

knitted
sock
sensations

Over 40 fabulous looks for feelgood feet



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Kirstie McLeod

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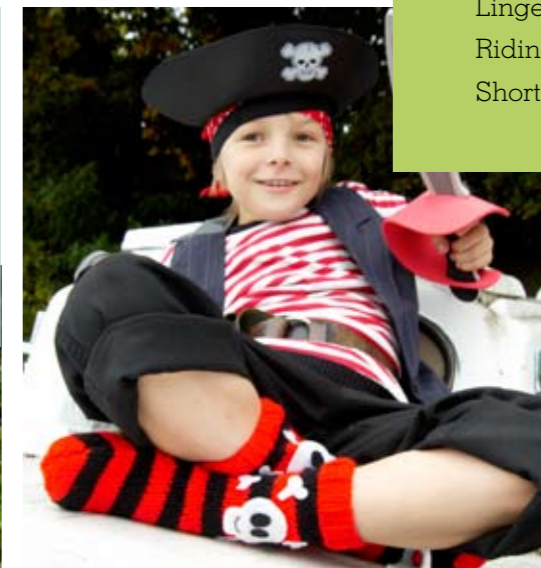
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Sock it to me!

Many knitters cherish an absolute passion for sock knitting. This might seem bewildering to the non-knitting world; after all, shop-bought socks are functional, forgettable items, easily overlooked and easily replaced when one goes astray in the wash. To the sock knitter, however, socks offer a glorious, colourful world of possibility, where crafty creativity meets wearable practicality. If you are a knitter who has yet to succumb to the seduction of socks, this is the book to get you hooked. It is packed full of tantalising projects to appeal to every type of knitter, and to every type of sock-wearer.

We've divided our fabulous footwear into four sections.

The Long and the Short of It is an excellent starting place if you're new to sock knitting. This section showcases projects that could be described as everyday-with-a-twist. We feature classic construction techniques, using both two-needle methods and knitting in the round on double-pointed needles. Each project, however, is a catalyst for creative inspiration. Try a straightforward tube sock, but make it in fresh, zingy colours (Around and Around Socks; pages 28–31). Or take a simple pattern, but knit it in a luxury colourful yarn and add a crocheted trim (Riding the Wave Socks; pages 50–53). And if you need any more convincing that sock knitting can be seductive, turn to pages 46–49; these stockings have tons of appeal!

Soothing the Sole is dedicated to blissfully cosy slipper socks. These are socks to wear around the house when you're in the mood for comfort, cossetting and warmth. There's a tempting array of projects to choose from; try the lush bedsocks in a luscious merino and angora yarn complete with a matching hot-water bottle cover (pages 74–79), or the bold, bright and beautiful ballerina slippers (pages 60–63). For the man in your life, we've got a pair of funky, furry gorilla feet (pages 70–73).

Tiny Tootsies features footwear for babies and children. Our projects include some kitschy-cute booties for instant knitting gratification; choose from the tiger stripe, strawberry pip and ladybug spot versions (pages 82–85). A pair of delicately pretty fairy socks complete with embroidered embellishments (pages 90–93) would make a precious present; while the dashing pirate captain socks, complete with skull and crossbones (pages 98–99), will put children in the mood for adventure.

Think Outside the Socks will challenge your notions of what sock knitting can be. These fabulously quirky designs are fun, bold, stylish and eccentric. Try the split-toe socks (pages 116–119) or the stripy five-toe socks (pages 106–109) to transform your knitting from mundane to magical; conjure up some retro chic with the fabulous legwarmers (pages 110–115); and introduce some handmade charm to your Christmas, with the candy-stripe stocking and advent calendar mini-socks (pages 120–123).

Before we get to the projects, however, we start with an appetite-whetting section on the sorts of enticing yarns we've used for the designs (pages 8–11), and then go on to introduce the techniques required to make the patterns (pages 12–25). In the project notes we use a generic description of the yarn used, so you can easily substitute it. If you want to recreate the project exactly, we have listed the specific brands and shade numbers used on pages 126–127. We've also included a list of yarn suppliers (page 125).



Put your best foot forward and start sock knitting today!

Easy as one, two, three!

Whether you want a simple design to knit up in a hurry, or more of a challenge, you can quickly identify the difficulty of each pattern with this easy-to-follow guide:



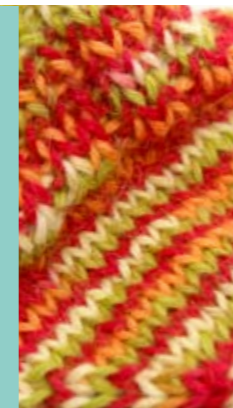
Simple



Intermediate



Advanced



Yarns your feet fantasize about

One of the joys of sock knitting is that we have a huge range of yarns to choose from, expanding our creative choices so that socks aren't just woolly, functional items but artworks for the feet. In this section we explore some of the options, including weight, yarn blends and texture.

