
Subject: But First...

Posted by [jmeadows](#) on Tue, 10 May 2011 23:55:16 GMT

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But First...

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [b_twin_1](#) on Wed, 11 May 2011 00:05:18 GMT

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Interestingly, we don't have that line from Patons here in Australia. Although buying 100% is dead easy.

Untreated etc etc may just mean it *felts* really well so be careful. ;)

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [jmeadows](#) on Wed, 11 May 2011 00:10:08 GMT

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Gauge smauge. It doesn't matter for blankets. (I guess it matters a little if you're sewing bits together, but things do *stretch*, so as long as you have the same number of stitches on each square, it should be easy, like eating pie. Easy, but not as fun.)

Good move on the chunky wool; that should knit up very quickly.

We have a lot of just wool here. Cascade, Brown Sheep, Patons of course... Lots of smaller dyers. I bet Blondviolinist knows a ton of them off the top of her head.

Though if you're talking about just wool that hasn't gone through a ton of processing, yeah, I don't think there's a huge ton, though it's certainly available. I believe -- someone please correct me if I'm wrong -- some of the processing involves putting the wool through some kind of chemical to dissolve the VM (vegetable matter - grass, seeds, etc), and if you get superwash, there are a couple of ways they go about doing that, which adds another process. And not all dyes are sensitive skin friendly.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [blondviolinist](#) on Wed, 11 May 2011 00:56:30 GMT

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Yep, what jmeadows said. Cascade has a good range of all-wool yarns, in various gauges, both regular (feltable) and superwash. Brown Sheep is great, and an eco-friendly company.

Other companies with all-wool yarns: several South American yarn companies, such as Malabrigo, Araucania, Manos del Uruguay. Dale of Norway also has some great all-wool yarns. Rowan has a great yarn line called Rowan Purelife British Sheep Breeds, with each different (undyed) color coming from a different breed.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [blondviolinist](#) on Wed, 11 May 2011 01:09:03 GMT

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Oh! Also... belts in photographs of knitwear are a flashing neon sign for: "These sweaters (jumpers?) are shaped like a box, and the only way to show your waist is by finding a big belt!" Mind you, a big boxy cardigan is a good item of clothing to have (and soooo cozy!), but sometimes the way photographs are styled can hide the true shape of the pattern.

(Other big warning signs: only side & back shots of the model? "We can't get the front of this garment to look good no matter how we try!" Pictures of the model sitting, but none standing? "The hem and/or bust line of this garment hit our model in an unfortunate place, so we're hiding that." Of course, sometimes the photographer simply went all artsy with his shoot, and there was absolutely nothing wrong with the garment, but what photos *don't* show about knitting patterns is as important as what they *do* show.)

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [BurgandyIce](#) on Wed, 11 May 2011 01:52:15 GMT

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Sweetheart, I knit at stoplights.^ There's a particularly ogreish stoplight in the middle of Mauncester which I am seeing way too much of again, it being on the way to both Tabitha and Nadia, and it used to be a pet hate of mine. No more. I roll up, put the clutch in neutral, yank on the handbrake, and knit.

Thanks for clarifying!!

Because of all y'all, all of you very yarn-happy people commenting on types and thicknesses (or

whatever) of yarn and things to make with yarn and ESPECIALLY the benefits of fiddling productively (EMoon even mentioned somewhere about the different muscles involved as not deterring from typing/writing/thinking) because of all of THAT - and because I happened to be in a craft store today picking up modeling clay for a school project (that's already late) I stumbled upon some yarn. I lost myself for a full half hour examining various types and lengths of needles having been sucked in by the beautiful display of color. I even looked at a book... about knitting socks. I thought "something easy, maybe" and the easy picture of FOUR KNITTING NEEDLES woke me up out of the stupor.

I practically ran out of the store.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [Stardancer](#) on Wed, 11 May 2011 01:56:35 GMT

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BurgandyIce wrote on Tue, 10 May 2011 21:52

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I hear socks are not actually as bad as they look...but I am not yet ready to attempt them. So. Seriously, start with a scarf. Or dishcloths. They're rectangular and even if they aren't, no one cares! But you still feel accomplished :)

DANGEROUS, I say. I asked my boyfriend--since I've been staring at patterns and trying to think of excuses to use some of them--if he'd like some knitted stuff (in, say, five years) and I've now got two vest patterns (which I can't read at all) and a scarf standing by.

