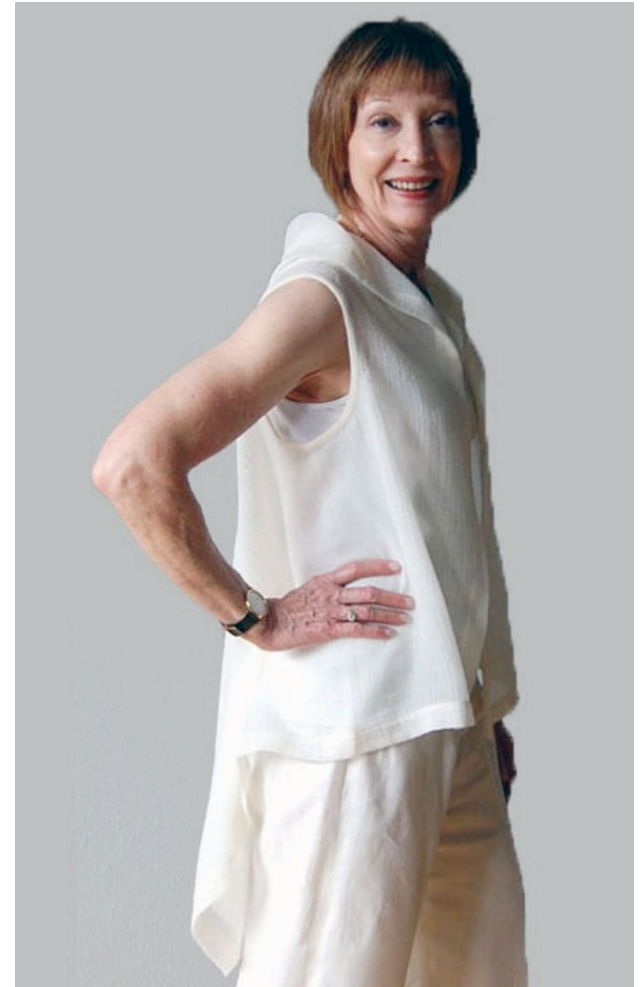


Sew Confident!
CLASS IN A FLASH

Sewing Crinkles, Gauze & Stretch Lace

By Linda Lee

THE SEWING WORKSHOP



The Difficulty Factor!

Crinkled knits, stretch laces, sheer gauzes, the latest fabric crazes, represent the category of fabrics that we didn't learn to sew on and don't know how to handle.

In this tutorial, you will learn essential techniques and tools to tame these fabrics and help take the mystery out of sewing with novelty fabrics, particularly the open-weave, semi-sheer, and stretchy ones.



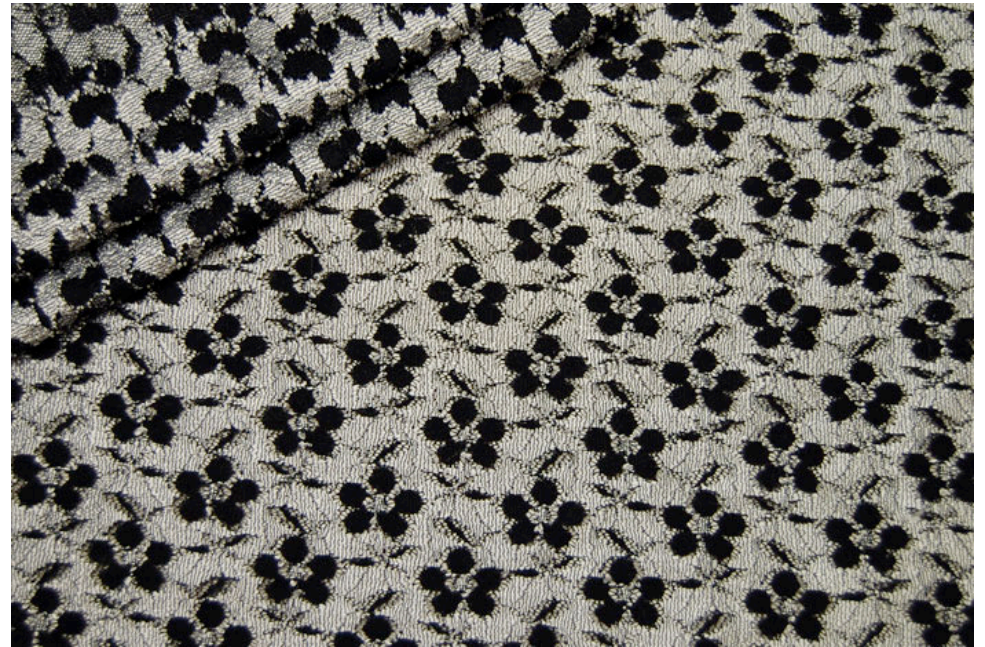
*Stretch lace combo -
eShrug over the Trio T-shirt*

Stretch Your Knowledge

■ Spandex - The generic name for man-made fibers composed largely of segmented polyurethane. They are known for good elongation and recovery.

