

2 sox/ 2 circs Tutorial by Sara Morris

I'm a sufferer of SSS (second sock syndrome) in the worst way. So, when a friend told me (years ago) that she'd heard it was possible to knit 2 socks at a time on 2 circulars, I jumped on the concept. It took me a while to find a cast on that doesn't result in bloodshed, tears, or 2 balls worth of very tangled yarn. But I persevered and, after some time, found a method that really agrees with me and my low-maintenance beliefs.

As with any particular method of knitting, there are pros and cons. I like the fact that I get two exactly alike socks at once, and don't have to write down what I did to duplicate the first sock as with DPN's. There's also the fact that it eradicates SSS. But, among its faults there's the problem of maintaining gauge, untangling yarn (which happens to me anyway), and it's overall 'fussiness' (yes, Bon, I'm quoting you). To me, this method is more than worth the effort required to master it. You'll have to decide for yourself. But, I promise that it gets much easier with practice.

Using (*translate*: "having to buy") the new(ish) Clover plastic mini-circular needles may seem ridiculous to some, but they're cheap and so much easier to manipulate than DPNs. And, at \$4.50 a pair, they're cheaper than the sock yarn we're using, anyway.

Please read through this tutorial several times before trying it. I've done my best to make it as sensible as possible, and will gladly edit out any errors found.

Details:

This tutorial is intended for knitters who already understand the basics of sock knitting and who have, preferably, tried knitting a sock on two circulars before. Neither of these prereq's are required to understand this tutorial, but they'll definitely help. Also, this tutorial does not include a pattern, but is intended to *work with* your pattern of choice -> with a cuff down cast-on.

*Some basic sock patterns books I'd recommend: *Sensational Knitted Socks*, *The Knitter's Handy Book of Patterns*, or *Knitting Vintage Socks*. Online: [Thuja](#).

*For a great tutorial on knitting with 2 circs, see [here](#).

Materials:

- 2 circular needles to make gauge - I recommend 22" - 24" long circs, as the needles are longer and making knitting easier (for the tute I used two 22" 2.50 mm/ US1 Addi turbos)
- 1 **8.25 inch/ 22 cm** [Clover mini-circular needle](#), preferably two sizes larger than needed for gauge (ex: I use the 3.50 mm/ US4 to cast on for my US1's needles) making the cuff stretchier. Because of varying stitches/ inch ratios, the mini-circ can be used to cast on for socks with a foot diameter as small as 6" without difficulty. If you want to make 5.5" socks for a toddler, I suggest you cast on really **really** loosely.
- Anything else your pattern calls for; if you are using a larger ball of sock yarn, like Opal or Trekking, there are two options. You can wind another ball from it, thus maintaining any stripe repeats. Or, if you're lazy like me, you can knit the yarn from the center of the ball and the yarn wrapped around the outside. Starting out with two smaller balls of sock yarn may just save your sanity, though.

A final note, and 'thank you':

All the good pictures were taken by [TheBon](#), and the bad ones by me (you'll be able to tell, I promise). Thank you, Bon! And, now, onto the tutorial...

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Step One: Swatch

GET GAUGE. Please don't make me say it again. Knit a swatch using one of your two 22" circulars

(ignore the mini circ for now). Once you've figured out your gauge and what size sock you're knitting, determine the number of stitches to cast on. For this tute I made socks for my nephew:

$$6.5'' \text{ foot circumference} \times 8 \text{ stitches/ inch} = \mathbf{52} \text{ stitches.}$$

Step Two: cast on sock # 1

Using the [long-tail cast on](#), begin to cast on enough stitches for ONE sock onto the CLOVER mini-circular needle:



As soon as you have the requisite number of stitches (**52** in my case), cast on one extra.*I then had **53** stitches on the mini circular.

Step Three: join sock #1 in the round

Hold the needles with the first CO (cast on) stitch on your left hand needle and the last stitch on the right needle. Slip the first CO stitch purl-wise to the right needle. Using the left needle, pick up and pass over the last CO stitch (that extra stitch from Step 2) over the first stitch and off the needle:



Once you have passed over/ bound off the last stitch, slip the 1st stitch back to the left needle. Tighten the bound off/ extra stitch and tie the 'tail' and the 'working' yarn in a knot to secure the join:



Above: I now have 52 sts cast on and joined in the round on my mini-circular. Check to make sure the stitches weren't twisted before moving onto step 4.

Step Four: transfer sock #1 to two circulars

Starting with the 1st CO stitch (at the join), begin to transfer 1/2 of sock #1's stitches to one of the longer (22"-24") circular needles by slipping them purl-wise:



26 stitches transfered to Circ #1:



Next, transfer the remaining stitches from the mini-circ to Circ #2. Slide the stitches on the mini-circ to the opposite point - the join will be at the tip of the needle. Begin slipping the stitches from the join to the center stitches onto Circ #2:



Sock #1 on the 2 circs:



Above: the mini-circ is left (temporarily) by the wayside.

Step Five: CO and transfer sock #2

Pick up the mini-circ again and cast on, again using the long-tail method, the requisite stitches for sock #2. Once you have the right number, CO 1 extra. Join in round as in step 3, by binding off one stitch over the first stitch:

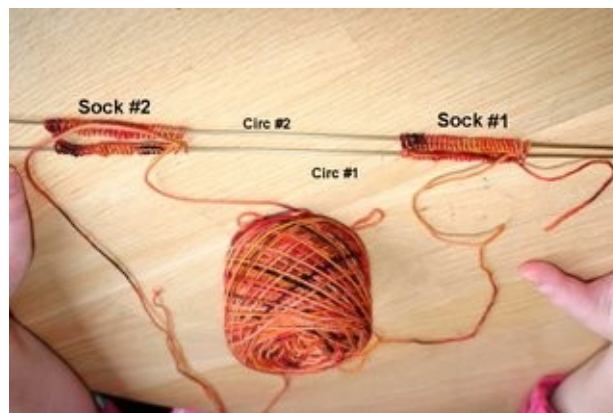


Begin transferring 1/2 of sock#2's stitches to Circ #1, making sure that the join faces the same direction as sock #1's - both joins will face 'east' or 3 o'clock, NOT each other:



Transfer the remaining stitches to Circ #2 in the same manner as in step 4 -> slide the stitches to the opposite point of the mini-circ, and begin the transfer with the join.

