

Sock Design - A Few More Thoughts

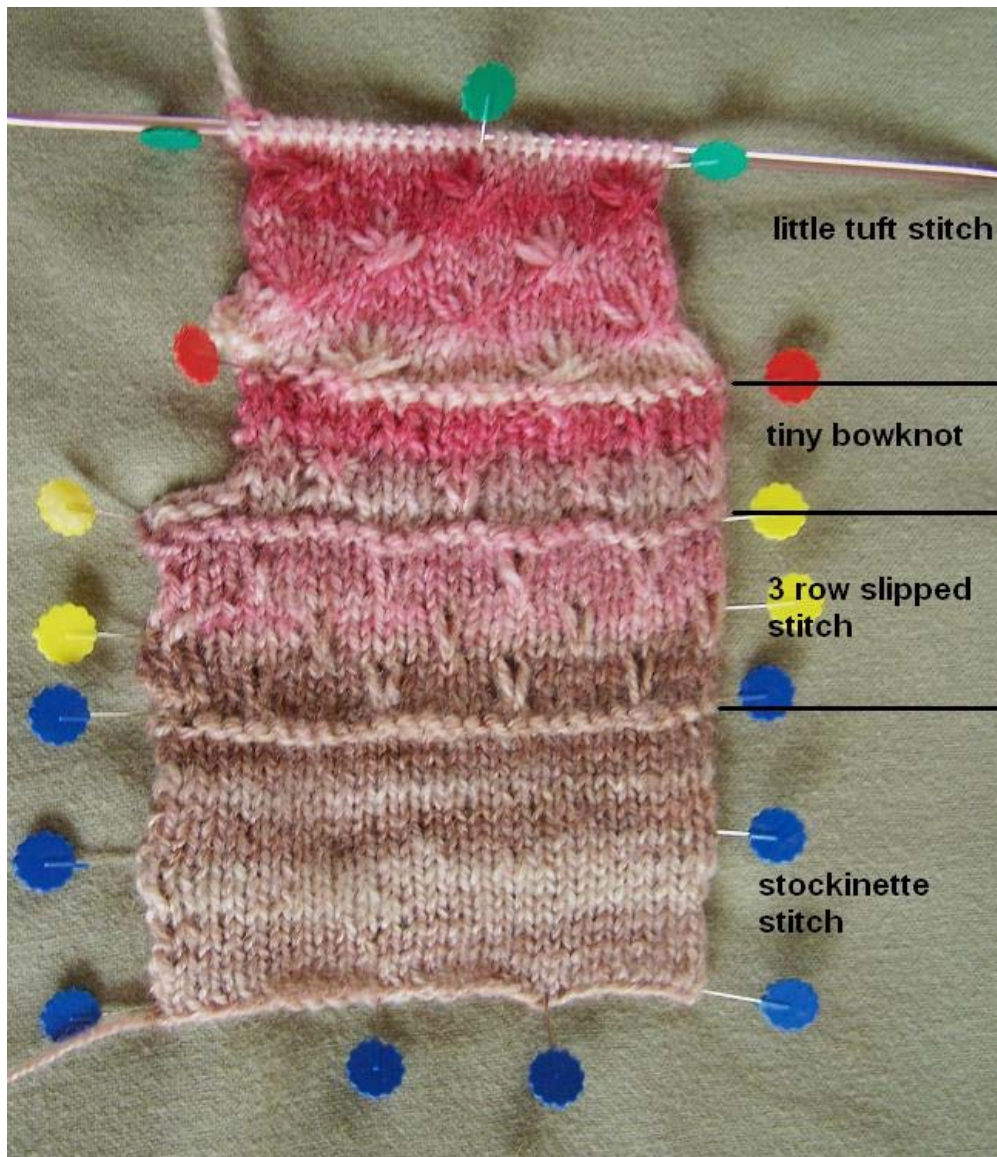
originally posted on October 20, 2006

Minor changes in [] have been made for the pdf version.

