

Patterning Traditional Korean Socks (버선 – *beoseon*)

Lady Stella di Silvestri



(16th C - Lined unpadded socks- *gyeop beoseon* - 겹버선)



(16th C - Quilted socks- *nubi beoseon* - 누비버선)

History

Socks have been a part of Korean clothing for centuries and are worn by all people, regardless of status. The name “*beoseon*” (버선) is first mentioned in *Hunmongjahoe* (훈몽자회) by Choe Sejin (최세진) in 1527. *Beoseon* is a pure Korean word, meaning it is not based on Chinese characters or names. It is thought that previously to this, they would have used the Chinese word for sock, but after 1443 with the implementation of Hangul (한글), the Korean alphabet, more pure Korean words were made and used.

By late Joseon, *beoseon* became a sort of icon for traditional Korean clothing and culture. The shape of *beoseon* appears as ornaments in *norigae* (노리개), embellished knotted accessories with tassels. Jars of fermented soybean paste, similar to miso, also have an upside down paper pattern of *beoseon* pasted on the outside of the jar as a protection talisman to prevent spoilage. Modernly, you can still find *beoseon*-shaped motifs and items that call back to the traditional Korean culture and clothing.

Characteristics

The shape of the traditional Korean sock features a rounded heel, wide neck and its iconic pointed toe. The socks are made out of ramie, cotton, silk, and hemp depending on the status of the wearer and what season they were worn. There are two sides to the sock with a seam that runs from the top of the sock, under the foot and up the back. There are two different *beoseon* shapes - one with a straight line through the ankle to the toes - *goteun beoseon* (곧은버선) and one with a bend at the ankle - *nuin beoseon* (누인버선), as well as several types of *beoseon*: single layered - *hot beoseon* (홀버선), lined but not padded - *gyeop beoseon* (겹버선), padded - *sombeoseon* (솜버선), and quilted - *nubi beoseon* (누비버선). *Tarae beoseon* (타래버선) are quilted *beoseon* for children that often feature embroidery, colored tassels on the toes, and ankle ties. Since socks are considered an underlayer, they are almost always white, except for the King’s, who had red or blue *beoseon* for certain ceremonies.

goteun beoseon (곧은버선)



nuin beoseon (누인버선)



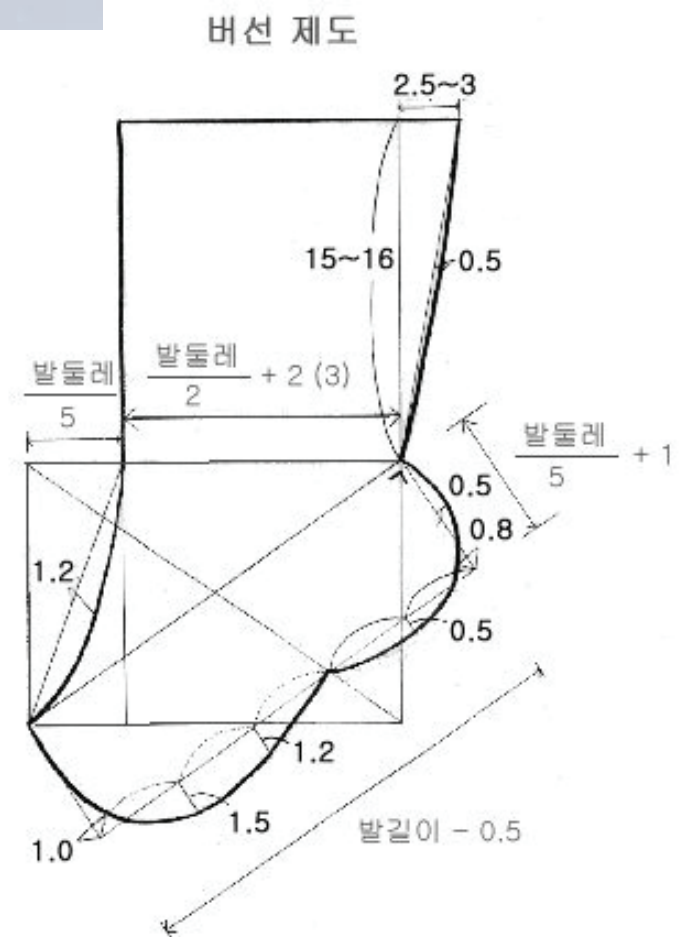
Patterning

The extant *beoseon* pattern pieces are out of SCA time period, but are made from *hanji* (한지), traditional mulberry paper. *Hanji* has been an important material in Korean culture, dating back to the Three Kingdoms, so it is safe to assume that these patterns would also have been made using *hanji* in period. Women made the socks and patterns for each member of her family. Mothers would pass down sock patterns and techniques to their daughters when they got married so that they could start making socks and patterns for their new family. By late Joseon, pattern pieces were folded and kept in a sock pattern case, which was often made of silk and embroidered. This shows how precious these patterns were to families.