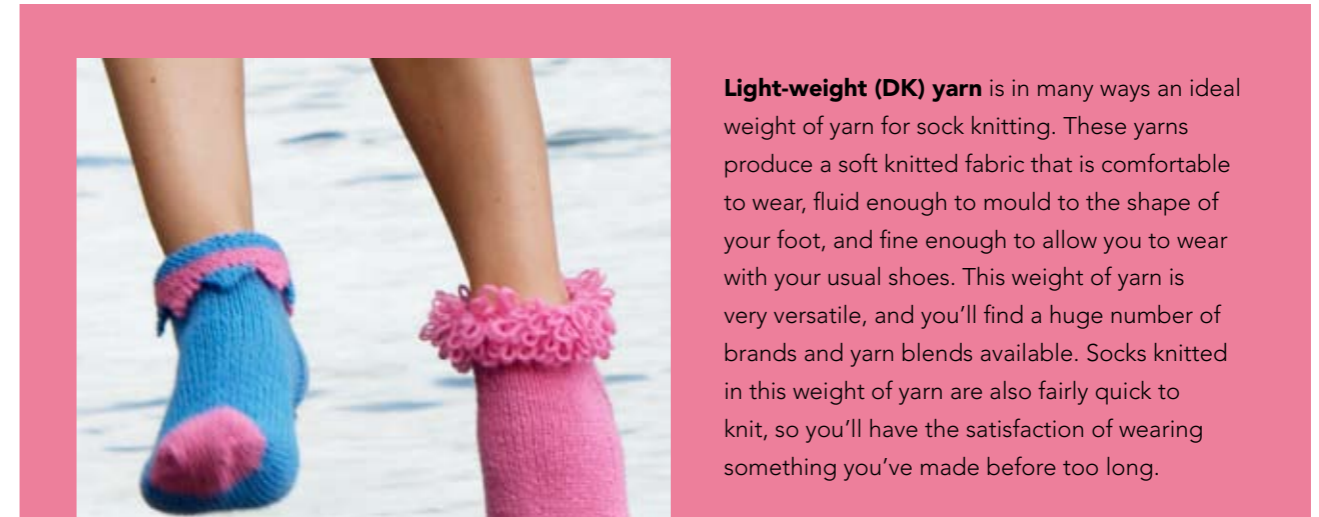
Yarn weight

Most of the projects featured in this book use light-weight (DK) yarn, while some use medium-weight (aran) yarn. There are a few projects that use finer-weight yarn. If you get drawn into the world of sock knitting, as we hope you will, you'll find that a lot of dedicated sock yarns are fine-weight (4ply) or even lighter, and are often knitted up on needles ranging from about sizes 0 to 4 (2 to 3.5mm). These are beautiful yarns that produce a fine, light-weight sock, but they also take more time to knit, of course. We went for the slightly heavier-weight yarns as we wanted to emphasize quicker, more achievable projects that are fun to make, and that will inspire you to explore more.

The language of knitting

We have used US knitting terms for the projects in this book. If there are any terms you are unfamiliar with, refer to this box for a translation.

US term	UK term
bind off	cast off
gauge	tension
moss stitch	double moss stitch
seed stitch	moss stitch
stockinette stitch	stocking stitch
reverse stockinette stitch	reverse stocking stitch



Light-weight (DK) yarn is in many ways an ideal weight of yarn for sock knitting. These yarns produce a soft knitted fabric that is comfortable to wear, fluid enough to mould to the shape of your foot, and fine enough to allow you to wear with your usual shoes. This weight of yarn is very versatile, and you'll find a huge number of brands and yarn blends available. Socks knitted in this weight of yarn are also fairly quick to knit, so you'll have the satisfaction of wearing something you've made before too long.

These socks with fancy cuffs are made in a light-weight (DK) yarn, so they produce a knitted fabric that is soft on your foot and thin enough to wear under shoes.



Medium-weight (aran) yarn has been our choice for some of the slipper socks and other projects for footwear that you probably wouldn't wear under shoes or boots. This weight of yarn makes a chunkier, warmer fabric that will be more hard-wearing, and therefore more suitable for footwear that you'll wear around the house.

These striking Swedish-style socks are knitted in a medium-weight (aran) yarn. They produce a pleasingly chunky, sturdy fabric that will really keep your feet warm.