I think I need more YARN.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [equus_peduus](#) on Wed, 11 May 2011 02:09:18 GMT

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Stardancer wrote on Tue, 10 May 2011 18:56BurgandyIce wrote on Tue, 10 May 2011 21:52

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I think I need more YARN.

Socks, so far, are not as scary as they look. And four needles, as it turns out, is not much harder than two; it's also not much harder (and may be easier) than the fancy circular needles. And I am not allowed to look at any websites or stores that sell yarn until I get at least two more pairs of socks... I ran across a sock yarn sale a couple weeks ago, before I'd even finished the *first* pair of socks (which has now been completed, and which needs to be photographed in the near future)... I started with a cup cozy, and then a couple of cell phone covers to learn about knitting in the round before I tried socks, though.

Yes. I have apparently been sucked into the dark side, or something. Aaaaah. Though most of my knitting is at home, while watching TV shows that don't actually require all my attention (I am working my way through Star Trek for the first time) or listening to books on tape... I'm not sure I could manage to knit during a stop light, though I did knit while my car was having a flat tire repaired a few weeks ago...

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [jmeadows](#) on Wed, 11 May 2011 02:39:28 GMT

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BurgandyIce wrote on Tue, 10 May 2011 21:52 I even looked at a book... about knitting socks. I thought "something easy, maybe" and the easy picture of FOUR KNITTING NEEDLES woke me up out of the stupor.

I practically ran out of the store.

Socks aren't hard. I've knit lots, and while they can *look* intimidating, you really just follow the

pattern. It won't lead you wrong! (Well, a badly-written pattern will, but poo on them.) Knitting on four or five needles is just like knitting on two. You have a working needle, and then the needle you're getting stitches off of. The other needles just hang out there and wait their turn. :)

I think it *is* a pretty good idea to practice on something flat at first, just so your hands get used to the motion of knitting, but don't let socks intimidate you!

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [EMoon](#) on Wed, 11 May 2011 03:47:46 GMT

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Due to an incredibly difficult day (details not important here, but both physically and emotionally difficult) I knit a lot of rows today. WAY more than usual. (Also way more mistakes than usual.)

And if I had not had my little old (very old) tote bag with my knitting along, I would probably have been a danger to myself and others at multiple points along the way. I am very grateful to the knitting enablers who lured me back to knitting and got me started well before the this day hit. (Of course, I now suspect that my mother made all those gorgeous sweaters for me during college not because she was really that fascinated with her return to knitting after a long lapse, but because she was worried about me. And my right hand is pretty stiff this evening, though it's been hours since I knit a row. But still. Sanity and courtesy and even bits of humor in the midst of chaos are desirable, and knitting helped me obtain them.)

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [Diane in MN](#) on Wed, 11 May 2011 05:55:39 GMT

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blondviolinist wrote on Tue, 10 May 2011 20:09 Oh! Also... belts in photographs of knitwear are a flashing neon sign for: "These sweaters (jumpers?) are shaped like a box, and the only way to show your waist is by finding a big belt!" Mind you, a big boxy cardigan is a good item of clothing to have (and soooo cozy!), but sometimes the way photographs are styled can hide the true shape of the pattern.

I think almost all newer pattern books give you schematics with printed dimensions in the instruction section, so you can see the actual shape of the garment. This is extremely useful.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [eadavidmmm](#) on Wed, 11 May 2011 06:06:43 GMT

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You are interested in wool of a color you choose? I learned to spin four years ago on a drop/suspended spindle. May 26, 2008, I acquired a lovely spinning wheel (Louet Victoria, model S96). This past weekend was the Shepherd's Harvest Festival, just 15 miles from my home. I bought no yarn but roving, batts, sliver, and washed locks of 14 sorts of animals. Angora rabbit to Wensleydale sheep to some nearly non-existent.it.is.so.soft cashmere/silk. If sheep fail to grow hair this year, I have enough stash to last a bit.... I may venture into buying a raw, freshly shorn fleece next year, maybe.

Links: http://www.louet.com/spinning_weaving/victoria.shtml

http://www.shepherdsharvestfestival.org/New_Site/

Some fiber: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/9850595@N03/5704856659/in/photo> stream

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [Diane in MN](#) on Wed, 11 May 2011 06:18:22 GMT

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Those sweaters actually do look "quick and easy," even for beginners. And remember that you have knitters on hand who can show you any techniques you'll need to learn. You don't want to be making hellhound squares forever--BORING.