■ Lycra - A spandex that is trademarked by DuPont.

■ Elastic - Another word used for spandex to describe stretch fabrics. An elastomeric yarn is used in manufacturing a fabric that can be stretched repeatedly.



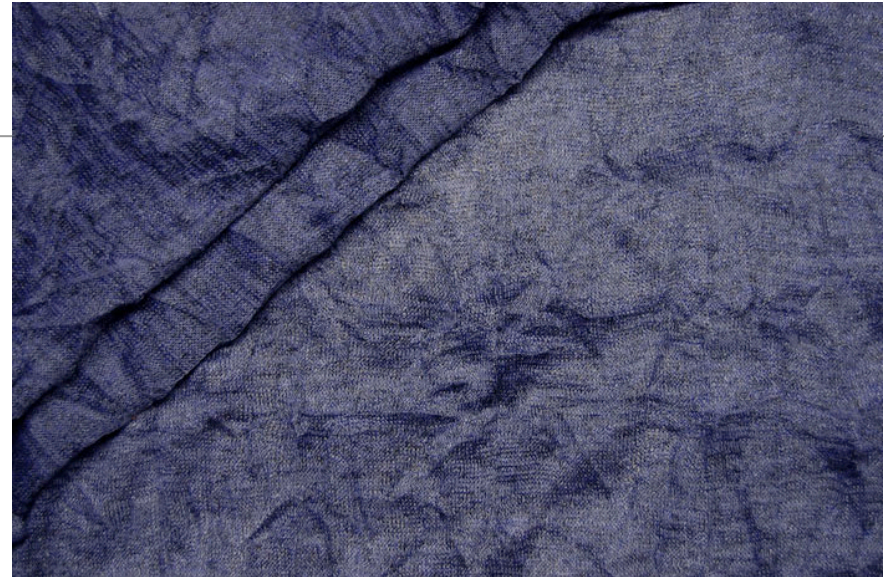
Viscose is combined with Lycra to make a stretch lace.

Know Your Terms

■ Crinkle - A wrinkled or puckered effect in fabric produces by either construction or finishing. Man-made fibers such as polyester are used in order for the crinkles to remain permanent.

■ Gauze - A thin, sheer, open weave fabric in which some of the warp ends are interlaced with each other in a leno weave. The term is derived from the city of Gaza in the Near East.

■ Lace - A broad group of fabrics with an open or mesh-like texture, that are either woven or knitted.



Properties of Stretch

- Some are stretchy because they are knitted and are crinkled. Others stretch with the addition of a spandex fiber such as Lycra.
- Most do not ravel and the edges may curl.
- Many have a definite right and wrong side, perhaps a knit and purl side.
- Cut out with the most stretch going crosswise.
- Use a one-way nap layout.



Open-Weave & Gauze

- Not every open-weave fabric has stretch.
- These are treated more like other woven fabrics such as handkerchief linen, fine silks, delicate fabrics.
- Woven fabrics ravel and may even curl at the edges.
- They are best cut with one-way nap layouts. Why? Some open weaves have a different shine depending on the direction, and you may not notice it until the garment is sewn. Best to be safe.....



This Four Good Measure Top from Shapes is made using a crinkle, metallic, semi-sheer woven fabric.

Successful Sewing Tools

Before we get started sewing, let's talk about notions. Using the right tools and notions is invaluable in achieving success. The supplies on the next few pages are Linda's favorites and are staples in her toolbox.

As you go through this tutorial, details about specific notions are designated by the following symbol:



Always purchase the best notions you can afford. They really do make a difference in your results and the enjoyment of your craft.

Helpful Notions to Have on Hand

Know Your
Notions



Pattern Weights



Fine Quilting Pins



Safety Pins

In addition to your regular notions, these will be helpful. Details about these notions will be given when you'll be using them.



Silk Thread



Temporary Spray
Adhesive



Clear Elastic

- Pattern Weights
- Fine Quilting Pins
- Safety Pins
- Silk Thread
- Temporary Spray Adhesive
- 1/4" Clear Elastic

Choose Your Tape

You have two options for stabilizing the fabric and preparing it for smooth seams or hems.

