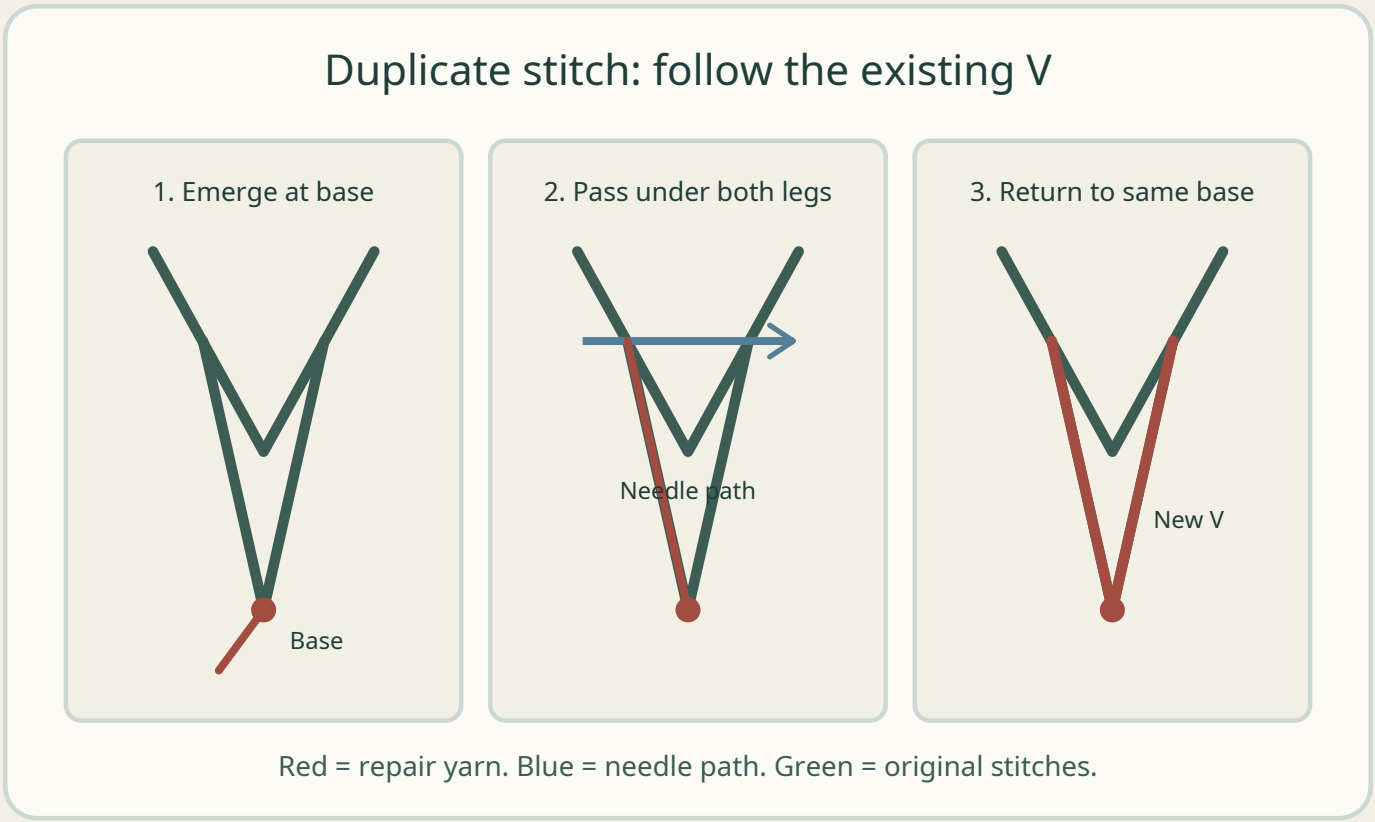
STEADLEAF PRESS
MEND / KNITS, SOCKS & DARNING

Darn a Heel Thin Spot Before a Hole Appears



Reinforce a small thin area of an ordinary knit sock heel with relaxed duplicate-stitch paths while retaining a low-profile surface.

14 practical steps • Original diagrams and repair records

Illustrative repair plans — not physical test results

Before you start

A thin heel may still retain a recognizable knit stitch network. Reinforcing those loops before yarns break can add support without building a thick patch. This guide covers an ordinary adult non-specialist wool or similar knit sock with a small local thin region in simple stockinette, stable loops and sound surrounding knit. It is not for broken or dropped loops, large worn regions, medical compression or protective socks. Stop using a sock that rubs or causes pressure.

Materials

Clean dry sock, good light, magnifier, suitable soft compatible darning yarn of similar effective thickness, blunt tapestry needle, smooth rounded support, paper and pencil, ruler and comparable knit scrap. Follow compatible care instructions. Avoid hard-edged supports and heavy yarn.

