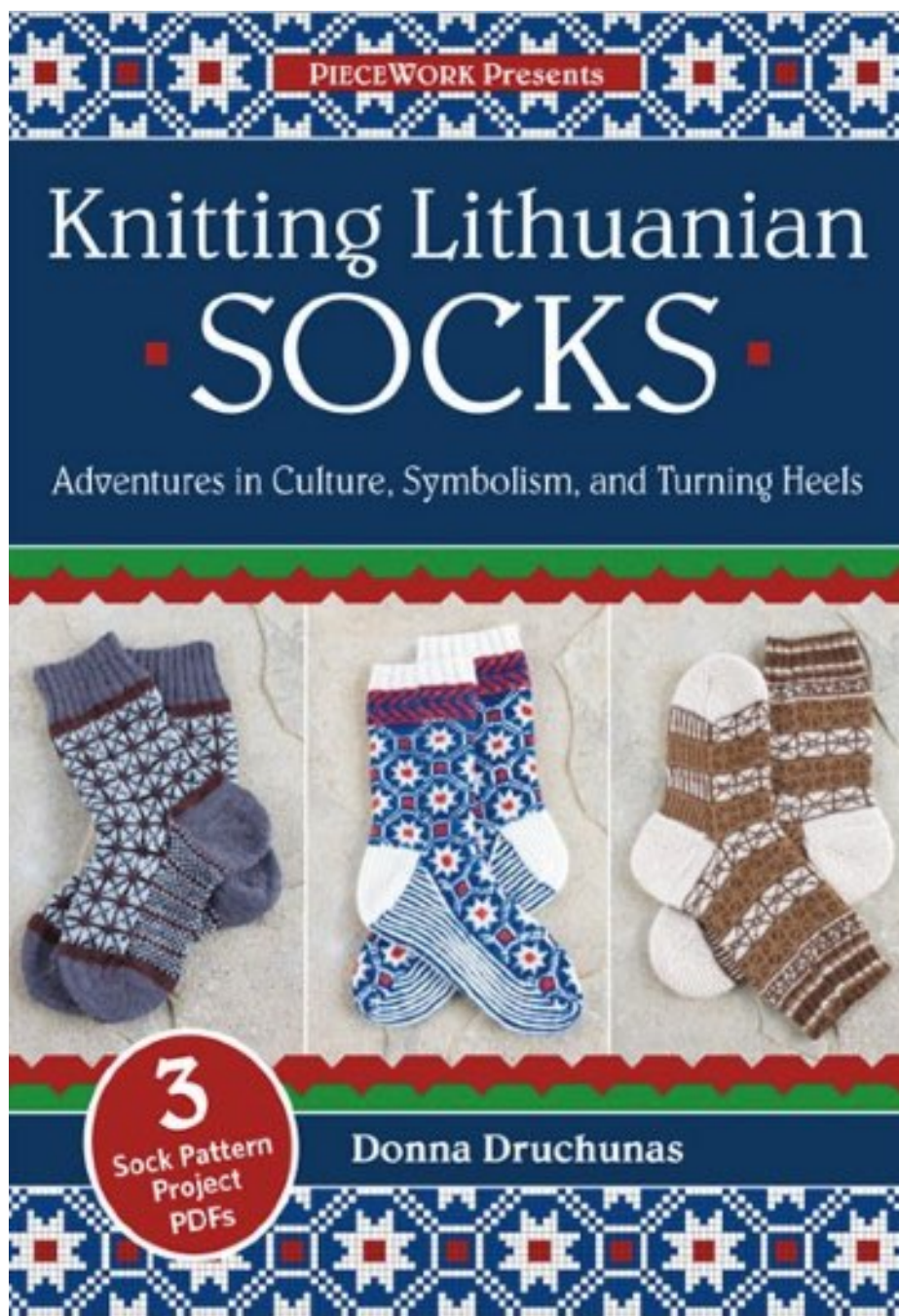




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# Lithuanian Knitting Sock Heels and Toes



## Lithuanian Sock Knitting Techniques

Lithuanian knitting books don't present patterns with line by line instructions in the manner we are used to in America. Instead, the basic steps to create a type of project are presented, and then the individual projects give you guidelines about what stitches, colors, and needles to use to make the item shown in the photograph. For socks, the project instructions will also tell you what type of heel and toe was used. Of course, you may modify anything to suit your own preferences. The following sections will walk you through the basic process of making a cuff-down sock, with several options for working the cuff, heel (with gusset & instep shaping), and toe.



### Size

The key measurement for sock sizing is the ankle circumference. For women, this is usually about 8 inches, for men about 10 inches. From this key measurement, subtract 1 inch when knitting for adults and half an inch when knitting for kids. This assumes that you are knitting with typical sock yarn, and not stranded colorwork. If you are knitting with a much thicker yarn, do not subtract as much from the ankle measurement. If you're knitting in colorwork, which is less stretchy than single color knitting, you'll need your sock to be a little bigger.