And actually, that's the bad part about sewing up. It's not that it's so hard, it's BORING. Weaving ends in is BORING. When you start on your sweater (yes, when), google "splicing yarn"--easy to do with untreated (feltable) wool, and you will have no ends to weave in.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [blondviolinist](#) on Wed, 11 May 2011 13:05:14 GMT

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Diane in MN wrote on Wed, 11 May 2011 01:55

I think almost all newer pattern books give you schematics with printed dimensions in the instruction section, so you can see the actual shape of the garment. This is extremely useful. The schematics are becoming more popular, yes, but newer knitters don't always know to look for them, and I've known several cases where the drawing of the schematic didn't actually match the shape of the finished garment. (Sigh.) So it's still good to be aware of how photography can hide a garment's true shape.

ETA: I'm one of those freaks who actually *likes* seaming. It's so fun to watch the various pieces come together into a cohesive whole. I will completely agree on the boringness of weaving in ends, however. I have to have something good to listen to or watch while I do that task.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [sixpence](#) on Wed, 11 May 2011 15:18:35 GMT

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Squares can also be crocheted together - with the advantage that a couple of extra rows of strategic crochet can adjust the fit of the squares. Been there, have the scars.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [Diane in MN](#) on Thu, 12 May 2011 05:19:05 GMT

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blondviolinist wrote on Wed, 11 May 2011 08:05

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About 10 years ago I took a beginner knitting class as a refresher, and the learning project was a vest. It had to be sewn up, and we were shown what I now know is mattress stitch--WONDER! I had not been taught this when I initially learned to knit, and found it a major improvement over the backstitch method I had used before. I've also decided that I'm going to do sleeves on my current project by picking up stitches after joining the shoulder and working the sleeve from the top down. If I feel bold enough for a major learning experience, I may even try to do this after sewing up the whole body, and work the sleeve in the round. But since I've just ripped my first gauge swatch to try again with bigger needles, I have plenty of time to decide about that. :)

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [BurgandyIce](#) on Thu, 12 May 2011 15:05:15 GMT

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Hmmm.... I will consider the Square. I'm glad to hear Socks aren't as Scary as they looked b/c I'm enthralled at the idea of finishing something that would be a Hit. I can picture my Energy Bundles running and sliding on the hardwood floor in Finished Knitted Socks - "Finished" being the key word as I deliberately don't think of the quilt blocks stuffed under my bed and especially avoid any connection between them and the beautiful sewing machine I Needed for Quilting.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [3rdragon](#) on Fri, 13 May 2011 17:29:54 GMT

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equus_peduus wrote on Tue, 10 May 2011 22:09Stardancer wrote on Tue, 10 May 2011 18:56BurgandyIce wrote on Tue, 10 May 2011 21:52

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I think I need more YARN.

Socks, so far, are not as scary as they look. And four needles, as it turns out, is not much harder than two;

The thing to know about socks (or any double-pointed needle (four needle) project) is that you're only ever working on two needles at any one time. It's good to have someone who knows how to do it to get you through the first few rows, which are harder because you don't have any knitted stuff to keep your needles in order, but after that it's just a matter of keeping the extra needles out of the way and making sure they don't slip out of the knitting when you're not paying attention to them (I recommend bamboo needles, *especially* if you knit loosely, because metal and plastic ones can be very slippery).

For anyone considering venturing into socks, I would recommend doing flat things for long enough that you mostly don't have weird holes in your knitting and don't accidentally gain or lose stitches every few rows. I would also recommend not trying double-pointed needles AND knitting with much smaller yarn/needles in one project. A lot of socks are knit on US size 1 needles, which seem REALLY FREAKIN' SMALL if you're used to US size 7 or 8.

One of my favorite beginning projects knitted on four needles are the Give a Hoot Mittens. I'm sure there are simpler patterns, but I also think these are really cute.

The thing to remember about double-pointed needles (also about cables) is that they aren't all that hard* -- they're just intimidating. Stare back, and eventually they'll back down.

And socks are very portable. It's much easier to knit socks in line at the post office than to knit a large shawl. (I've done both.)

*for 99.5% of the population. I do know one woman, otherwise a very accomplished knitter, who hates double-pointed needles with a fiery burning passion, and makes her own itty-bitty circular needles so as not to use them.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [claning](#) on Sat, 14 May 2011 02:44:43 GMT

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3rdragon wrote on Fri, 13 May 2011 13:29I would also recommend not trying double-pointed needles AND knitting with much smaller yarn/needles in one project. A lot of socks are knit on US size 1 needles, which seem REALLY FREAKIN' SMALL if you're used to US size 7 or 8. Second the motion. I encourage people to work their way down gradually -- do a project or two on size 7 or 8 (4.5 to 5mm), then try something on 5 or 6 (3.75 to 4mm), then work your way through 3.25mm, 3mm, 2.5mm, and so forth as you feel comfortable. (US size 1 is 2.25mm.) You may of course skip steps and/or go at your own pace.

