

Small Christmas Stockings



Size: Small enough to be cute. Large enough to be a little useful.

My Stockings: Ranged from 7 to 8 inches long and were all about 8 inches around. They would all fit a gift card, some candy, or just about anything that fits comfortably in an adult's hand.

Gauge: It doesn't really matter, but the fabric you are making should be a little stiff - more like a sock than a sweater. My rule of thumb was to use yarn twice as thick as I would normally use for that needle size. This helps the stocking keep its shape even when it's stuffed. I got 4.5 stitches to the inch.

Needles: #8, whatever you like to use to work in the round. I used 5-inch-long double-pointed needles.

Yarn: This is the perfect stashbusting project. I used just about all of the red, white, and green yarn I could come up with in my stash. After I ran out

of that, I used Patons Classic Wool, a worsted-weight wool yarn, doubled.

About That Stashbusting:

Like most knitters, I have yarn lying around at a lot of different weights. For this project, I used chunky and bulky yarns on their own, doubled worsted-weight yarns, and worked sport-weight and dk yarns four strands at a time. I should have worked the dk yarns at three strands at a time, because it was very hard on my hands to work then with four strands - it was just a tiny bit too thick for comfort.

Even yarns of the same weight can knit up at slightly different gauges, so if you're a perfectionist, you should still swatch for this project. I am not a perfectionist, at least not about something so small, so I just made sure that if I chose two yarns for a project that might work up a little bit differently, that the thicker yarn was on the heels and toes, and the thinner yarn was for the body of the stocking.

The heels and toes of the stocking are already extra-short, to enhance their cute factor. If the yarn for the heels and toes works up at a smaller size than the stocking's body, the heel doesn't stick out at all and the stocking could cross the line from adorably stumpy to just plain strange.

Quick Guide to Yarn Math for This Project:

- If the ball band suggests a needle size larger than 8, use one strand of the yarn.
 - If the ball band suggests a needle size 7 - 8, use two strands of the yarn.
 - If the ball band suggests a needle size 5 - 6, use three strands of the yarn.
 - If the ball band suggests a needle size 3 - 5, use four strands of the yarn.
- No ball band? Guess. That particular stocking might just be a bit larger or a bit smaller than the others.

You will also need some waste yarn. Lastly, I like to use a very slender circular needle (#1 size) for picking up stitches, but that's a personal preference.

The following are specific instructions for working a stocking that is all one color, with a different color for the toe and the heel. Of course, stripe, change, and adjust to your heart's content.

Using your main color, cast on 36 stitches and join to knit in the round. Work (P1, K1) ribbing around for 3 rounds. (Yarn-over, knit 2 together) around once. Work (P1, K1) ribbing around for 3 more rounds.

Knit every stitch until your work measures 4" from the cast-on edge. Knit 18 stitches with your waste yarn. Slip your work around so that you can start that round over again, with your working yarn. Keep knitting every stitch until your work measures 6" from the cast-on edge.

Switch to your second color. Knit one round.

Decrease Rounds:

(ssk, slip 1 stitch, knit 13 stitches, knit 2 together) twice. 32 stitches remain.

(ssk, slip 1 stitch, knit 11 stitches, knit 2 together) twice. 28 stitches remain.

(ssk, slip 1 stitch, knit 9 stitches, knit 2 together) twice. 24 stitches remain.

(ssk, slip 1 stitch, knit 7 stitches, knit 2 together) twice. 20 stitches remain.

(ssk, slip 1 stitch, knit 5 stitches, knit 2 together) twice. 16 stitches remain.

(ssk, slip 1 stitch, knit 3 stitches, knit 2 together) twice. 12 stitches remain.

Graft those last last 12 stitches together.

Go back to the 18 stitches you worked with waste yarn. Pick up those stitches with a very slender needle then remove the waste yarn. Or just throw caution to the wind, remove the waste yarn, and slide the newly-free 36 stitches onto your #8 needles.

Using your second color, work 1 round on those 36 stitches. Then repeat the decrease rounds and grafting exactly as you did for the toe.

Darn in all ends.

I often find I have to close small holes on either side of the heel. When making a "real" sock, I carefully pick up extra stitches there and decrease them away on the next round.

With these little guys, I let the holes form and then hide them. This keeps the decrease lines on the heels and toes more sharply defined.

On one side, I use the tail from where I added in the new yarn to fix the hole. On the other side, I simply take a 12" length of yarn and use that.

There are many ways to do this, but I like to turn the stocking inside-out, loop my length of yarn through the edges of the stitches I see around the hole, pull tightly, and then darn in any loose ends. Then, I turn the stocking right-side-out and look closely at what I have done. Sometimes it looks great. Sometimes I Swiss darn over two or three stitches to make things look a little more neat.

What was the point of that row of eyelets? Well, for a drawstring, of course. A drawstring on your stocking allows you to keep the contents secret - or even to use the stocking as a small bag or purse.

You could use ribbon or crocheted cord, but this time I made i-cord.

It's very easy. Using double-pointed needles, temporarily cast on 4 stitches. Knit them, and slide your stitches to the right end of the needle you just used to knit. Bring the working yarn around behind the work and knit the four stitches again. Repeat this over and over, and you will have made a cord.

I experimented with color work in i-cord with these little stockings. On some, I striped my colors. On others, I worked a kind of spiral color work. You should try whatever strikes your fancy. After your cord is about 14 inches long, thread it through your eyelet row, and connect the beginning of your i-cord to the end of it. I simply grafted the two ends together. A three-needle bind-off might look nice, too, though.

I made a short video, attached to Math4Knitters, Crafty Living: Show 50 about grafting i-cord in two colors.





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