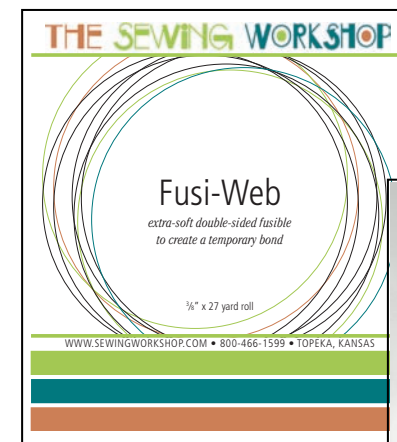
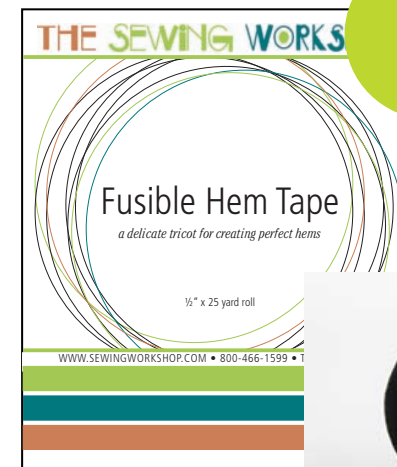
If you have a very stretchy fabric that is not too transparent or open, use **Fusible Hem Tape**—available in white, natural, or black. This strip of tricot interfacing is sewn into a seam or stitched to the hem edge before fusing the hem in place.

• OR •

If your fabric is lacy or has an open weave, use **Fusi-Web** as your stabilizer. Fusi-Web is a paper-covered strip of “glue”.

project sewing workshop

Know Your
Notions



What Needle Should I Use?

It would be wonderful to be able to tell you exactly which needle to use—but your perfect needle will depend on your particular fabric. Test on some fabrics from the fabric that you are using. Start with the Universal sizes 75/11 or 80/12. If you are experiencing skipped stitches, try a Stretch needle or a Jersey or change sizes. The correct needle will give you smooth, even stitching.

- Universal
- Ball Point/Jersey
- Stretch

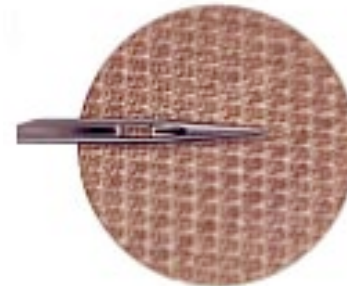
Always start a new project with a new needle.



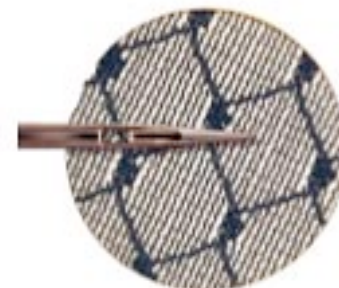
Know Your
Notions



Universal



Jersey



Stretch

The Best Thread for Stretch

Buy good quality polyester thread that is cross-wound on the spool. You can tell if a thread is cross-wound if you can see the thread forming diagonal patterns on the spool. Cross-wound thread comes off the spool smoothly and will allow the stitches to be made more easily. Don't EVER be tempted to buy bargain thread! It will only bring you grief.

Buy 4 to 5 spools when you buy your fabric—1 for your sewing machine, 3 or 4 for your serger.

Why polyester? Polyester thread has a slight give that keeps it from breaking when the fabric stretches.

Excellent brands to choose from include Mettler Metrosene Plus and Isacord.

project sewing workshop

Know Your
Notions



The Best Serger Thread

■ Seralene is a new serger thread from Mettler. It is suited for fine, almost invisible seams in lightweight fabrics. It has exceptional gliding properties, smooth characteristics, and is shrink proof.

■ Each spool has 2000m, and it is available in 18 colors.

I was skeptical at first. But after using this thread in my serger, every other thread now looks heavy and fuzzy.

project sewing workshop

Know Your
Notions



Sewing Machine Accessories

Know Your
Notions

Your sewing machine may have come with some of these specialty feet. If not, they are worth looking into if you plan to do much sewing with novelty stretch fabrics—you will notice the difference in the quality of your stitches and the ease of precise topstitching.



Clear Presser Foot



Walking Foot



Single Hole Throat Plate

We'll cover the benefits of each of these accessories when their use shows up in the techniques. This gives you an overview of supplies that will help you be successful.