I've found that you not only have to train your hands to use the smaller needles, you have to train your eyes and brain so that you can actually see what you are doing on the smaller needles as well as you are used to on the bigger ones. Your eyes need time (and sometimes different reading glasses) to adjust to seeing details on a smaller scale.

Quote:I do know one woman, otherwise a very accomplished knitter, who hates double-pointed needles with a fiery burning passion, and makes her own itty-bitty circular needles so as not to use them.

There are more people than just her who hate "DPNs." Fortunately there are also two techniques, one called Magic Loop and another called Two Circulars, that allow you to knit small-diameter objects like socks on one or two (respectively) long circular needles. Both are very clever and many people like them. (Personally, I will freely reciprocate your friend's sentiment by hating Magic Loop.)

Much to my surprise, I've actually seen very short circulars for sale in a few catalogs, though it's been years since I saw one in a store: Addi Turbo makes 8-inch circulars in US sizes 0 through 6, and Hiya Hiya has 9-inch ones in more sizes (and for about 2/3 the price of the Addis).

Patternworks.com is one US vendor that carries them.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [blondviolinist](#) on Sat, 14 May 2011 03:53:17 GMT

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claning wrote on Fri, 13 May 2011 22:44

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Patternworks.com is one US vendor that carries them.

Yes, one of the local yarn stores in my neck of the woods carries both the super-short Addis and the super-short KA bamboo circular needles. I don't care for them, personally, but they seem to be quite popular around here.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [HeiQ](#) on Sat, 14 May 2011 04:38:13 GMT

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claning wrote on Fri, 13 May 2011 22:44

There are more people than just her who hate "DPNs." Fortunately there are also two techniques, one called Magic Loop and another called Two Circulars, that allow you to knit small-diameter objects like socks on one or two (respectively) long circular needles. Both are very clever and many people like them. (Personally, I will freely reciprocate your friend's sentiment by hating Magic Loop.

Ugh. I've never actually used the Magic Loop method, but I looked it up and watched a couple of videos on it, and I couldn't figure out why ANYONE would want to use that method, haha... But I guess we all do what we are most comfortable with. I'm knitting a baby sweater right now, and while it's not in the round, it does use two circular needles. It took me a little while to figure out what the heck I was doing (complicated by the fact that it's a sideways knit starting from the sleeve, which I have never done before), but once I did, it's been working really well and I kind of like it. I should try making a pair of mittens or socks on two circulars just to try that method of knitting in the round out, though DPNs work just fine for me.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [Diane in MN](#) on Sat, 14 May 2011 05:47:59 GMT

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I had to use DPNs for my hat and didn't find them hard to learn, but the 7-inch ones were good at getting in each other's (and my) way. I had to make a second hat to get the size right and found some 5-inch DPNs to use on it, and liked that length much better. I've seen videos of the two-circular-needle and Magic Loop methods of working small things in the round, and Magic Loop looked like way more trouble than it was worth. The two-circular method might be worth a try, though.

I've not seen the tiny circulars that claning and blondviolinist mentioned, but gosh, the tips must be so short that they'd be hard to use. I suspect that my first venture into sock knitting will be on DPNs.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [b_twin_1](#) on Sat, 14 May 2011 05:50:07 GMT

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HeiQ wrote on Sat, 14 May 2011 00:38Ugh. I've never actually used the Magic Loop method, but I looked it up and watched a couple of videos on it, and I couldn't figure out why ANYONE would want to use that method, haha...

What suits one person doesn't necessarily work for someone else. I use Magic Loop and find it works well for me. DPNs are waaaay too scary and the idea of using two circulars seems bonkers. But then, I've never actually tried them so I guess I can't really comment can I?

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [HeiQ](#) on Sat, 14 May 2011 17:43:25 GMT

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b_twin_1 wrote on Sat, 14 May 2011 01:50What suits one person doesn't necessarily work for someone else. I use Magic Loop and find it works well for me. DPNs are waaaay too scary and the idea of using two circulars seems bonkers. But then, I've never actually tried them so I guess I can't really comment can I?