(Late Joseon - Sock patterns and pattern case)

(Modern beoseon sock pattern)



Beoseon Patterning Method

Lady Stella di Silvestri

About This Method

I've developed this method for patterning socks based on two *beoseon* sock patterns I found for a straighter sock. These are modern patterns, but will produce a perfectly wearable sock for garb purposes. The patterns use fractions of the measurements of foot length and girth, so I use paper strips so you can fold and easily divide your measurements. Since women of all classes were making these socks in period and women were not typically educated in math, I believe this may be an easy and feasible way to pattern *beoseon*. I currently do not have any sources for patterning methods for socks, so please note that this is conjecture. If you happen to know of any sources or information on Korean patterning, please let me know at stelladisilvestri@gmail.com.

**I've worked this pattern using cm instead of inches to eliminate converting from the Korean patterns.

Materials

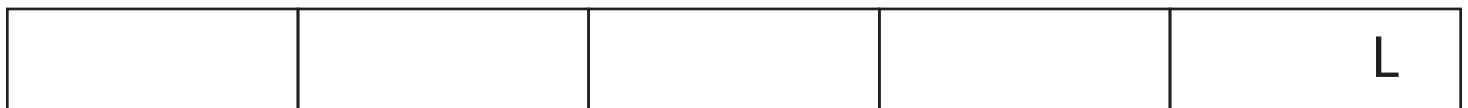
You'll need:

- Measuring tape
- Straight edge/ruler
- Strips of paper
- Pencil
- Patterning paper

Prepping Your Tapes

1. Measure the length of your foot from end of heel to tip of your toes and subtract .5 cm. Cut one paper strip to match this length. Label this tape L.
2. Measure the girth of your foot around the widest part, usually around your arch. Cut one strip to match this length. Label this tape G.
3. Take tape L and fold it into fifths. Draw lines in the creases. Set aside.
4. Take tape G and fold half and in fifths. Draw lines in the creases.

You should have two tapes marked for both measurements. We will be using these tapes to draw out your pattern.



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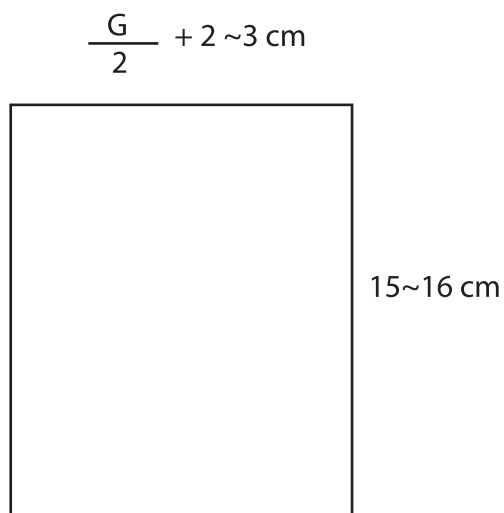


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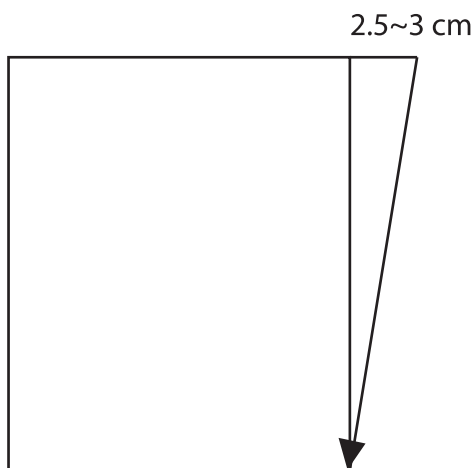
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Drafting Your Pattern

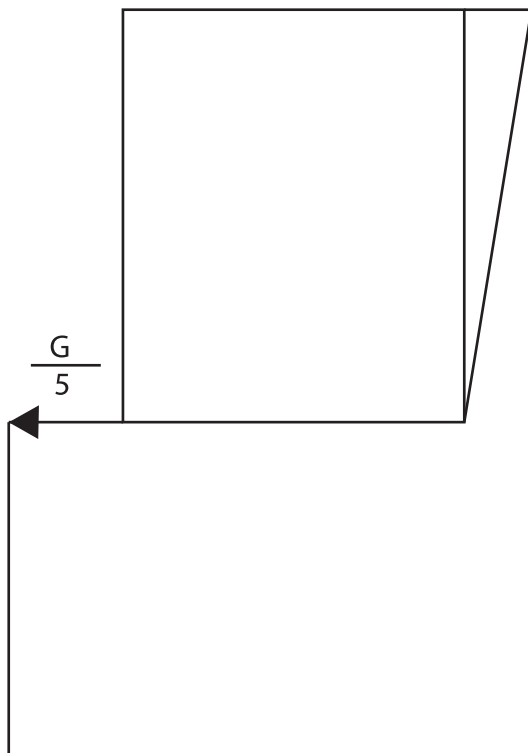
1. Near the top of your patterning paper, draw a line that is half of your G tape + 2 ~ 3 cm, depending on how wide you want your sock's opening to be.
2. Draw a line straight down 15~16 cm long, depending on how tall you want your socks to be. Complete the lines to make a square.



