

Knitting through the War

These patterns are adapted from the *Schools Patriotic Fund (SPF) Service Knitting* booklet. The booklet was released during the Second World War to provide patterns for people knitting for the troops on the home front. During the First World War basic instructions for knitting similar items were published in newspapers around Australia.

The patterns here have been translated for the beginner and modern knitter by Lianne Gould, Master Knitter. History SA in partnership with Artlab Australia have released them for the anniversary of the First World War. For more on how South Australians experienced the First World War, at home and abroad, visit *A World Away: South Australia's War* www.southaustraliaswar.com.au

Lianne Gould and Iris Woolcock's sock pattern

100 grams standard weight sock wool and four 3.25mm double pointed needles (DPNs)

For thicker socks, use 150 grams sports weight wool and four 3.75mm double pointed needles (DPNs)

Pattern for small (medium, large) socks

Cast on 60 (64, 72) stitches, loosely, spread over three double pointed needles, and bring the needles around so that you can knit from the last stitch over to the first, **after checking that your stitches are all facing upwards**, then pull your yarn firmly to close the space between the first and last stitch.

You are ready to start knitting around and up the **leg** section of your sock. Use a knit 2, purl 2 rib to make your sock stretchy so it will stay up without shaping.

Continue working until your work measures 20cm, or the length you feel is comfortable. You are ready to begin the heel.

To work the **heel**, you will need to mark out 29 (32, 36) stitches and work on these, put them onto one needle and spread out your remaining 29 (32, 36) stitches over two needles.

Swap to stocking stitch for heel shaping and the underside.

Knit one row plain, one row purl until your work measures 5cm (5cm, 6cm) (about 25 [25, 28] rows) ending with a wrong side row.

Now you have a square of knitted work at the end of your sock – the heel flap.

Turn the heel:

Row 1: Knit 18 (19, 20), knit 2 together, knit 1 and turn

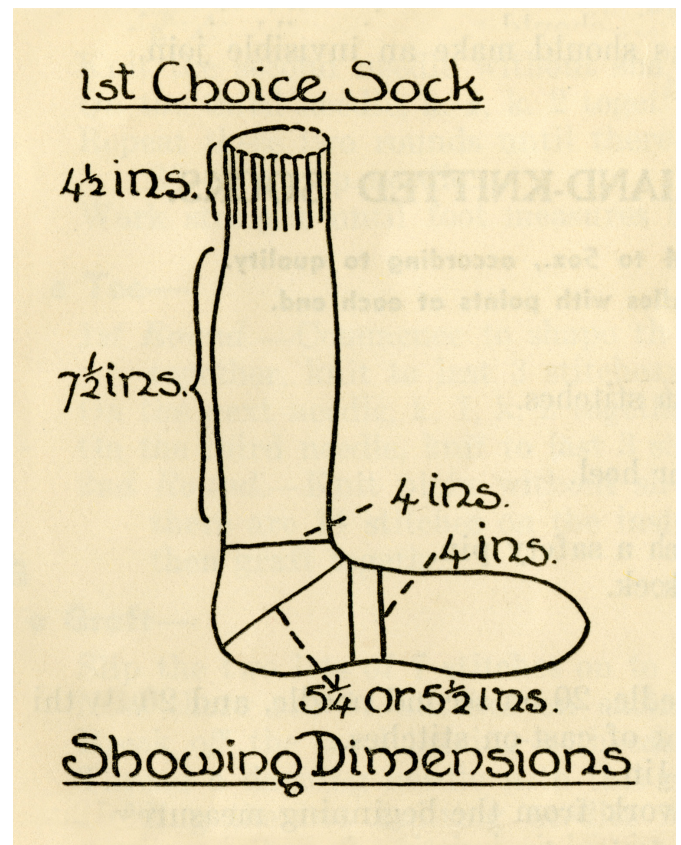
Row 2: Slip 1, purl 6 (7, 8), purl 2 together, purl 1 and turn

Row 3: Slip 1, knit 7 (8, 9), knit 2 together, knit 1 and turn

Row 4: Slip 1, purl 8 (9, 10), purl 2 together, purl 1 and turn.

Continue in this way until you reach the end of your stitches, so the last row of this section is slip 1, purl 17 (17, 18), purl 2 together, purl 1.

You now have 20 (20, 24) stitches. If you are not at the end of a purl row, turn your work around and purl across to the end of the next row.



Next round—place marker, knit across heel stitches, place marker, pick up 12 (12, 15) stitches along one side of **heel flap**, rib across 29 (32, 36) stitches (**instep**), pick up 15 stitches along other side of heel flap. Divide the heel and picked up stitches evenly on two of your needles, 22 (22, 27) stitches on each, keeping the markers in place and the 29 (32, 36) rib stitches on the third needle.