Besides a Sewing Machine?

- Your sewing machine should be in prime working order, cleaned and oiled, with consistent and balanced straight and zigzag stitches.
- Owning a serger is optional, but these days, with fabrics behaving in unusual ways and the need to up the ante, I recommend purchasing a serger that will perform 2, 3, and 4-thread stitch formations.



Pretreating Before Cutting

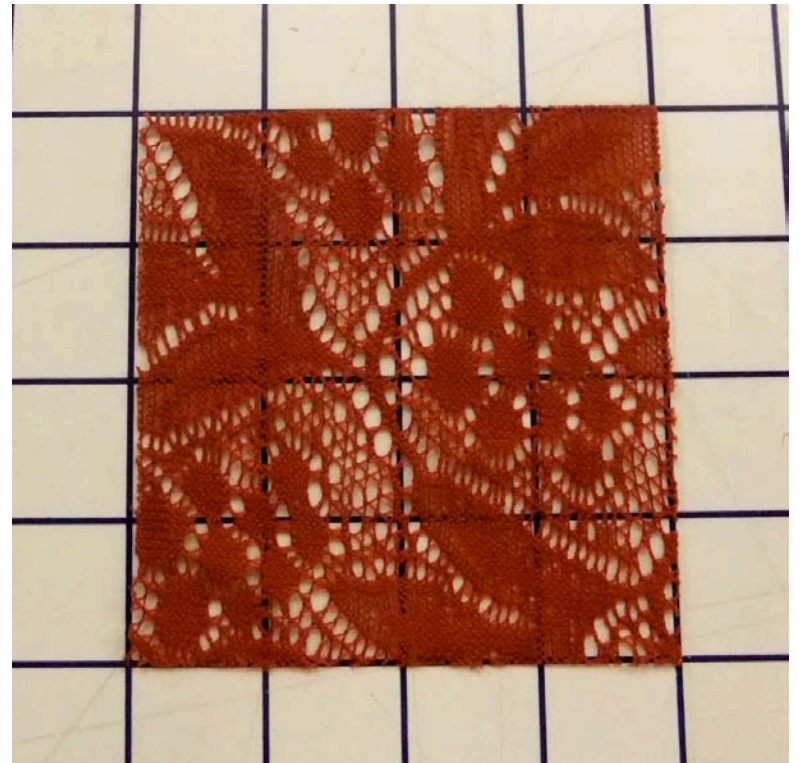
Like all fabric, these fabrics do need pretreating.

- If your fabric is made of cotton, silk, linen, rayon/viscose, or polyester, you can either pre-shrink on the gentle cycle in the washer and dryer, or hand wash with a gentle laundry soap. Your choice will depend on the fabric and also how you plan to launder your garment.
- Wool laces and gauzes will need to be either dry cleaned or steamed—unless you purposely would like to felt or alter your fabric. Be sure to experiment with a test sample so you are not unpleasantly surprised at the results!

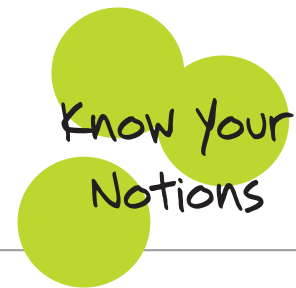


Pretreating Before Cutting

- Cut a 4" x 4" swatch from the corner of your fabric.
- Machine or hand wash in cold water. Machine dry on cool/air fluff or lay flat to dry.
- Compare the shrinkage to the original size.
- Layout all pattern pieces before cutting even a single piece, to make sure you have enough fabric or need to adjust your layout.



Layout and Cutting



- Cut out using a single layer of fabric. Most of these fabrics do not lie flat after pre-treating, so it is difficult to fold evenly and guarantee the correct straight of grain.
- Use pattern weights instead of pins.
- Use a rotary cutter for clean edges.
- Do not allow the fabric to hang over the edge of your cutting surface.
- Lay the pattern on the fabric so that the greatest stretch goes around your body.



If You Like the Selvage - Save It!

- Selvages come in handy for trims and hem edges, especially scallops and ruffles.
- Cut off about 2” of the selvage for the length of the fabric. Set it aside to use on the current garment or a future project.
- Or - build the selvage into the design of the garment.



The selvage on this wool lace is used as the center front edges of the Nine Lives Top.



Marking

- Use silk thread to make individual tailor tacks. Silk thread doesn't mar the fabric, and can be removed easily when needed.
- Or use small safety pins to identify dots and other match points along the edges and other interior markings.
- Chalks and marking pens won't stay (or stay too long), or can bleed through.