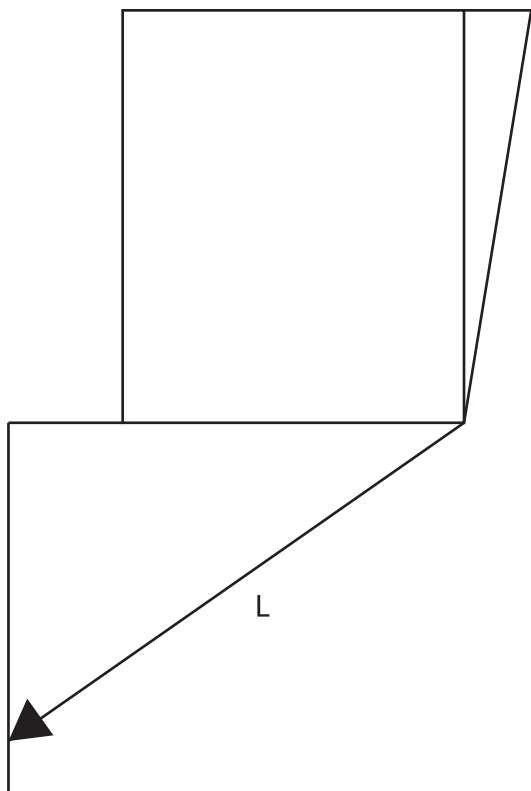
3. Extend the top line by 2.5~3 cm and draw a straight line connecting it to the corner as shown.



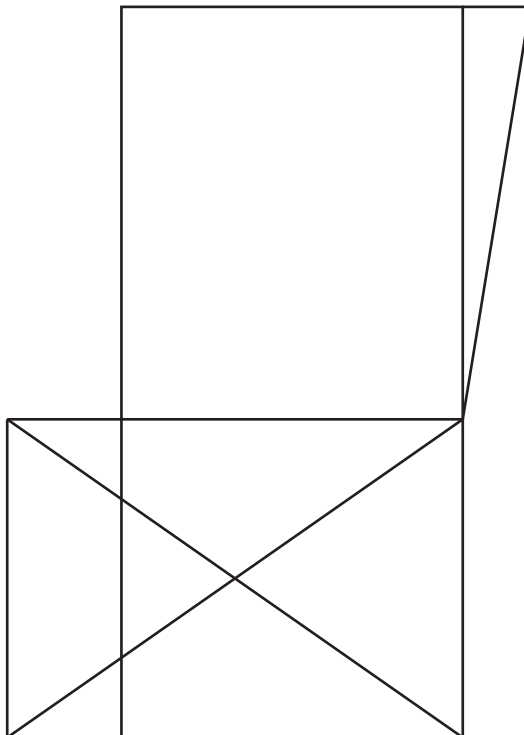
4. Extend the bottom line of the square by one fifth of your G tape. Draw a line from the end of that line straight down.



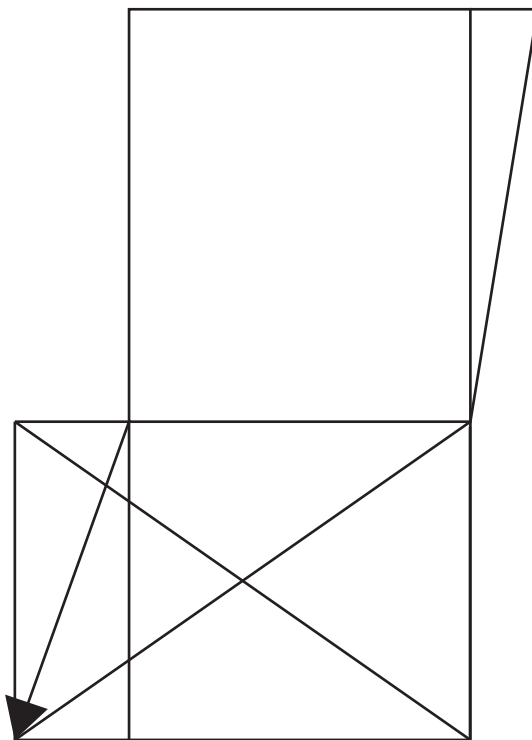
5. Starting from the bottom corner of the original rectangle draw a diagonal line that equals your L tape. The angle will depend on where your tape hits the line you just drew.



