



Tip of the Month—June 2016



Socks

My first pair of socks turned out rather 'odd' and suitable for someone with a size 10 foot rather than mine. I still wear them though as bed socks and have a comfortable night sleep. Since then I've read a bit more about socks, taking the right measurements and using different yarns and have had much better outcomes. I've pulled together some of the tips I've found and hope you find them useful and encouraging to make socks if you never have before.

1. Make the crocheted socks slightly smaller than the actual measurements of your foot and leg (enabling them to stay on your feet), and ensure your yarn has some stretch (cotton doesn't work the best).
2. To add more elasticity in the cuff, crochet a thin strand of elastic with the yarn in the cuff or crochet over a loop of elastic slightly smaller than the circumference of the sock.
3. Help your heels and toes last longer by using two strands of yarns or adding a reinforcing thread (nylon based threads while strong have been known to 'cut' the yarn) alongside the yarn in these parts. Or you can add reinforcement in the heel and toe after you've completed the socks by turning them inside out and weaving a strand of the same yarn over the rows, first up and then down the heel. I personally don't use two strands, as this requires some recalculation of the pattern and the use of a smaller hook.
4. Another way of reinforcing the heel is to use a texture stitch with ridges or bumps that can protect the area.
5. If you need to add new yarn or change colour, don't use knots - they can make your socks uncomfortable. Instead weave in the ends securely.
6. Yarns with soft fibres make for very comfortable socks, but they wear quicker so need some extra special care or reinforcement (see point 3.)
7. Most self-stripping yarns are designed for knitting. Crocheting, however, uses 30% more yarn and so the stripes will come out differently than shown in knitted colour swatches.
8. When decreasing, use the invisible decrease also used in amigurumi to avoid holes appearing.
9. There are a number of techniques for crocheting the heel—if you don't like the first one you try, find another technique—you can then substitute that technique in other patterns you find.