Once the stitches for both socks are transferred, this is what your 2 circs should look like:



In relation to the joins of the socks' stitches - (looking down) Circ#1 will be to the 'south' or 6 o'clock and Circ #2 will be to the 'north' or 12 o'clock. Sock #1 is on the right, Sock #2 is on the left. As you can see, I used a single ball of yarn for this tutorial -> the 'working' yarn for sock #1 was pulled from

the center of the ball, the 'working' yarn for sock #2 was unwound from the outside. This method can be a bit 'fussy', but it works.

Step Six: knitting both socks in the round

This is where the fun begins. It may seem crazy and difficult for a couple of rounds, but it's worth it, I promise. Remember to follow your pattern's directions for the cuff ribbing, etc.

Starting at the join of sock #1, identify both ends of Circ #1 and knit from [one needle to the other](#) (ignore Circ #2 for now).



Once you have knit across half of sock #1 (**26** sts, for me) using Circ #1, you'll come to sock #2. Knit across sock #2 -> make sure to switch strands of 'working' yarn - either from the inside or outside of a ball, or different balls.



All the stitches on Circ #1 have been knit (both socks worked), half a row has been completed on both socks.

To complete the row, turn the knitting in order to use Circ #2. Continue across sock #2 by knitting from one needle of Circ #2 to the other. The row will be complete when you reach the join and have to start knitting on Circ #1 again. Continue knitting as directed by your pattern, making sure to knit from one needle to itself and NOT the other. The first round or two will see incredibly loose, as a result of the cast on - just ignore it and the gauge will stabilize. I like to use this CO method because of it's super-stretchy cuff.

Also a few tips:

- it's a sad fact of life, but at some point you will knit from one circ to the other, and not itself. Once this happens, take a deep breath and tink back.
- every so often, check to make sure your yarns aren't twisting around each other
- when switching from one sock to the other on a circ, let the previous sock's 'working yarn' drop naturally (do not tighten it, throw it, or wrap it around the needle). It should look like this - _



- To prevent 'ladders' or overtightness of edge stitches, knit the first 4 stitches with the previous Circ's needle still in the stitches of the previous row: _



- (I admit I don't do this, after several pairs of socks I'm set on tension-autopilot. But, it'll help if you are having gauge/ tension issues with edge stitches)

Step Seven: the heels

If this were a horror film, lightning would have just flashed with a roll of thunder echoing behind. I personally don't see sock heels as being overly terrifying, but I guess I'm an odd duck. Anyway, working the heels of 2 socks on 2 circs isn't as traumatic as one would think. I'm going to do my best to explain how to manage it, no matter what pattern you're using.

As the heels of socks are worked on 1/2 of the total stitches, we're already prepared to ignore the other half (no waste yarn or fiddling with DPN's necessary). If you want your heels to be worked on Circ #1, start at the beginning of a row. If you want them to be worked on Circ #2 (technically the 'back' of the socks when looking down at them) knit across Circ #1 before following your pattern. I prefer the easy method, and work the heels on Circ #1.

Short-row, or hourglass, heels are painfully easy to explain. At the start of a new row on sock #1, follow the pattern to turn the heel. You will completely turn sock #1's heel before repeating the process on sock #2. And then you get to resume knitting in the round. How easy was that?

For those of you who are heel-flap sticklers, we're gonna need some pictures here. Following your pattern, knit the heel flaps of both socks at the same time. Once they are the correct length (end with a purl row), turn the heel of sock #1 following your pattern's directions. Once the heel is turned (it should have ended with a purl row) knit across sock #1's heel. But, BEFORE you turn the heel of sock #2, pick up the gusset stitches on the left side of sock #1's heel:



In fact, it should look like so:



Then you can turn sock #2's heel, repeating the same steps as for sock #1.



Once all the stitches on Circ #1 (or #2, depending) have been worked and the two left gussets have been picked up, knit across the instep (or the stitches on the other circular needle). DO NOT pick up any gusset stitches with the instep needle.



Using the heel circular, pick up the right gusset stitches for sock #1:



BEFORE knitting across sock #1's heel and left gusset:



When you reach the last 3 stitches of sock #1's left gusset, follow the decrease in your pattern. Then, pick up the right gusset stitches for sock #2. Knit across the heel and gusset, decreasing one stitch as in sock #1. Knit across the insteps again. At the right gusset, knit 1 stitch and follow pattern decrease. Knit across heel. Repeat for sock #2:



Continue alternating decrease and knit rows until you have the same number of TOTAL stitches as before (**52** for me). This method of decreasing may seem odd, but it follows the traditional method of placing the start of a row in the heel's center during the decrease - to maintain balance. Once the gussets are finished, the row's start will return to where the stitch join is.

Step Eight: the feet and toes

By this point you're a 2 socks/ 2 circulars veteran. After the heels have been turned continue to follow your pattern, knitting in the round in the same way as before the heels.



Once you have the correct foot length, you can decrease the toes without much fuss. Follow your chosen pattern, and soon you'll have a pair of socks finished together. Here are D's:



There. I hope this tutorial made sense and was helpful. Happy knitting!