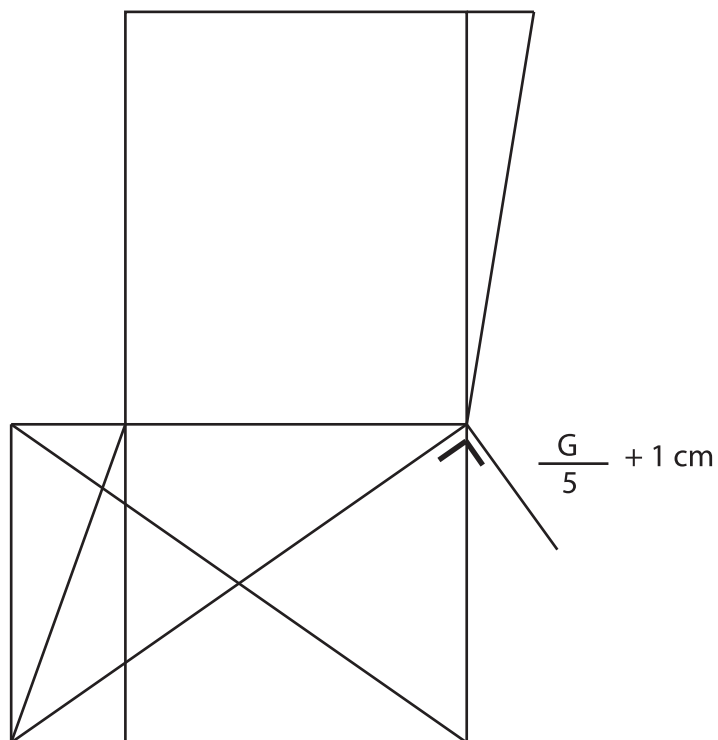
6. Complete the rectangle and draw in the other diagonal. Extend the other side of the top rectangle all the way down.



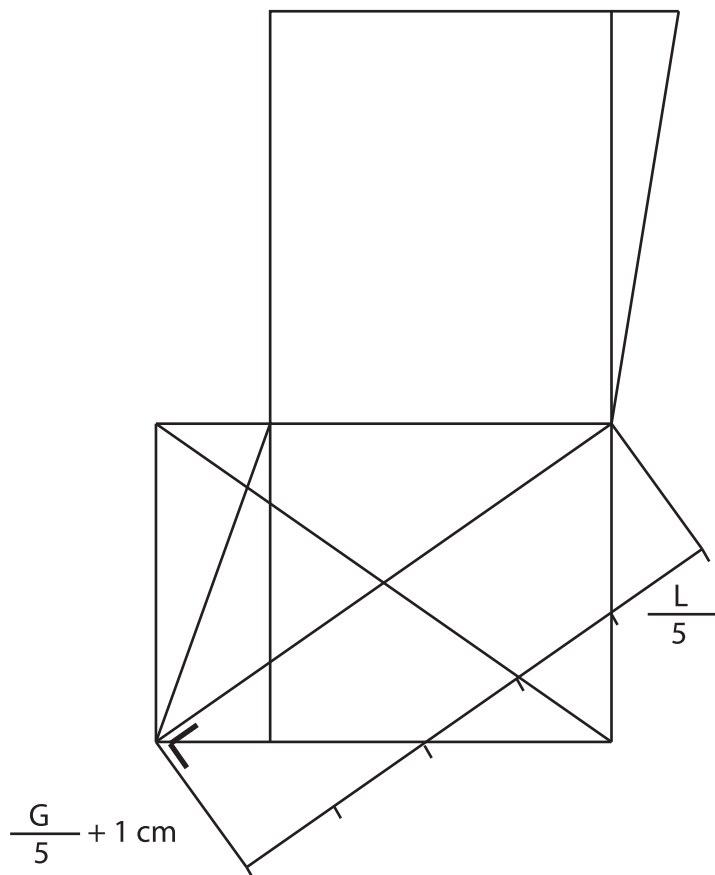
7. Draw a diagonal line connecting the corners shown.



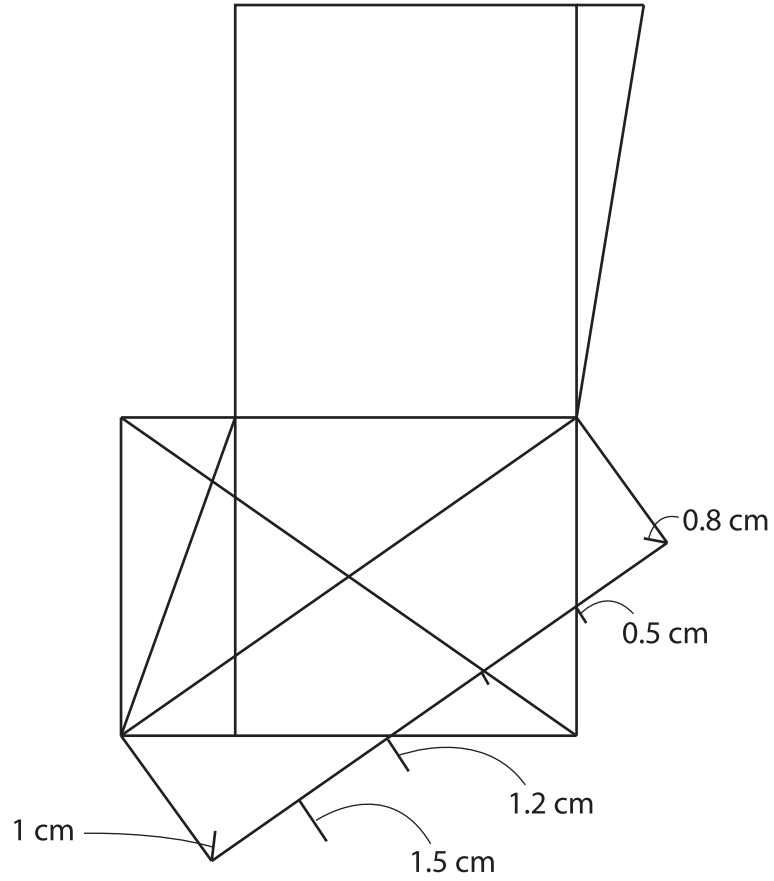
8. From the same corner, draw a line that is one fifth of your G tape + 1 cm. Make sure this is at a right angle to your diagonal.