Get the gauge of the yarn you want to use. This is, of course, best measured from an actual gauge swatch -- even better if done in the round rather than flat since that's how the sock will be knit. When using a yarn not originally meant for socks, use needles a size or two smaller than the ball band calls for. Socks are knitted at a tighter gauge than other garments, to maximize wear. You'll find that they feel better on your feet that way, too.

The number of stitches to cast on is the magic number, X. Once you've got that, you can create an entire pattern. X is the stitch gauge (per inch) multiplied by the ankle circumference, minus 1 inch or half an inch, as the case may be.

For example: If your yarn provides a gauge of 30 sts over 4 inches, divide by 4 to get the number of stitches to the inch (7.5 sts). Then multiply this number by the ankle circumference less 1 inch. So for someone with an 8" ankle:  $7.5 \times 7 = 52$  sts.

The number of stitches you cast on will also be determined somewhat by the ribbing you want to do. K1 p1 rib requires an even number of stitches; k2 p2 rib requires that the number of stitches be divisible by 4.

When you switch to the leg, you can increase a few stitches to fit the repeat of the pattern you will use on the leg.

We are going to look at 3 heels and 3 toes used in Lithuanian socks.

## Basic Heel

### Heel Flap

The heel flap is worked back and forth on half of the total number of stitches, with garter stitch edges. Put one half of the stitches on one needle and leave the other stitches on two needles without working them, while you work on the heel stitches.

**Row 1 (RS):** Slip 1, knit across.

**Row 2 (WS):** Slip 1, k2, purl to last 3 sts, k3.

Repeat rows 1 and 2 until the heel is a square or the desired length. End after working a WS row.

*Let's take a short digression to talk about slipping sts.*

### Turning the Heel

Continue to work back and forth to turn the heel. Divide the heel stitches into three equal sections. If you have odd stitches, put them in the center section.

**Row 1 (RS):** Knit to 2 sts before the first marker, k2tog, slip marker, knit to the next marker, skip marker, ssk, knit to end of row.

**Row 2 (WS):** Purl to 2 sts before the first marker, ssp, slip marker, purl to the next marker, skip marker, p2tog, purl to end of row.

Continue working back in forth in this manner, noting that all the decreases are outside the markers, so you will have fewer and fewer stitches outside of the markers until only 1 st remains on each side of the markers. End after working a WS row.

### Gusset (Instep Shaping)

You will now return to knitting in the round, decreasing as follows:

Sl 1, knit across remaining heel sts. With the same empty needle, pick up 1 st in each edge stitch along the side of the heel flap. Knit across the held stitches on 2 needles. With an empty needle, pick up 1 st in each edge stitch along the other side of the heel flap, then knit halfway across the heel sts on the same needle. This is now the beginning of the round and the sts are distributed on 4 needles again.

**Dec every other rnd:** Knit to last 3 sts on first needle, k2tog, k1, knit across second and third needles, on last needle k1, ssk, knit to end of rnd.

Repeat until you are back down to your original number of stitches. Then stop decreasing and work even on the foot until you are ready to work the toe.

### Variations

This heel – both the flap and/or the heel turning -- can also be worked in standard or offset heel stitch for added padding and strength. The heel can also be worked in a contrasting color.

#### Standard Heel Stitch

**Row 1 (RS):** (Sl1, k1) across.

**Row 2:** Sl1, purl across.

Rep rows 1 and 2 for patt.

#### Offset Heel Stitch (Eye of Partridge)

**Row 1 (RS):** (Sl1, k1) across.

**Rows 2 and 4 (WS):** Purl.

**Row 3:** (K1, sl1) across to last st.

Rep rows 1-4 for patt.





## Stair-Step Heel

The heel flap is worked back and forth on half of the total number of stitches, with reverse garter stitch edges. Put one half of the stitches on one needle and leave the other stitches on two needles without working them, while you work on the heel stitches.

**Row 1 (RS):** Slip 1 kw, p2, knit to last 3 sts, p2, k1.

**Row 2 (WS):** Slip 1 pw, purl.

Repeat rows 1 and 2 until the heel is HALF of the desired length. End after working a WS row.

Count the number of slipped stitches on one side of the heel.

Work this number of sts at the beginning of the row and put those stitches on a holder or spare needle. Work until the same number of stitches remains at the end of the row. Put those remaining stitches on a holder or spare needle.

On the center stitches that are still on the working needle, continue in the heel pattern as above until you have worked the same number of rows as in the first portion of the heel. End after working a WS row.

### Turning the Heel

**If not changing colors:** Work across rem heel sts on RS, and pick up 1 stitch in each edge stitch down the other side of the heel center. Do not turn.

