both determined by you as you knit.

**Abbreviations:**

k: knit

p: purl

RS: Right side of work

WS: Wrong side of work

K2tog: Knit 2 together

P2tog: Purl 2 together

st(s): stitch(es)

m1: Make 1 stitch

**Directions****Toe:**

Cast on 20 sts (10 sts on each needle) using the extremely simple but effective magic cast on developed by Judy Becker, details of which can be found here:

<http://www.knitty.com/ISSUESpring06/FEATmagiccaston.html>

Working in the round, knit the 10 stitches on the first needle, then knit the 10 stitches on the second needle through back of loops (to untwist these stitches).

Increase round: [k1, m1, k to last stitch on needle, m1, k1] and repeat for second needle. Knit one round.



Repeat previous two rounds until there are 32 sts on each needle (64 sts in total).

**Foot:**

Work 32 sts on one needle in stocking stitch, ie. knit every round. This is your sole needle.

On the other needle, begin working the chart appropriate for the left or right foot below across all 32 sts. This is your instep needle. Read chart rows from right to left. Knit all even rows, which are **not shown on the chart**. (The section of the chart bordered in black is the pattern repeat you will be using later for the leg.) When a yarn over occurs at the end of your needle you may find it easier to slip a stitch round from your sole needle and create the yarn over between this and the previous stitch. Remember to return the stitch to your sole needle again.