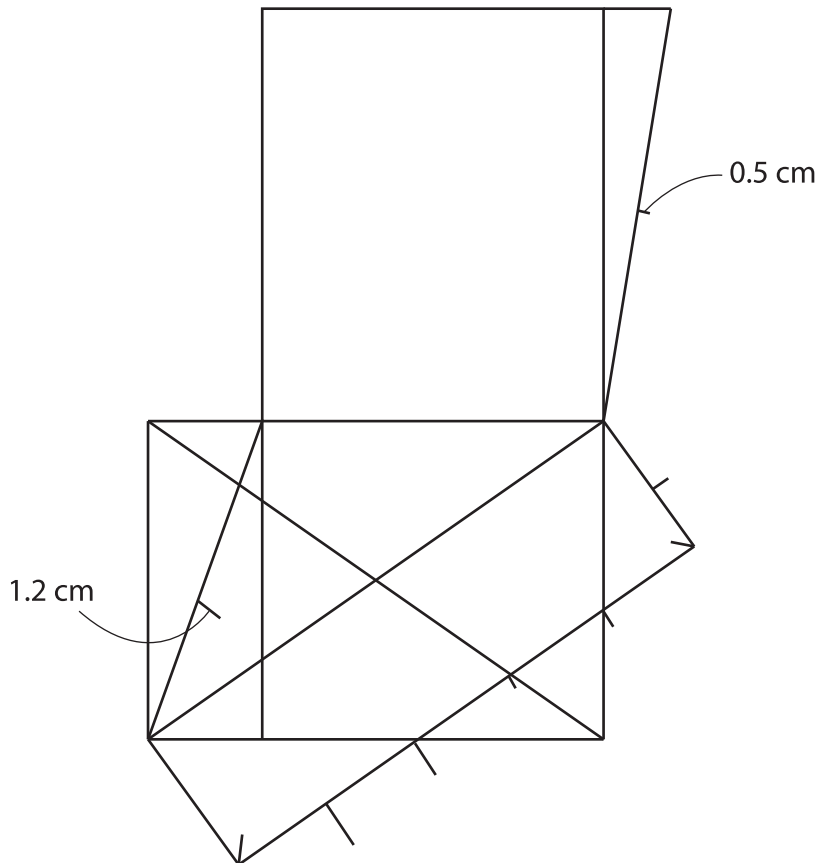
9. Repeat on the other side of the diagonal and connect the lines to finish the rectangle. Mark the bottom line at each one fifth interval on your L tape.



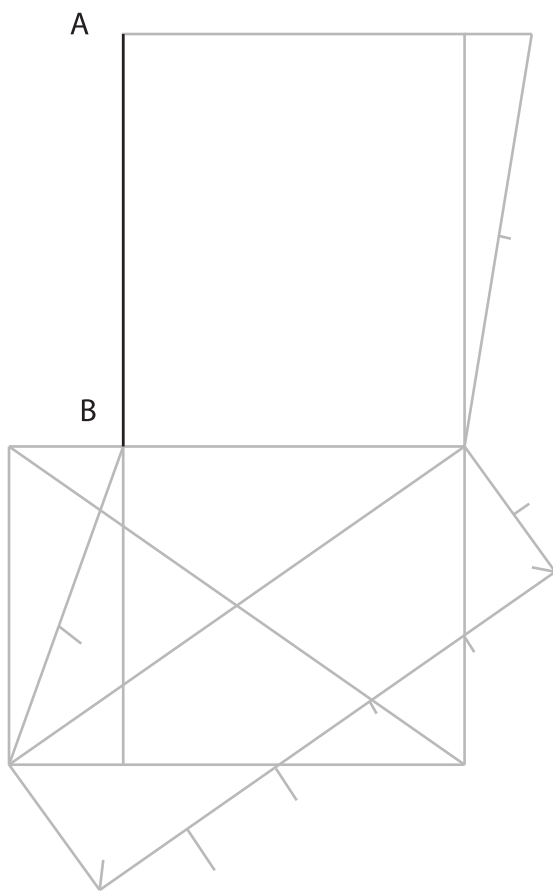
10. Draw lines out from the L/5 intervals with the lengths shown. In the corners of the rectangle, draw lines inside the rectangle with the lengths shown.