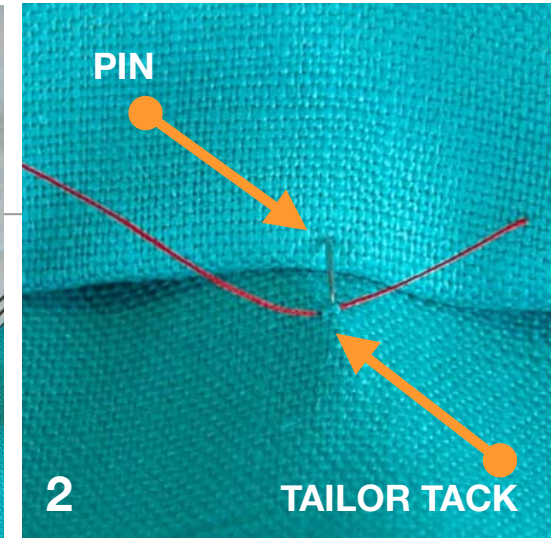
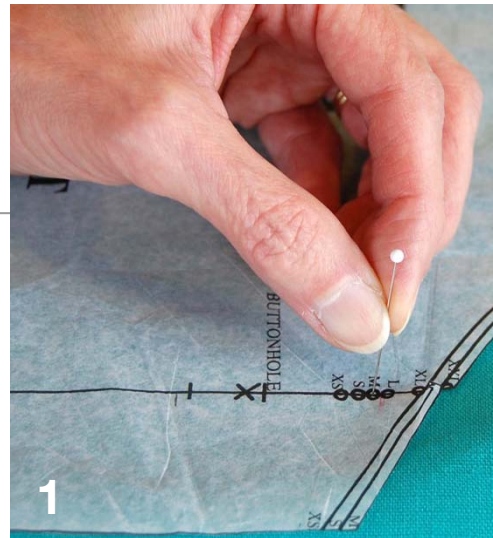
Know Your
Notions



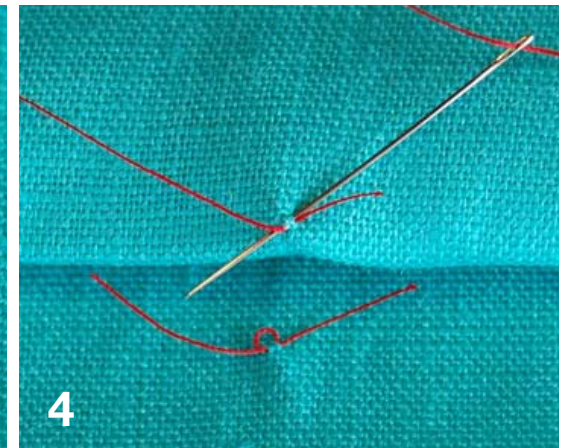
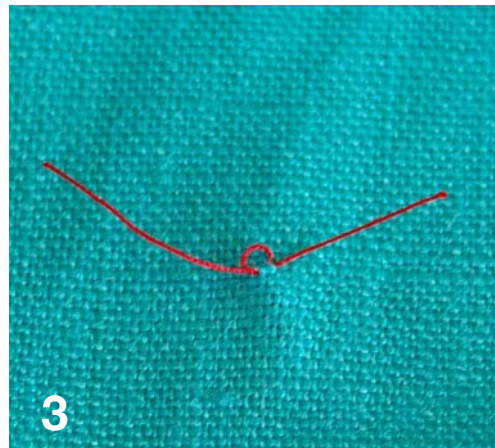
If you are still tempted, do not use red or blue inks and chalks. These colors are the most difficult to remove and sometimes remain permanent on certain fibers.

Making Tailor Tacks

1. Place pin through the point you want to mark.
2. Gently separate fabric layers. Take a single stitch through the pinpoint on the bottom layer. Use thread in a contrasting color.
3. Complete the stitch loop. Cut thread leaving a long tail.
4. Repeat on the top layer.