**Legend:**

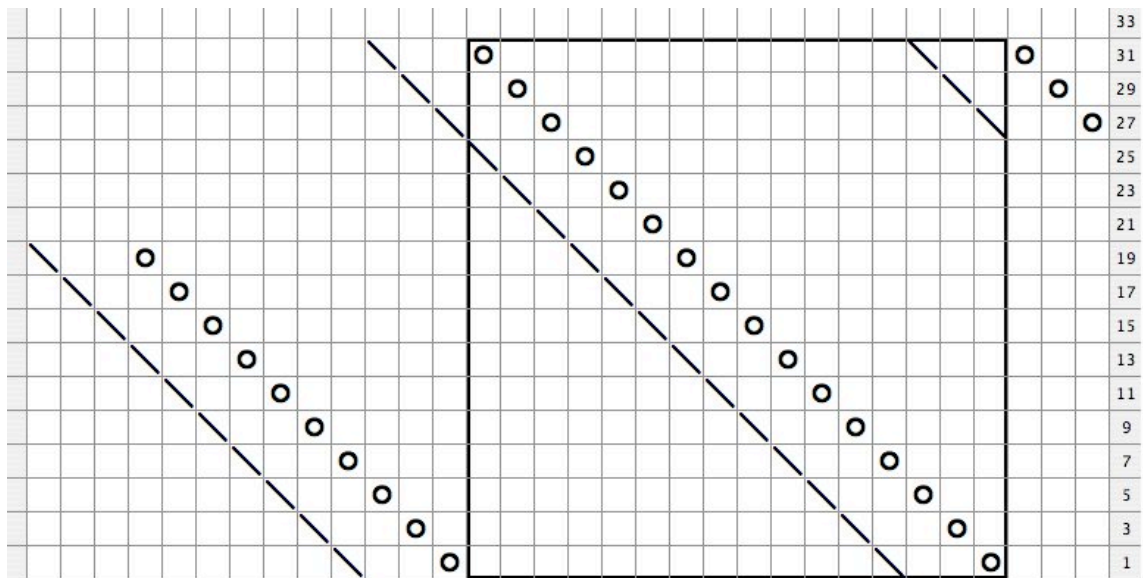
knit  
knit stitch

k2tog  
Knit two stitches together as one stitch

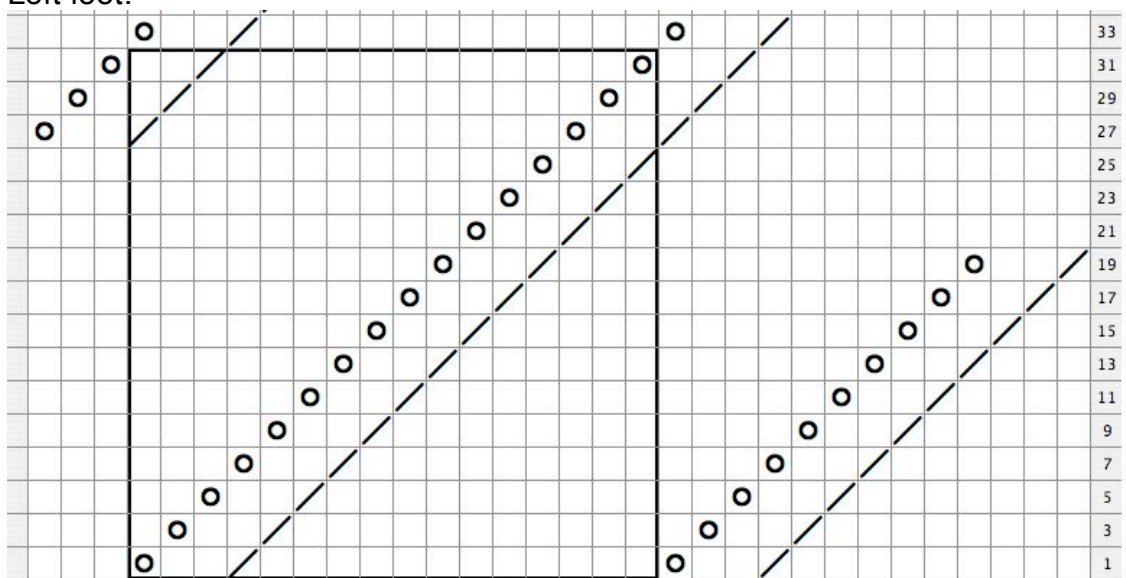
yo  
Yarn Over

ssk  
Slip one stitch as if to knit, Slip another stitch as if to knit. Insert left-hand needle into front of these 2 stitches and knit them together

**Right foot:**



**Left foot:**



Continue, trying on your sock occasionally, until foot of sock stops 1.5" from the end of your heel, ending with a charted pattern row. Now it's time to work the heel.

### Heel:

The heel will be worked back and forth **only on the sole needle** (the one on which you've been knitting in stocking stitch).

(RS) Knit to the last stitch, but don't knit this last stitch. Turn the work.

(WS) Slip the first stitch purlwise, purl to the last stitch, but don't purl the last stitch. Turn work.



(RS) Slip the first stitch purlwise, knit to the last two stitches (but don't knit the last two). Turn work.

(WS) Slip the first stitch purlwise, Purl to the last two stitches (but don't purl the last two). Turn work.

Continue in this fashion, knitting right side and purling wrong side rows, each time turning one stitch earlier than the previous time on that side and slipping the first stitch in each row purlwise, until you have only 10 active stitches remaining. 11 held sts are left at each side of these 10 centre stitches. Congratulations- you have created half the heel! Now for the other half- time to add the held stitches back in:

(RS) Slip first stitch purlwise, then knit to the last of your centre active sts, then K2tog. (You have now closed the gap between the last active stitch and the first held stitch.) M1. (You are adding a stitch to compensate for the K2tog decrease.) Turn work.

(WS) Slip the newly added stitch purlwise, purl to the last active stitch, P2tog, M1. Turn work.

Repeat these 2 rows until all held stitches have been worked back into the active row. (The new stitches which you are making will be the first stitch in the P2tog or K2tog on the next row). Remember you will still need to make a stitch at the end of the final row of the heel to make sure you have the same number of stitches on the bottom needle as you have on the top needle, ie. 32 sts.

**Leg:**

Now you will return to working in the round over both needles.

Knit one round.

Using the pattern repeat outlined in black in the chart, continue on from where you left off over your instep needle stitches and continue the pattern on over the stitches on the sole needle.

**Cuff:**

When leg is the desired length, or when you've nearly run out of yarn, work round in 2x2 rib ([k2, p2] repeat) or your choice of rib pattern, for about an inch.

Bind off all stitches using the stretchy bind-off technique of your choice. I like Elizabeth Zimmerman's sewn bind off, which is explained here:

<http://www.knitty.com/ISSUEsummer06/FEATsum06TT.html>

Weave in ends and block if desired.

Wear and enjoy, and beware sea monsters!