Underlined words are links. Access the links from the pdf document or from the original post.

In my sock design tutorials ([Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#)), I showed you the swatch that starts all my sock designs. Here are two more swatches. As always, click on any image [in the original post] to see it larger.

The yarn is my [handspun](#) fingering weight yarn made with painted roving from [Spunky Eclectic](#) in her Chocolate Covered Cherries colorway.



From the bottom up:
I always start with stockinette to find my needles size and get gauge.

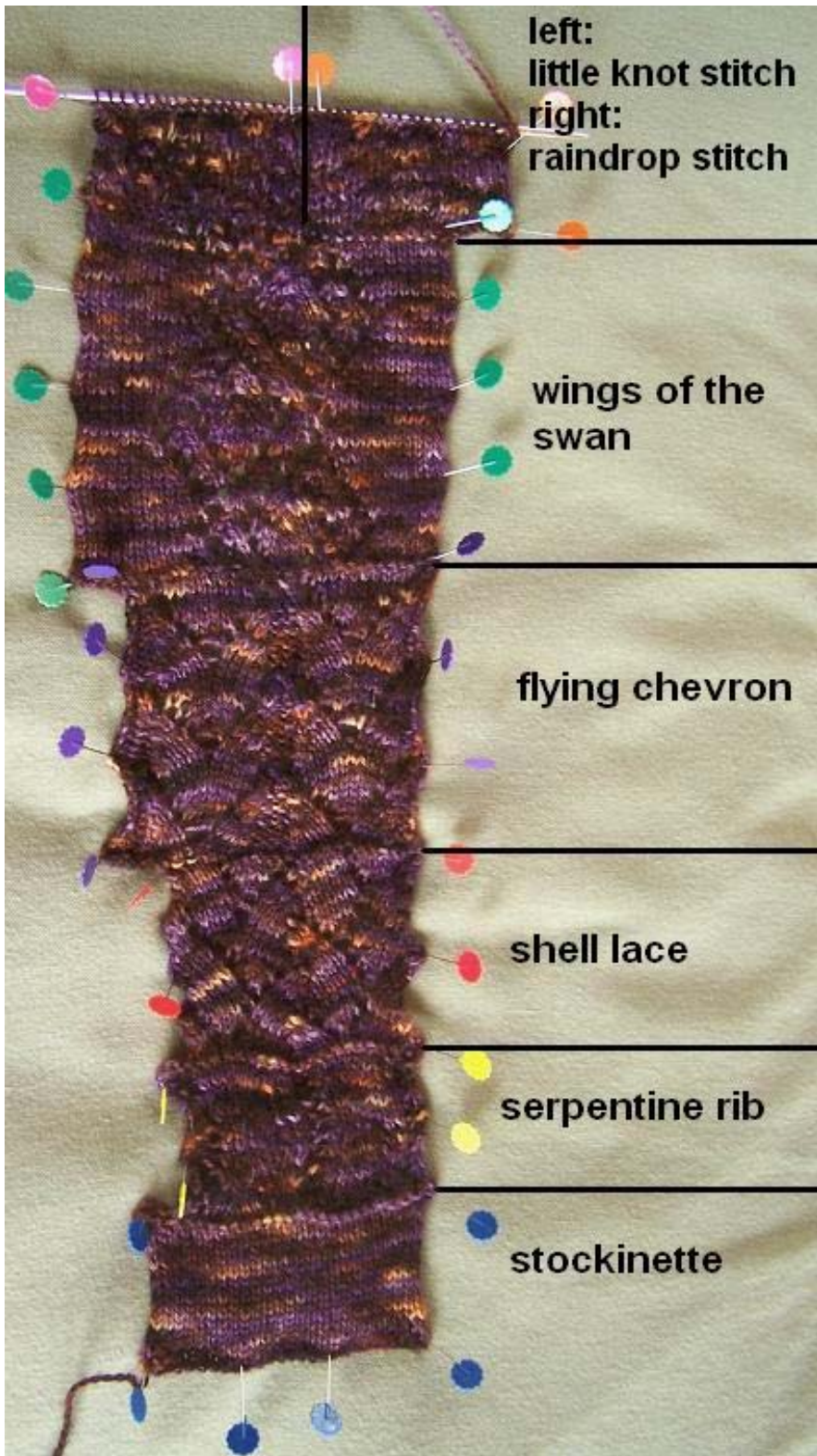
3 row slipped stitch - just a slipped stitch (with a yarnover so it won't pucker the fabric) every 6th stitch, shifted on the row it is knit in. Too simple for my tastes.