Plan the repair

Observe the complete worn region on the knit face. Where the Vs are still intact and can be traced, use duplicate stitch (Swiss darning): emerge at the base of a V, pass beneath both legs of the stitch immediately above it without splitting yarn, then return through the same base, following the existing V. Work neighbouring Vs with modestly staggered boundaries into sound knit; keep the new yarn relaxed and avoid dense layering or long floats on the inside. If yarns are broken or the knit cannot support the new stitches, choose a different repair or replacement. A reinforcement is not a durability guarantee.

Steps 1–2

1. Locate the heel wear

Turn the sock as needed to inspect both sides and lay the heel in its relaxed shape. Identify thinning beyond the most visible area.

2. Confirm the scope

Check the sock type and knit structure. This method covers a local stockinette area with a recognizable V network, not a reinforced technical heel or medical sock.

Steps 3–4

3. Inspect the remaining loops

Look for continuous Vs and sound anchors around the thin region. If a loop has broken or dropped, secure it with an appropriate marker and seek another method.

4. Map the whole zone

Draw the columns and rows affected, plus sound knitting beyond them. Record the actual dimensions and avoid a fixed grid size.

Steps 5–6

5. Choose a compatible yarn

Compare the original knit with a soft, flexible candidate of similar effective thickness and care. Avoid yarn that creates a hard ridge. Use the yarn comparison guide if uncertain.

6. Support without stretching

Place a smooth rounded support behind the heel if helpful. Keep the knit in its natural shape and the opposite sock layer separate.

Steps 7–8

7. Trace the V path

On a sound practice swatch, find the bottom of a V and the two legs of the next stitch above it. Use Pattern 1; do not pierce or split existing yarn.

8. Plan the grid

Mark rows that extend through the full thin region into stable neighbouring knit. Stagger start and end positions to avoid a hard straight boundary. See Pattern 2.

Steps 9–10

9. Anchor discreetly

Thread the blunt needle and weave the starting tail through several sound wrong-side loops. Keep it relaxed and avoid a bulky knot in a pressure area.

10. Follow the first V

Bring the needle up at the base of the selected V. Slide it under both legs of the stitch directly above, then bring it down through the same base. The new strand follows the original V, not a tight crossbar.

Steps 11–12

11. Repeat across neighbouring Vs

Move to the next adjacent V, keeping the yarn relaxed and the back floats short. Work only intact traceable stitches, including sound border stitches. Do not pull the heel inward.

12. Finish the planned region

Continue adjacent rows with staggered endpoints. Stop when support is distributed without stacking multiple layers. Weave ends through sound wrong-side loops without tension; trim only the new yarn tail.

Steps 13–14

13. Inspect inside and outside

Remove the support. Observe the relaxed heel for loose loops, hard ridges, puckering and trapped layers. Do not pull or load-test; do not wear an uncomfortable sock.

14. Record and monitor

Record the yarn, rows and actual appearance. Check after permitted care and ordinary use if comfortable. If wear spreads, loops fail or rubbing occurs, discontinue use and reassess.

Fix, care and preserve

The original V cannot be followed

Do not invent a stitch path through broken yarns. A hole or unstable knit needs a different support method.

The heel becomes smaller

The duplicate stitches are too tight. If the original loops are sound, remove only affected new work and restore the relaxed shape.

The inside feels lumpy

Long floats, bulky ends or thick yarn can create pressure. Do not wear the sock until the problem is resolved; replacement may be preferable.

New thinning appears

The wear may be too broad for a local reinforcement. Do not keep stacking yarn. Assess the whole heel and consider replacing the sock.