**If changing colors:** Break the yarn. With RS facing, join the yarn at the bottom of the heel center on the right-hand edge. Pick up 1 stitch in each edge stitch up the side of the heel center, knit across the center stitches, and pick up 1 stitch in each edge stitch down the other side of the heel center. Do not turn.

**Row 1 (RS):** Slip the first stitch from the held stitches knitwise, and pass the last picked up stitch over it. Turn.

**Row 2 (if changing colors):** Slip 1 pw, purl across to the held stitches on the other side. Slip the first held stitch purlwise and pass the last purled stitch over it. Turn.

**Row 2 (if not changing colors):** Slip 1 pw, purl across to the other side of the heel flap, then pick up and PURL 1 stitch in each edge stitch down the side of the heel center. DO not turn. Slip the first held stitch purlwise and pass the last purled stitch over it. Turn.



**Row 3:** Slip 1 kw, knit across to the held stitches. Slip 1 and pass the last knit stitch over it. Turn.

**Row 4:** Slip 1 pw, purl across to the held stitches on the other side. Slip the first held stitch purlwise and pass the last purled stitch over it. Turn.

Rep rows 3 and 4 until all sts are worked, ending after working row 4 (a WS row). Turn.

Return to working in the round and work instep decreases as above.

## ***Garter-stitch Short-row Heel***

This is a short row heel that also has instep shaping. The short rows are worked in garter stitch to provide extra cushioning and strength to the heel. Again, the heel is worked back and forth on half of the total number of stitches.

Work in St st, slipping the first stitch of every row, for 8 rows or about ½-1 inch, ending after working a WS row.

### **Short Row Heel Turn**

Begin working short rows in garter stitch as follows:

**Every row:** Slip 1 kw, knit to 1 stitch before the end of the row, turn.

Continue in this fashion, slipping the first stitch and working 1 less stitch in each row.

When 1/3 of the heel stitches (8 sts for a 48 st sock) remain unworked in the center of the heel, begin working 1 more stitch in each row as follows:

**Every row:** Sl1 kw, knit to the last of the worked/center stitches, sl the last center stitch kw, k1 (first stitch of unworked sts), turn.

When all stitches have been worked, end after completing a WS row. Note that this leaves a line of decorative holes on the sides of the heels.

Return to working in the round and work instep decreases as above.



## **Basic Toe**

If you've made socks before, chances are you used this toe because it is the most common in American sock patterns.

With the stitches divided equally on four needles and the beginning of the round at the middle of the bottom of the foot, work as follows.

For a standard-length toe:

**Dec Rnd:** \*K to last 3 sts on needle, k2tog, k1, on next needle k1, ssk, knit to end; rep from \* once more.

**Next rnd:** Knit.

Rep these 2 rows until 8 sts remain. Join toe with kitchener stitch or gather in and secure.

For a longer toe:

The difference here is how the decrease rounds are spaced out. In American sock patterns, the decreases are normally worked every other round.

**Dec Rnd:** \*K to last 3 sts on needle, k2tog, k1, on next needle k1, ssk, knit to end; rep from \* once more.

Work 5 rnds even, work dec rnd. Work 4 rnds even, work dec rnd. Work 3 rnds even, work dec rnd. Work 2 rnds even, work dec rnd. Work 1 rnd even, work dec rnd. Decrease every rnd until 8 sts rem. Join toe with kitchener stitch or gather in and secure.



## ***Spiral Toe***

Divide the sts into 4 equal sections. There are two ways to work this toe, and for fun you can work one sock with each technique for a mirrored pair.

**Option 1, Dec rnd:** \*Knit 2 last 2 sts on needle, k2tog; rep from \* around.

**Option 2, Dec rnd:** \*SSK, knit the rest of the sts on the needle; rep from \* around.

Knit 1 round even.

Alternate between dec rnds and plain rnds until 8 sts rem. Gather toe to fasten off.





## ***Tapered Toe***

Divide the stitches up into 8 sections. If you have the sts divided evenly on 4 needles, place a marker in the middle of each needle.

**Dec round 1:** \*Knit to marker, sl1, k1, pss0; rep from \* around.

Always knit the same number of plain rounds between dec rounds as you have plain stitches between decreases. For example:

If you had 6 (or 7) sts between decreases, knit 6 (7) rnds plain.

Rep dec rnd, each time you will have one less stitch between decreases, then work the same number of plain rounds as you have plain stitches between decreases. For example:

**Dec round 2:** \*K5 (6), sl1, k1, pss0; rep from \* around. Knit 5 (6) rnds plain.

**Dec round 3:** \*K4 (5), sl1, k1, pss0; rep from \* around. Knit 4 (5) rnds plain.

And so forth. K2tog around until you have fewer than 8 sts remaining. Gather the toe to fasten off.