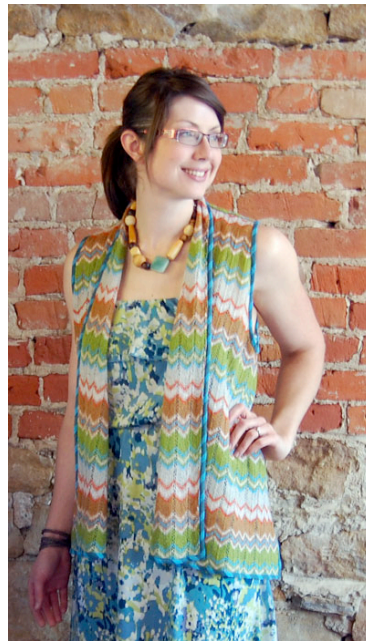
For accurate marking, be sure the pin goes vertically through the pattern piece and all fabric layers.



Keep the tailor tack thread loop loose so that it will be easy to remove later on. It's a tack—not a knot!

Choose a Pattern - eVest

■ This download pattern has two simple shapes plus a facing, making it a perfect garment for a difficult, but interesting fabric.



Wool lace, polyester crochet, poly crinkle, and Missoni sweater knits make great eVests.

Choose a Pattern - eShrug

■ This download pattern has one simple shape for the body and sleeves (or not!)

■ With the right fabrics, none of the edges even have to be finished.



*This is a great “starter” project.
Make it in less than an hour.*

Choose a Pattern - Shapes

■ Shapes patterns, designs by Linda Lee and Louise Cutting, are built using simple geometric shapes - great for sheers, gauzes, and laces.



The Nine Lives, Three Fold, Four Good Measure, and the Plus One Tops from Shapes have few seams, but high style.

Choose a Pattern - The Sewing Workshop

■ Many of the styles from The Sewing Workshop's line of patterns complement the use of gauze, lace, and stretch fabrics.



The Poppy Vest, Alex Top, Hudson Top, and Stella Top are especially wearable in fabrics with character.

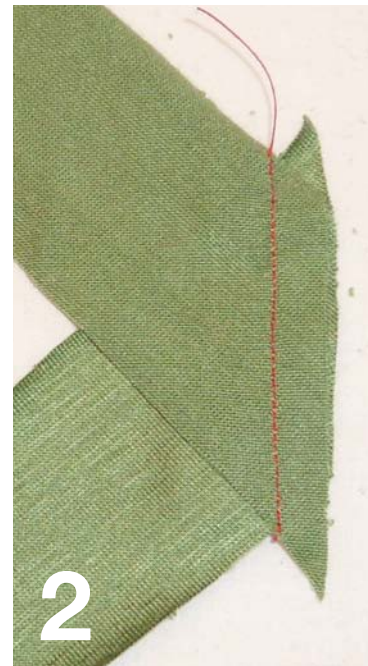
Test Your Stitching



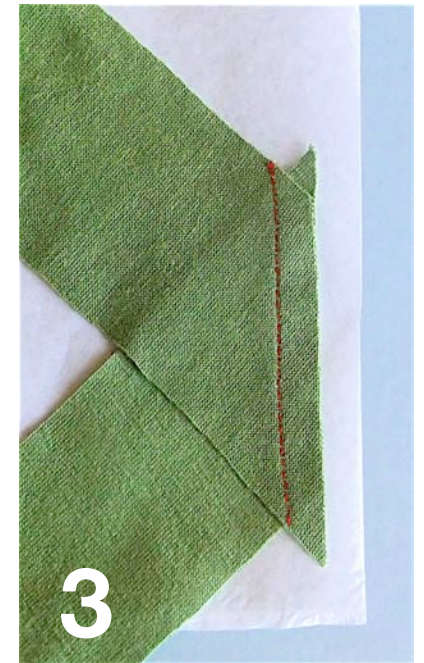
1. Not so good... The fabric resists feeding properly and threads stick in the throat plate.
2. Single-hole throat plate helps keep your seams smooth. Keep in mind the limitations with zigzag stitching.
3. Using a paper underlay is an easy alternate.



1 Sewn with no special tools



2 Sewn with a single hole throat plate and walking foot



3 Sewn with paper underlay and walking foot



A single-hole throat plate prevents the fabric from getting caught in a wide opening of a standard throat plate.