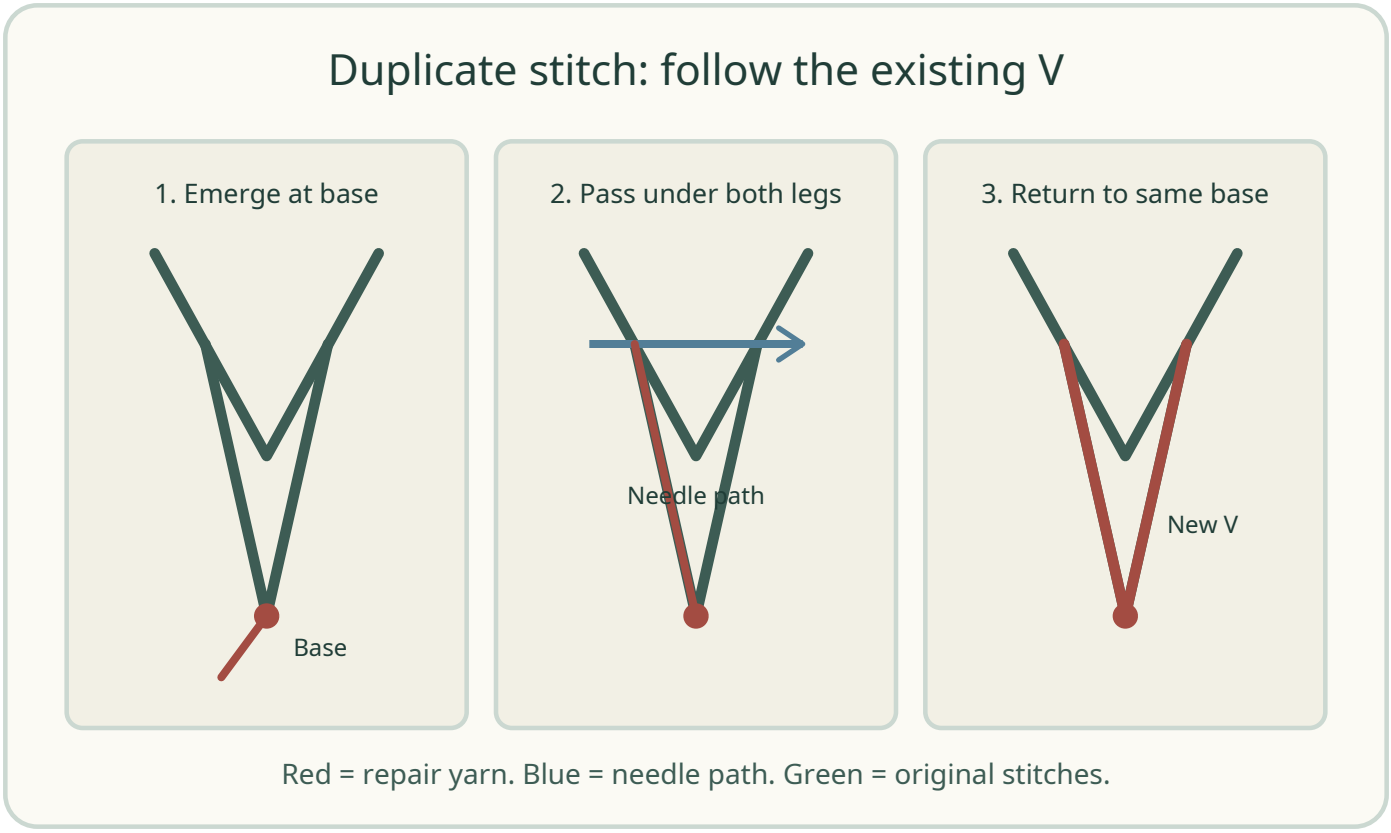
Originality and evidence boundary

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Print the following pages separately if desired. Schematics are illustrative, not full-size cutting patterns. Record only actual observations.

Pattern 1

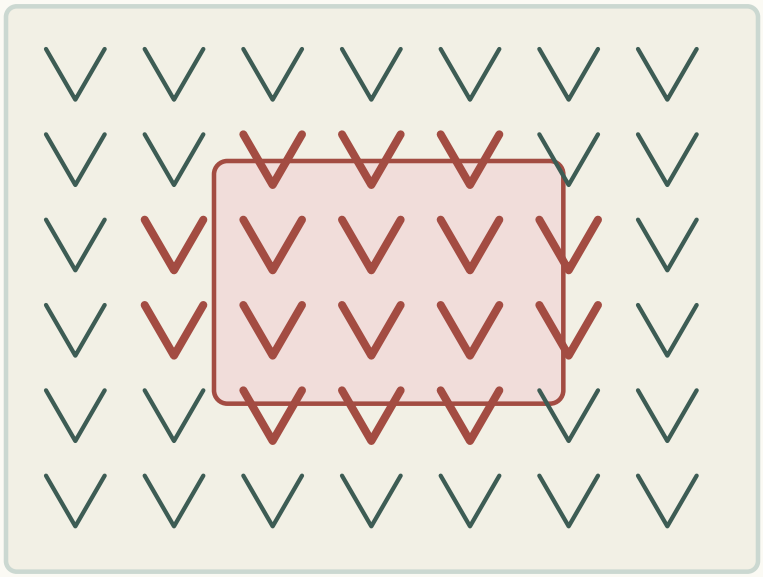
Duplicate stitch diagram: identify the original V base, both legs of the stitch in the next row, and the new strand following the original V. Show the needle emerging at the base, passing under the two upper legs and returning through the base. Illustration is not to scale.



Pattern 2

Preemptive darning grid: show columns of existing V stitches with a local thin region, adjacent sound rows and staggered reinforcement endpoints. Highlight the duplicate stitch path across intact loops. Provide blank rows to map the actual heel; no prescribed stitch count or strength claim.

Map the preemptive darning grid



Your heel grid

Stagger endpoints in sound knit; no prescribed stitch count.

Record 1 — Materials and repair plan

Record actual observations only. Use UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED for anything you have not established.

Sock / knit construction / care

Full heel wear dimensions

Original loops intact?

Sound margin / grid location

Candidate yarn / thickness / care

Practice stitch observation

Planned rows and endpoints

Decision: reinforce / refer

Record 2 — Finish and follow-up

Record actual observations only. Use UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED for anything you have not established.

Actual yarn and rows

V paths / ends secured

Inside and outside profile

All supports / tools removed?

Relaxed heel shape

Normal use / permitted care observations

Decision: continue / replace / refer

Date / follow-up