Super-fine

Fine

Light

Medium

Bulky

Super-bulky

Yarns come in a wide range of weights, as you can see from the examples here. Most of the projects in this book use light-weight (DK) and medium-weight (aran) yarns; a select few use fine-weight (4ply) yarn and the bulkier-weight yarns.



acrylic pp 60-63

merino and angora blend (pages 74-76)

bamboo and wool blend (pages 116-119)

Yarns for sock knitting tend to be quite smooth and even in texture so that the sock is comfortable to wear against your skin. There is still a wide variety of yarns to choose from, however, as a large number of fibres, including wool, alpaca, cashmere, angora, bamboo, and a huge number of blended yarns are suitable.



These charming little booties are knitted in a yarn that blends wool with acrylic and nylon. This combines the best qualities of each fibre: the wool adds warmth and softness to the fabric, while the synthetic fibres are hard-wearing and stable.



These socks are made from the poshest of fibres: pure cashmere. Cashmere is high-maintenance, but everyone deserves this level of indulgence sometimes.

Yarn types

Choose your sock yarn with care, as many types of yarn will not be suitable. The ideal sock yarn is one that produces a fabric with a fairly smooth, even and soft texture, so it is comfortable to wear against your skin. Yarns with a lot of texture, such as bouclé, astrakhan or slubbed yarns, could be less comfortable.

Sock yarn also needs to have a fair amount of 'give', or elasticity. Feet are a peculiar shape, with lots of knobby bits, and the knitted fabric needs to be able to hug the shape of your foot without restricting it. For this reason yarns with no stretch, such as pure cotton, linen or silk, don't make good sock yarns.

Another important factor is the resilience of the yarn. Your socks will get a lot of wear and tear, and the fibre of the yarn needs to be able to withstand this. Something like a mohair yarn will be too wispy, while many ribbon yarns will be too fluid and sloppy. You'll also need to consider the aftercare of your sock. We tend to wear socks for a day and then put them in the laundry, so your sock yarn will need to put up with a lot of washing, whether by hand or by machine.

The yarn types that we've used could be put into five broad categories: luxury yarns, such as pure cashmere; luxury blends, such as merino and angora or alpaca and silk; pure wool; wool blended with synthetic fibres; and 100% synthetic yarn. Each of these yarn types has its merits. A luxury blend such as alpaca and silk produces a gloriously soft, lustrous and smooth fabric. Pure wool yarn is wonderfully warm and cosy. Acrylic yarn is economical, versatile and easy to look after, as it's hard-wearing and machine-washable.



These fantastically patterned legwarmers are made in pure wool, and will stave off the harshest of winter chills.



Standard yarn weight system

Confusion can sometimes arise with weights of yarn because there are several ways of describing the different categories, particularly in different parts of the world. In this book we have used US terms to describe the weights used, with the UK term in brackets. However, for a clearer idea on the categories of yarn that are in use in the UK and US, please refer to the table below – this is the Craft Yarn Council of America's standard yarn weight system.

Yarn Weight and Category Names	0 LACE	1 SUPER FINE	2 FINE	3 LIGHT	4 MEDIUM	5 BULKY	6 SUPER BULKY
TYPES OF YARNS IN CATEGORY	Fingering 10-count crochet thread	Sock, Fingering, Baby	Sport, Baby	DK, Light Worsted	Worsted, Afghan, Aran	Chunky, Craft, Rug	Bulky, Roving
KNIT GAUGE RANGE* IN STOCKINETTE STITCH TO 4 INCHES	30–40** sts	27–32 sts	23–26 sts	21–24 sts	16–20 sts	12–15 sts	6–11 sts
NEEDLE IN METRIC SIZE RANGE	1.25–1.5mm	2.25– 3.25mm	3.25– 3.75mm	3.75– 4.5mm	4.5–5.5mm	5.5–8mm	8mm and larger
NEEDLE US SIZE RANGE	000–1	1–3	3–5	5–7	7–9	9–11	11 and larger
CROCHET GAUGE* RANGES IN SINGLE CROCHET TO 4 INCHES	32–42 double crochets**	21–32 sts	16–20 sts	12–17 sts	11–14 sts	8–11 sts	5–9 sts
HOOK IN METRIC SIZE RANGE	Steel*** 1.4–1.6mm	2.25–3.5mm	3.5– 4.5mm	4.5– 5.5mm	5.5–6.5mm	6.5–9mm	9mm and larger
HOOK US SIZE RANGE	Steel*** 6, 7, 8 Regular hook B1	B1 to E4	E4 to 7	7 to I9	I9 to K10½	K10½ to M13	M13 and larger

* GUIDELINES ONLY: The above reflect the most commonly used gauges and needle or hook sizes for specific yarn categories.

** Lace-weight yarns are usually knitted or crocheted on larger needles and hooks to create lacy, openwork patterns. Accordingly, a gauge range is difficult to determine. Always follow the gauge stated in your pattern.

*** Steel crochet hooks are sized differently from regular hooks – the higher the number, the smaller the hook, which is the reverse of regular hook sizing.