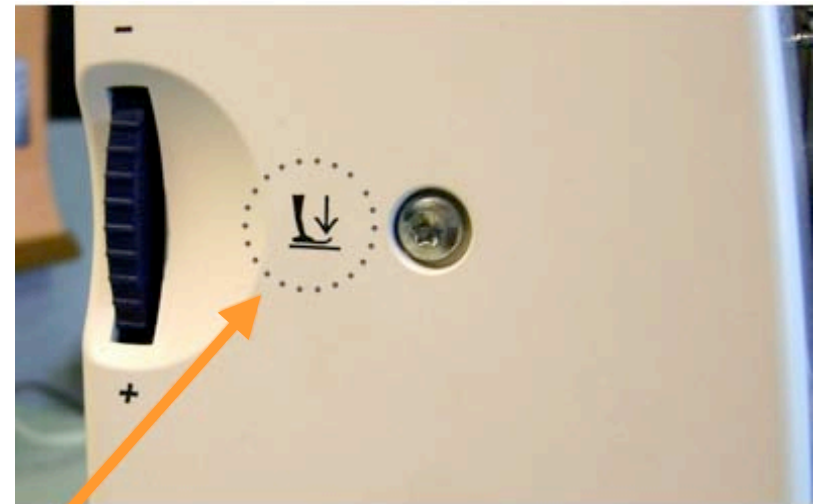


Walking Foot

What Else Can I Do to Get Smooth Stitching?

Loosening the pressure on the foot can also help feed the fabric better. Many pressure knobs are on the left side of the machine. Start with the lightest pressure possible and increase the pressure a click at a time as you test on your fabric.

You'll soon find the right pressure for *your* fabric on *your* machine.



Look for this
type of symbol



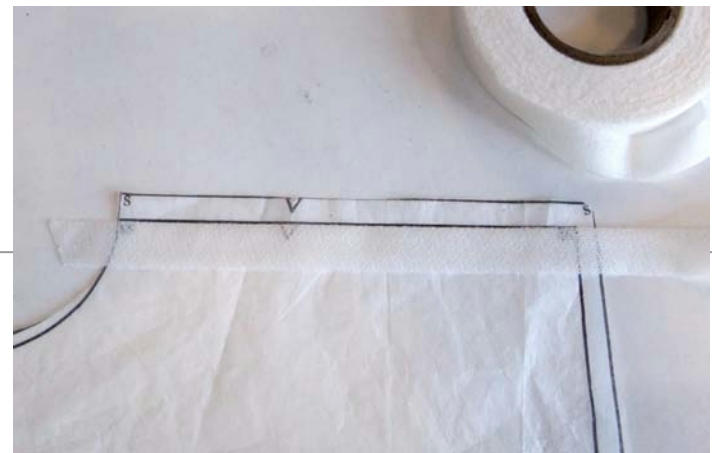
Stabilize Shoulders

■ Cut strips of fusible web tape or 1/4"-wide clear elastic the length of the shoulder seam on your pattern.

■ Center the strip of fusible web tape over the seamline and *fuse* in place.

■ Or, center a strip of clear elastic over the seamline and *sew* in place.

Use fusible web tape to stabilize a neckline, too.

