

Nickel Plate Socks©2017

By Benita Story



The Nickel Plate Railroad Tracks go through the town of Fishers, Indiana. The depot is still there, and the Nickel Plate Bar & Grill is next to the tracks in a building that was constructed in the 1880's. The Indiana State Fair Train makes stops here during fair season every August, and the area has become a thriving arts community. The railroad has played an enormous part in the history of Indiana, and I wanted to create a sock pattern that reminded me of railroad tracks. I hope you enjoy knitting these socks as much as I have.

Size shown in photo is Women's US7. The pattern can easily be modified to fit larger or smaller feet.

The yarn used was Wildefoot by the Brown Sheep Company in the "Harvest Bonanza" colorway (75% Washable Wool/25% Nylon).

I used a US 1.5 (2.25MM), Hiya-Hiya 9" circular for these socks for all but the last few rounds of the toes where I switch to DPNs. Of course, you may use DPNs, Magic Loop, or 2 circulars, whichever is your preference. Other notions that you will need are two stitch markers, and a tapestry needle for weaving in the ends.

Gauge: 9 stitches and 12 rows = 1" in stockinette stitch after blocking.

This pattern is written for 64 stitches. If you use a different number of stitches, then you will need to adjust the numbers in the pattern accordingly. If you need to adjust the number for smaller or larger feet, make sure the number is divisible by 8 (i.e. 72 or 56).

Cast on 64 stitches using a stretchy cast-on like the long-tail cast-on. (I use size US 1.5 (2.25MM) needles to knit the main socks, but use a size 2 (2.5MM) and a cable cast-on just to give a bit more stretch for the cast-on. Once the join has been made (be careful to not twist your stitches), then switch to the US 1.5 needles. I keep a couple of US 2 DPNs in my notions bag just for this use.)

Join the stitches in the round making sure not to twist your stitches. Place a marker to denote the beginning of the round.

Do a 2X2 ribbing (Knit 2, Purl 2) for as long as you want (I like 1.5 inches – approximately 4.25 cm).

The pattern rows are as follows:

Row 1: *K1, S1, K2, S1, K1, P2; repeat from * to the end of the round.

Row 2: *K6, P2; repeat from * to the end of the round.

Repeat these two rows until you reach the leg length you like. End after working a Row 2.

The fun thing about this pattern is that you can use any heel you like, although I have written the heel flap to continue the railroad tracks pattern, so I recommend it. My favorite heel is a Dutch Heel. I am including it here.

Heel Flap - Move the marker for the beginning of the round back one stitch so that it rests in between the last 2 purl stitches at the end of the last round.

Row 1: S1, *K1, S1, K2, S1, K1, P2. Repeat from * 4 times, ending with a P1 on the 4th repeat. (32 stitches total). Turn your work.

Row 2: S1, K1, *P6, K2. Repeat from * 4 times. On the 4th repeat from *, you will only K1 at the end. (32 stitches) Turn your work.

Repeat these two rows 15 more times for a total of 32 rows. If you need a deeper gusset, you may do additional repeats of the heel flap, but you will need to add the extra slipped stitches to the gusset instructions below (for every 1 repeat added to the heel flap, you will need to pick up one extra stitch on each side of the heel flap).

Heel Turn

Row 1 - Knit 21, SSK, Turn.

Row 2 - Slip 1, P10, P2TOG, Turn.

Row 3 - Slip 1, K10, SSK, Turn.

Row 4 - Slip 1, P10, P2TOG, Turn.

Repeat Rows 3 and 4 until there are no more unworked side stitches. You should have 12 stitches on the needle and be ready for a right side row. You are ready to pick up the gusset stitches.

Gusset – Written for circular needles with instructions for DPNs in parentheses

For circular needles - Set-up Round: Knit across the 12 remaining stitches, pick up and knit 16 stitches using the slipped stitches along the side of the heel flap, PM, Knit in pattern beginning with Pattern Row 1 - *there will be a P1 at the beginning and end of the instep section rather than it beginning with a K1 and ending with a P2* – for 32 stitches, PM, pick up and knit the 16 stitches using the slipped stitches along the side of the heel flap and knit 6 stitches of the 12 along the end of the heel turn. This brings you to the center back.

(For DPNs – Set-up Round: Knit across the 12 remaining stitches, pick up and knit 16 stitches using the slipped stitches along the side of the heel flap. The end of this needle (needle 1) is where you will do the gusset decreases. Knit in pattern beginning with Pattern Row 1 - *there will be a P1 at the beginning and end of the instep section rather than it beginning with a K1 and ending with a P2* – on needles 2 and 3 for the 32 instep stitches. On needle 4 (you will also be doing gusset decreases here), pick up and knit 16 stitches using the slipped stitches along the side of the heel flap, then knit the first 6 stitches from needle 1. This will bring you to the center back. At this point, you should have 22 stitches each on needles 1 and 4, and 16 stitches each on needles 2 and 3.)

Round 1: Knit to 3 stitches before the marker (end of needle 1). K2Tog, K1, slip marker (begin needle 2), Knit Row 2 of pattern (*remember to start and end with P1*) to next marker (end of needle 3). Slip marker (begin needle 4), K1, SSK, Knit to end of the row.

Round 2: Knit to marker (end of needle 1), slip marker (begin needle 2), knit Row 1 of pattern (*remember to start and end with P1*) to next marker (end of needle 3), slip marker (begin needle 4) and knit to end of the row.

Repeat Rounds 1 and 2 of Gusset until 64 stitches remain (32 pattern stitches for the instep and 32 stockinette stitches for the sole). Leave markers in place.

If you aren't using the heel flap and heel turn for your sock (if you are using the Fish Lips Kiss heel or after thought heel, for example), the markers will need to be placed at the sides of the foot with 32 sole stitches and 32 instep stitches.

Foot

Continue knitting in pattern for the instep of the foot and stockinette on the sole of the foot until 2.5 inches from the end of the foot (*2 inches if wanting a flat end of toe finished with Kitchener Stitch*).

Toe

Knit one row plain stockinette.

Round 1: Knit to 3 stitches before the first marker (end of needle 1), K2Tog, K1, slip marker (begin needle 2), K1, SSK, knit to 3 before the second marker (end of needle 3), K2Tog, K1, slip marker (begin needle 4), K1, SSK, Knit to end of row. Four decreases in this round.

Round 2: Knit all the way around.

Continue repeating Rows 1 and 2 of the toe until one of two scenarios: 1. (*this is for the 2 inches from the end of foot scenario as mentioned above*) *The Sock is long enough to fit your foot, then Kitchener the toe closed*, or 2. (*this is for the 2.5 inches from end of foot scenario as mentioned above*) Until there are 20 stitches remaining at which time you Repeat Row 1 until 8 stitches remain. Then break off yarn giving yourself about a foot (30 cm) and, using a tapestry needle, thread the yarn through the remaining stitches (I like doing it twice around for added strength). Pull snug, poke the tapestry needle through the center hole, and weave your ends in on the wrong side.

Repeat for the second sock. ☺

K – Knit stitch

P – Purl stitch

S1 – Slip 1 stitch purlwise

K2Tog – Knit two stitches together

SSK – Slip 1 stitch as if to knit, slip a second stitch as if to knit, place the two stitches back onto left needle and knit together

PM – Place marker