Tiny Bowknot - lost in the stripes.

Little Tuft stitch - my own creation, again using slipped stitches. I may use this but space out the tufts more. As you can see the fabric pulls in changing the gauge significantly. It also seems a little too busy with them spaced so closely.

This is a sock that wants to be knit plain. It is a hard decision for me, but if I am honest and listen to the yarn, that is what I hear. I may sneak in a few tufts here and there or use a pretty ribbing.

The yarn is hand-painted superwash merino sock yarn from [Pippi Knee Socks](#) in her Strange Days colorway.



From the bottom up:
stockinette

Serpentine Rib, Shell Lace, Flying Chevron, & Wings of the Swan - all lovely pattern stitches but completely lost in the rich dark colors of the yarn. I determined that I would need to use a simple pattern stitch.

Little Knot Stitch - also completely lost

Raindrop Stitch - so subtle it almost looks like stockinette but it has a rougher texture.

This sock also wants to be plain. Sometimes the yarn steals the show and this beautiful yarn certainly has a lot to say. The color repeats are not predictable so it has a lot of visual texture all by itself. As you can see I tried many pattern stitches before relenting on this one.

[Laurie in Maine](#) asked about translating stitch patterns for knitting in the round. If your stitch pattern is charted, it is easy. Every row will be read from right to left. Any pattern that calls for purling the wrong side row will now be knit (yay!) since you are always working on the right side.

If your stitch pattern is not charted you may want to chart it out before you start knitting. This is important if you are using a pattern stitch that requires you to do some stitch manipulation on each row. Remember the directions are written as if you are working wrong side rows left to right (as viewed from the right side) but you are working them from the right to the left. If you follow the directions you will not end up with the desired result (well maybe, but only if the pattern stitch is completely symmetrical). Here are a few charting references: [Charts Are Your Friends](#) from [Knitty](#) and [Beginner's Guide to Charted Lace Knitting](#) from [Heirloom Knitting](#). I learned a lot from reading the symbol reference section in [A Fourth Treasury of Knitting Patterns](#) by [Barbara Walker](#). I imagine that [Charted Knitting Designs: A Third Treasury of Knitting Patterns](#) will have good charting information too, but I don't own that book.

The other thing to keep in mind is that many pattern stitches have extra stitches that help the pattern at the edges. You will see something like multiple of 6 plus 2, meaning four repeats will be $4 \times 6 + 2 = 26$ stitches. If you are working the pattern stitch on the top of the foot then that is what you will need, 26 stitches. I like to have at least one knit stitch on either side of the panel on the foot. If it is an all-over type of pattern stitch, I like the number of knit stitches at the edges to be minimal. For a lace panel or cables, I like to have a few more, say 3 - 6 stitches. Of course, it depends on how it looks and how many stitches you need to make the sock fit. A fingering gauge will support more stitches at the edge than a sport weight gauge.

If you are working the pattern stitch around the leg without interruption, you will not need the extra stitches. For this example, you will need a multiple of 6 stitches that works with your gauge. Keep in mind that the pattern stitch may have a different gauge and you may need to increase or decrease to get the fit right.

Thank you for a great question Laurie.