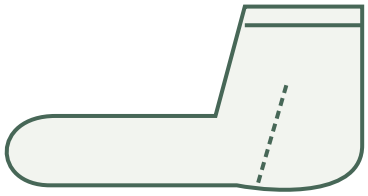
# Short wool socks

## Toe first, with a separate heel cup

Short socks made from a shaped forefoot and a separate heel cup, joined before a low ankle edge is added.

**Modern, measurement-led project. Not physically test-made.** This is not an exact reconstruction of a Viking-Age object. Use the fit checks throughout.



Forefoot + separate heel cup + low ankle edge.

Construction sketch, not a full-size template.

Use your measurements and frequent fitting.

## Prepare your materials

Smooth, medium-weight wool. Allow roughly 150-250 g for a pair for planning, plus a swatch; size and density can change this substantially.

You also need a blunt large-eyed needle, scissors, a tape measure, paper, a sewing needle and removable markers. Use one nalbinding stitch you already know; Oslo stitch is a practical option. The linked videos teach the loops and joins.

## Make a sample first

Make a small tube with the same stitch, yarn and tension you will use. Wash it according to the yarn label, dry it flat, then measure. Test a yarn join. With feltable wool, overlap teased-out ends, dampen with water and rub them together; check the join holds before continuing. Superwash yarn needs another joining method.

## Your measurement worksheet

| Measure | How / your chosen target | cm |
|---|---|---|
| Foot length, standing | Longest toe to back of heel | _____ |
| Ball circumference | Around the widest forefoot | _____ |
| Instep circumference | Around the highest part of the foot | _____ |
| Heel passage | Diagonally around heel and front of ankle | _____ |
| Finished foot length | Include the comfort room you want | _____ |
| Ankle edge height | Keep the first pair low; record your choice | _____ |

Measure both feet while standing and use the larger measurements. If you will wear a thin sock underneath, fit over it. The ankle opening must pass over the heel without forcing it. A foot outline helps compare length, but does not replace circumference measurements.

**First fit check:** Baste the heel to the forefoot before making a permanent seam. Heel depth changes the overall sock length.

## Make it, fit it, finish it

**1. Make a rounded toe.** Make a small loop and work a ring of stitches into it, then draw the centre closed. About 8-12 stitches is a trial starting point for medium yarn; add or remove some if it bunches or leaves a hole. Continue in a spiral, increasing to form a cup that fits over the toes.

**2. Build the forefoot.** Stop regular increases when the piece fits the ball of the foot comfortably. Continue towards the arch, adding width where the instep needs it. Work the second sock alongside the first. Leave the back open and the working end accessible for length adjustments.

**3. Make a separate heel cup.** Start another small centre and work outwards in rounds. Increase as needed to spread it across the back of the heel, then use fewer increases so it cups the heel rather than lying flat. Keep fitting it directly to the heel; no fixed diameter fits every foot.

**4. Fit the two pieces together.** Put the forefoot and heel cup in place on the foot. Pin or loosely baste their lower edges together around approximately the lower half of the heel cup. Keep the upper edges open for the ankle. Extend or shorten the forefoot until the toes have room and the heel sits correctly.

**5. Sew the join.** Take the sock off and sew the fitted lower edges together using a flat seam. Spread connections evenly if the two edges have different loop counts. Avoid a bulky ridge under the foot. Try it on again before securing the thread.

**6. Add the ankle edge.** Work a new round around the remaining open upper edges of both pieces. Add stitches at the joins if needed to bridge them smoothly. Check that the opening still passes over the heel. Work only the height you want; do not narrow it to ankle circumference unless it can still pass the heel.

**7. Finish and wear-check.** Weave ends away from pressure points on the sole. Wash as for the sample and dry flat. Compare the pair. Try them in the footwear you intend to use: thick nalbound fabric needs room. Correct pressure points or a bulky seam before prolonged wear.

## Colour and your own notes

Undyed wool with a muted blue ankle edge. A contrast heel can help you see the join while learning.

Yarn / dye lot: _____ Stitch: _____

Measurements, changes and yarn used: _____

## Technique help and construction references

Shelagh Lewins: sock construction, separate heel (type A)

Sanna-Mari Pihlajapiha: sock measurements

Rounded starts

Sanna-Mari Pihlajapiha: stitch and finishing videos

Joining wool yarn

Increasing and decreasing

This modern project uses the separate-cup principle described by Lewins. It is not a stitch-for-stitch reconstruction of the Coppergate sock, and no source drawings are reproduced. Links checked 19 October 2026. Original wording and diagrams by Nordic Viking History.

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