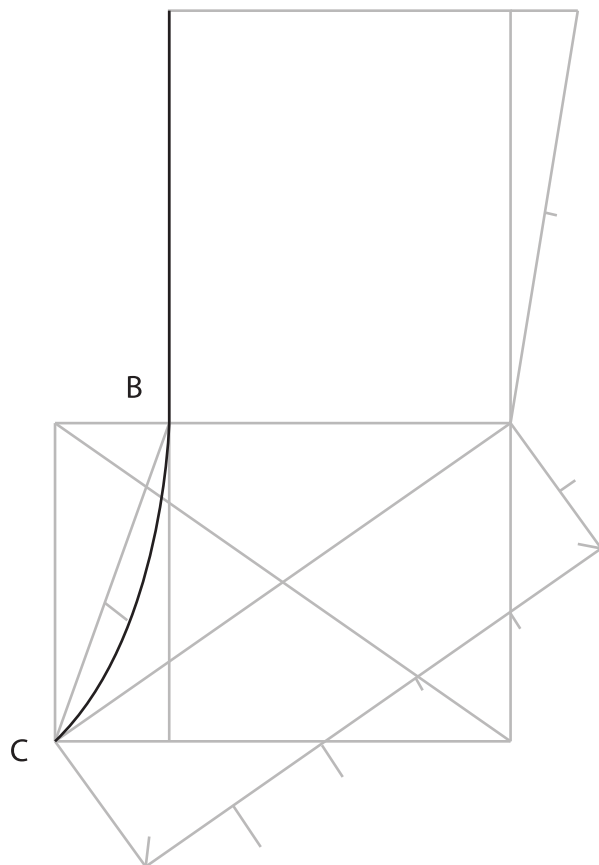
11. Draw lines out with the lengths shown.



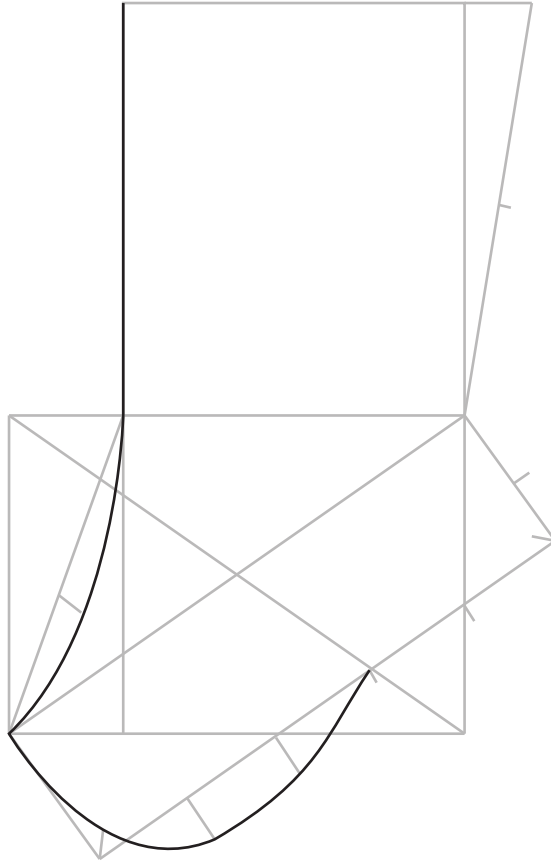
12. Time to draw the final shape of the pattern! Starting from corner A, trace the original line down to corner B.



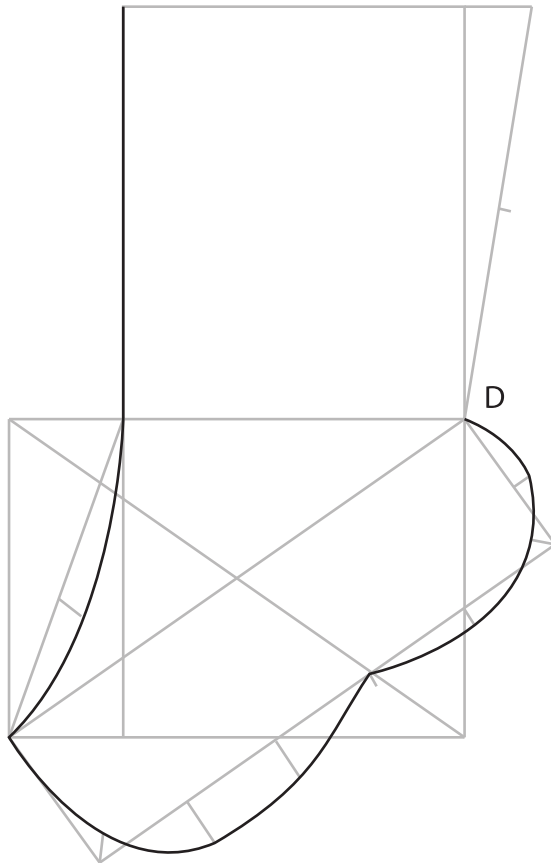
13. Draw a curve from corner B to corner C, making sure you hit the line you extended.