This is true. I think that when it comes to knitting we tend to mostly be comfortable with what we learned first. For example, I don't understand why anyone would want to knit using the English method, because I learned the Continental method and after watching people knit with the English method, it seems as though my way is usually faster and simpler and there's less yarn being thrown around. But, there are clearly LOTS of people that use the English method, and they

like it, and I'm sure they think the way I knit looks funny and kind of complicated in it's own way. I was trying to re-teach my husband's sister-in-law how to knit. She had learned the English way and I was trying to teach her the Continental way because that's the only one I know. It did not go well at all, haha... What a mess.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [Stardancer](#) on Sat, 14 May 2011 19:30:03 GMT

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Quote:I've not seen the tiny circulars that claning and blondviolinist mentioned, but gosh, the tips must be so short that they'd be hard to use. I suspect that my first venture into sock knitting will be on DPNs.

Mine too, I think. I did look up Magic Loop, but I feel like that particular method would leave me shouting at my needles for misbehavior. No guarantee that DPNs won't also, but still.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [3rdragon](#) on Sat, 14 May 2011 20:11:16 GMT

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I understand the theory of Magic Loop, but have never had the need to use it enough times to make it look anything but awkward to me. I've used two circulars on occasion and think it can be pretty slick, but mostly I don't *have* two circulars in the same size (and the one size I do, I also have DPNs), so I mostly just use DPNs, or if I need more stitches, I'll do a weird hybrid of using a circular with DPNs.

I actually taught myself to knit continental because it seemed easier and more efficient to me (I used to wrap with my right hand. I guess that's English). It's a continuing process; at this point I can't imagine wrapping with the right, but I use my left hand to help wrap, instead of just wrapping with the right needle, which is my eventual goal. I'm capable of wrapping with the right needle if I'm just doing straight-up knitting (although it does funny things to my tension sometimes), but I lose it if I'm doing any sort of pattern, and I can't even figure out how to purl without using my fingers to help.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [HeiQ](#) on Sun, 15 May 2011 01:51:25 GMT

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3rdragon wrote on Sat, 14 May 2011 16:11

I actually taught myself to knit continental because it seemed easier and more efficient to me (I used to wrap with my right hand. I guess that's English). It's a continuing process; at this point I can't imagine wrapping with the right, but I use my left hand to help wrap, instead of just wrapping with the right needle, which is my eventual goal. I'm capable of wrapping with the right needle if I'm just doing straight-up knitting (although it does funny things to my tension sometimes), but I lose it if I'm doing any sort of pattern, and I can't even figure out how to purl without using my fingers to help.

I have found that with knitting (especially back when I was first learning) it is SO much easier if I can watch someone do something over and over and over again slowly. I think purling may actually be a little trickier the continental way. It took me a little while to learn it and I ended up rubbing a hole in my index finger with the tip of my needle. Even now if I'm not watching myself, my purl usually has a looser tension than my knit.

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [dozingpanther](#) on Mon, 16 May 2011 13:24:03 GMT

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Wow- I've knitted that very cardigan, using that pattern, in the darkest shade they make. I can confirm that it is very quick and easy to knit, but it does tend to pill a little bit. Don't know about felting as I wouldn't machine wash it! The pattern does shape the waist a little bit but it does need something to hold it closed.

I made a knitted belt to go with it (10 stitches wide of k1p1 rib using up a whole ball) and added belt loops, (i-cord).

It is very soft and warm and I like it.

(and it motivated me to register after lurking for a long while!)

Subject: Re: But First...

Posted by [claning](#) on Tue, 17 May 2011 02:33:33 GMT

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3rdragon wrote on Sat, 14 May 2011 16:11 I understand the theory of Magic Loop, but have never had the need to use it enough times to make it look anything but awkward to me. I've used two circulars on occasion and think it can be pretty slick, but mostly I don't *have* two circulars in the same size (and the one size I do, I also have DPNs), so I mostly just use DPNs, or if I need more

stitches, I'll do a weird hybrid of using a circular with DPNs.

I won't tell you how many decades of knitting it took me before it dawned on me that it was okay to have more than one set of knitting needles in the SAME size!

Quote: I actually taught myself to knit continental because it seemed easier and more efficient to me (I used to wrap with my right hand. I guess that's English).

I've always knitted English (by that definition). In my experience, Continental has the reputation of being faster, but in practice I don't think it makes that much difference. Rather, different knitters seem to have different "cruising speeds" regardless of what method they're using.

(Should anyone wish to time themselves by knitting steadily for a few minutes to establish a stitches-per-minute rate, I'm always interested in hearing the results. There seem to be "clusters" of people who knit at certain speeds.)