Work one full round, knitting the heel stitches and your 12 (12, 15) stitches on each side of the heel. Continue the ribbing on the 29 (32, 36) top stitches.

Begin knitting around, keeping in the pattern of knitting on the heel and ribbing on the top, until you get to the three stitches on the side of your heel, next to the markers. For the three stitches before the marker, knit two together, knit one then knit across the heel. When you get to the stitches on the other side of your next heel marker, then knit one and knit two together, continue around in the established pattern.

Continue decreasing every second row as above and knitting every first row, until you have 58 (64, 72) stitches left.

You have made the **gusset** for your sock – now onto the **foot**.

Continue knitting around in the established pattern of stocking stitch for the underfoot and ribbing for the top until your work measures 15cm (15cm, 17cm) from the back of the heel.

Alternately, you can measure the foot you are knitting the sock for, and when it is 5cm less than the length you need, you can begin shaping for the toes.

To shape the **toes**: Put your 29 (32, 36) ribbed stitches on one needle and divide your 29 (32, 36) plain stitches onto two needles. Put stitch markers at each side between the ribbed and plain stitches.

From now on, all your knitting should be plain, no ribbing.

The first stitch you knit should be next to one of your stitch markers, if it isn't, knit around until you are.

Row 1: Knit one, knit 2 together, knit to last 3 stitches before stitch marker, knit 2 together, knit one, slip stitch marker, knit one, knit 2 together, knit around to last 3 stitches before stitch marker, knit 2 together, knit 1.

Row 2: Knit

Row 3: Repeat row 1

Row 4: Knit

Continue in this way until you have 28 (32, 36) stitches left.

Place 14 (16, 18) stitches on each needle, so the stitches sit in two rows alongside each other, and join using the kitchener stitch.

Kitchener stitch is named after Lord Kitchener. It was adopted during the First World War as a technique to finish off the socks in a way that didn't irritate the soldiers' feet, and is still the most popular way to finish off socks today.

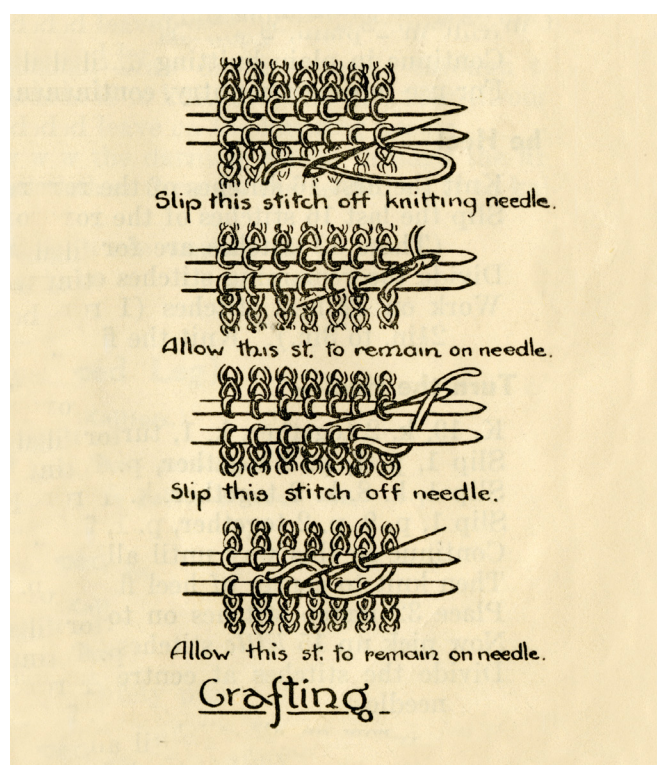
Kitchener stitch (grafting):

Break off your yarn, leaving about 40cm to stitch with. Thread this onto a darning needle. Holding the knitting needles flat, draw the darning needle through the first stitch on the front needle, as if to knit and slip the stitch off, then through the second stitch as if to purl and leave on the knitting needle.

Now work on the back needle. Draw the darning needle through the first stitch as if to purl and slip off, then through the second as if to knit, and leave on the knitting needle.

Continue this way until all the stitches are worked off. Knot your remaining yarn into the top of the sock, and feed your yarn through the toe. Cut off the remaining tail. Weave in any loose ends. You have completed your first sock!

Repeat for second.



If you would like to donate your finished knitting to a good cause consider Fred's Van, providing comfort and a warmth for those experiencing homelessness. www.vinnies.org.au/page/Get_Involved/Become_a_volunteer/SA/Freds_Van

With thanks to Kristin Phillips, Senior Textile Conservator at Artlab Australia, Lianne Gould, Master Knitter, and the rest of the KnitWW1ts team at History SA.