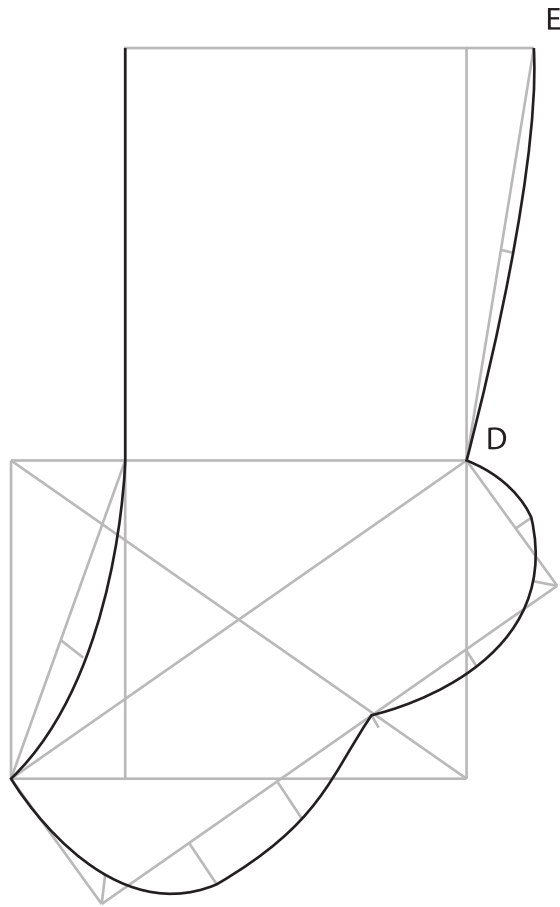
14. Continue drawing a curve, connecting the lines you extended.



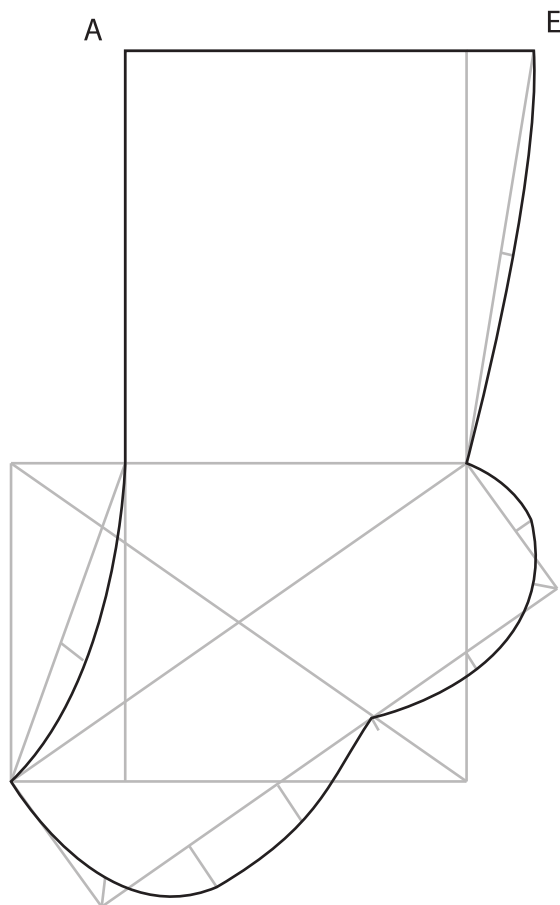
15. Finish the heel by ending the line in corner D.



16. From corner D, draw a curve to corner E, connecting the line extended.



17. Connect corner E to corner A to complete the pattern. Cut out the pattern - it will NOT have seam allowance.



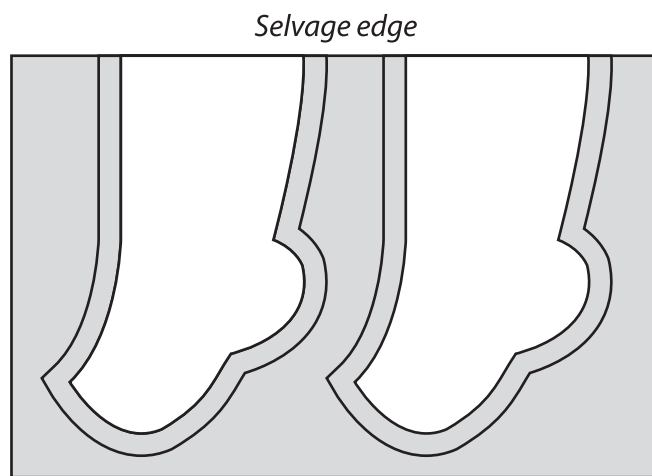
Sewing Your *Beoseon*

When you're ready to make your socks, you'll have to decide what kind of socks you'll be making:

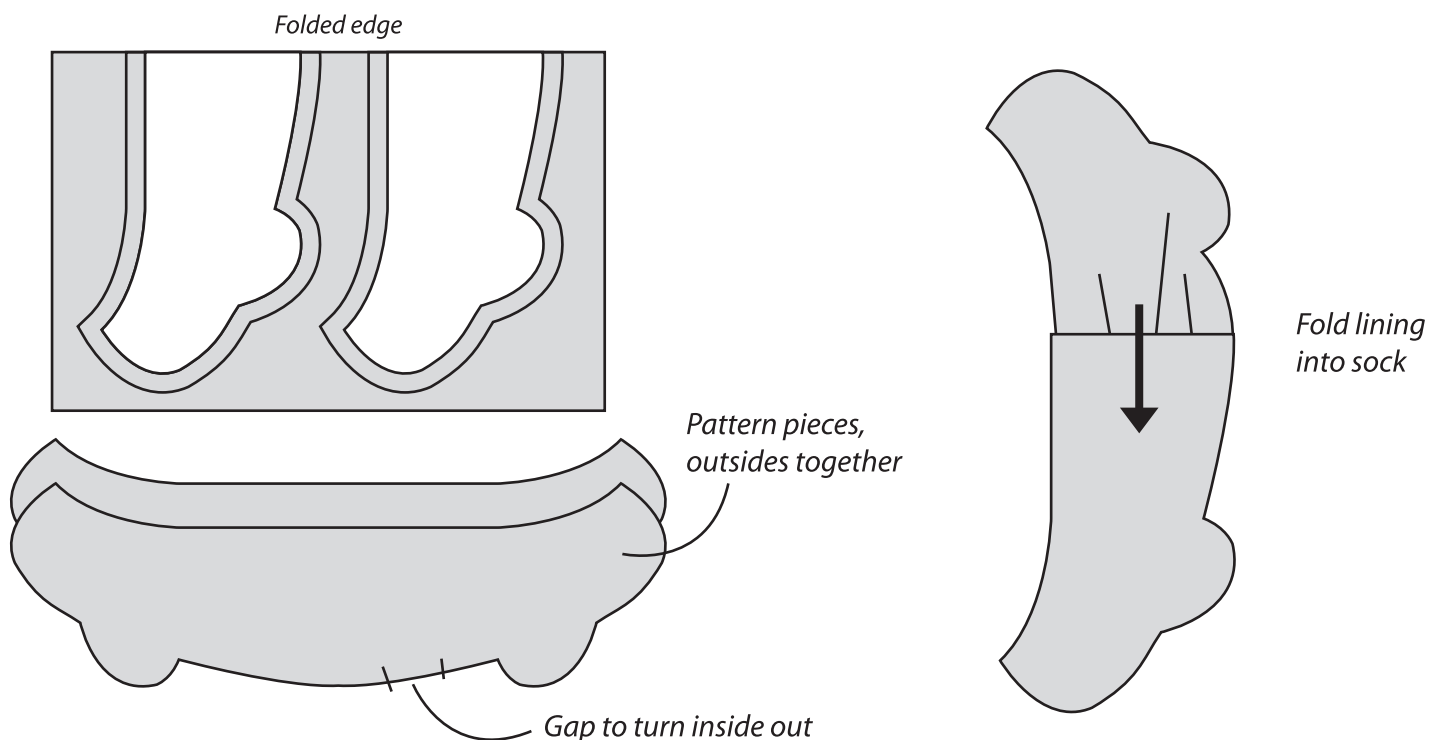
- Single layered - *hot beoseon* (홀버선)
- Lined but not padded - *gyeop beoseon* (겹버선)
- Padded - *sombeoseon* (솜버선)
- Quilted - *nubi beoseon* (누비버선)

Note: The only difference between a left and right sock is which side you push the seam. If you push the seam to the right, it's the right sock. If the seam goes to the left, it's the left sock!

Single layered *beoseon* were worn as a liner for other *beoseon* to keep them clean. You can also wear modern socks inside your *beoseon* for the same purpose if it's more comfortable. Match the top of your pattern to the selvage edge of the fabric to avoid having to hem the top. Trace your pattern, adding in your seam allowance. Sew two layers outside together on line you traced, turn inside out and iron to complete your sock.



For lined and padded socks, trace your pattern with the top on the fold. Sew the two layers outside together, leaving a gap on the back to turn inside out and to add padding. Fold the top into the bottom to create the sock.



For quilted socks, sew cotton batting between two layers of fabric with straight seams. Cut and sew quilted pieces like a single layered *beoseon* and bind the top layer of the *beoseon* to finish the cut edge. You can also quilt the cotton batting between folded fabric in order to avoid binding the top edge.