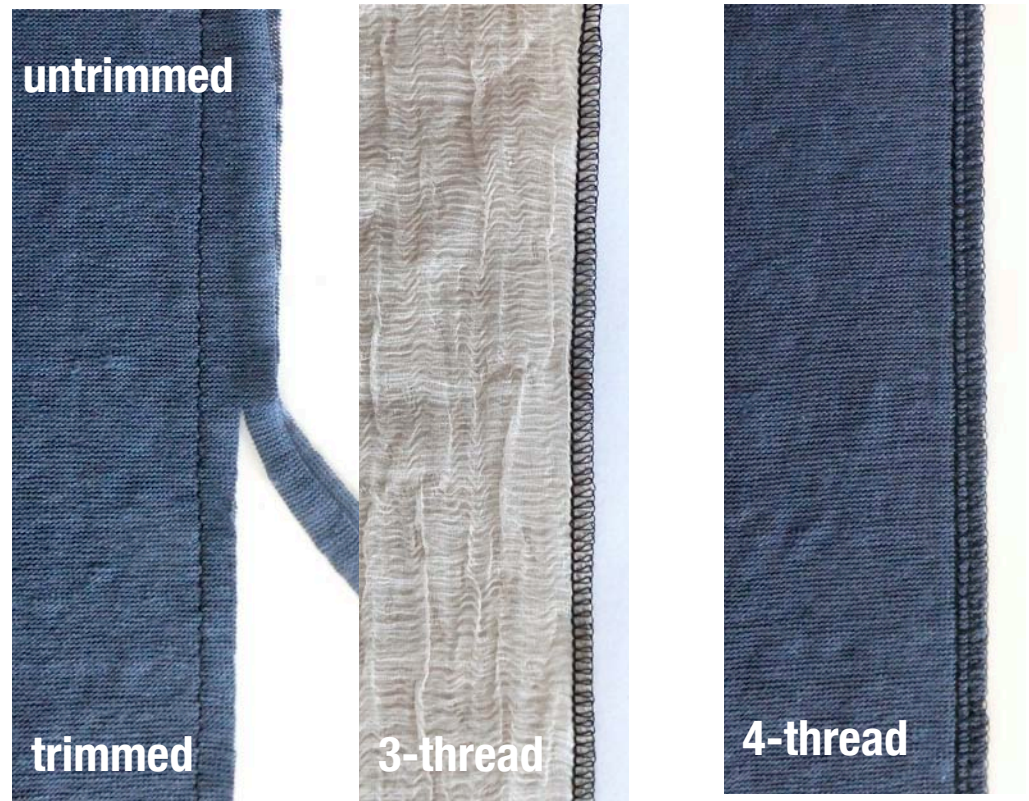


Seam Stitch Options

These are your standard options when using a sewing machine or serger:

1. Straight stitch *(not shown)*
2. Narrow zigzag 2.5mm L x .5mm W
3. 3- or 4-thread serger

TEST, TEST, TEST!



Use 3-thread for delicate fabrics and 4-thread for bulkier ones.

Stitch & Zigzag

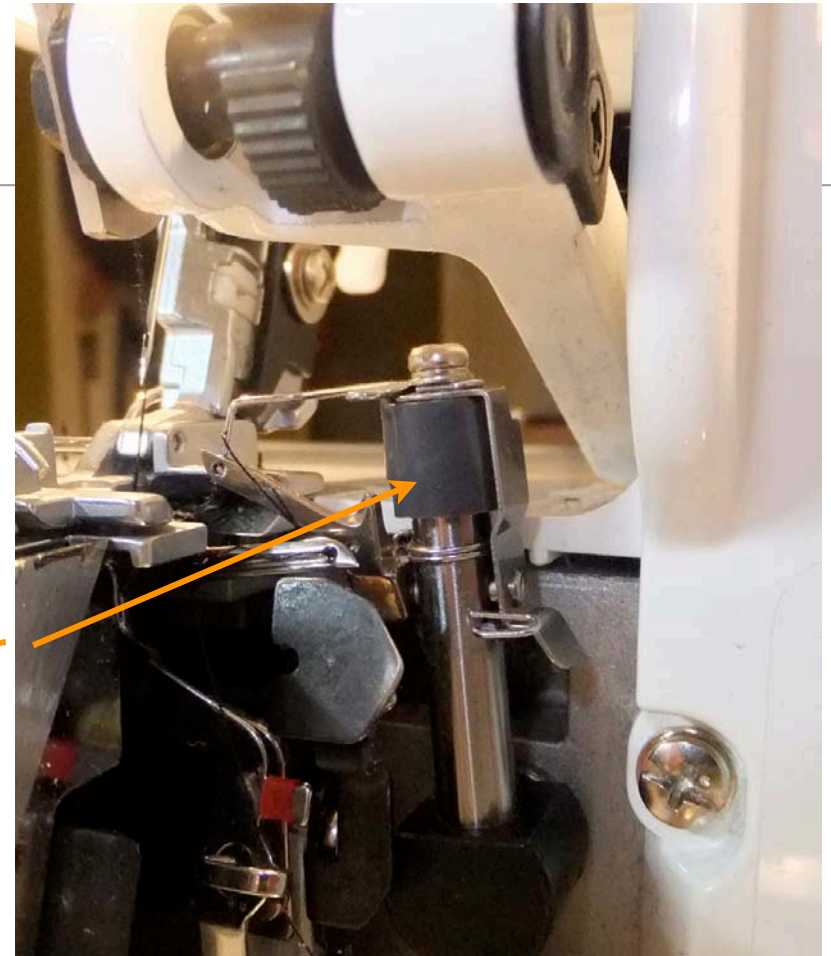
- Sew the regular seam allowance.
- Press the seam open and zigzag stitch along each raw edge.



This finish is especially useful when sewing laces and open weave fabrics. The zigzag stitches meld into the fabric and become almost invisible.

Flatlocking

- Flatlock is a serged seam that lies flat. It can be both decorative or utilitarian.
- For laces and open weaves, a 2-thread flatlock is best, with the ladder stitches exposed on the right side of the garment. The is almost invisible when sewn in matching thread.
- You will need to install a converter mechanism to bypass the upper looper.



Converter

Not every serger model is equipped with the necessary converter to perform flatlocking. Check your accessory box and manual.

Flatlocking

■ To stitch a 2-thread flatlock, use the left needle and set the lower looper tension to 5.0 (or looser).

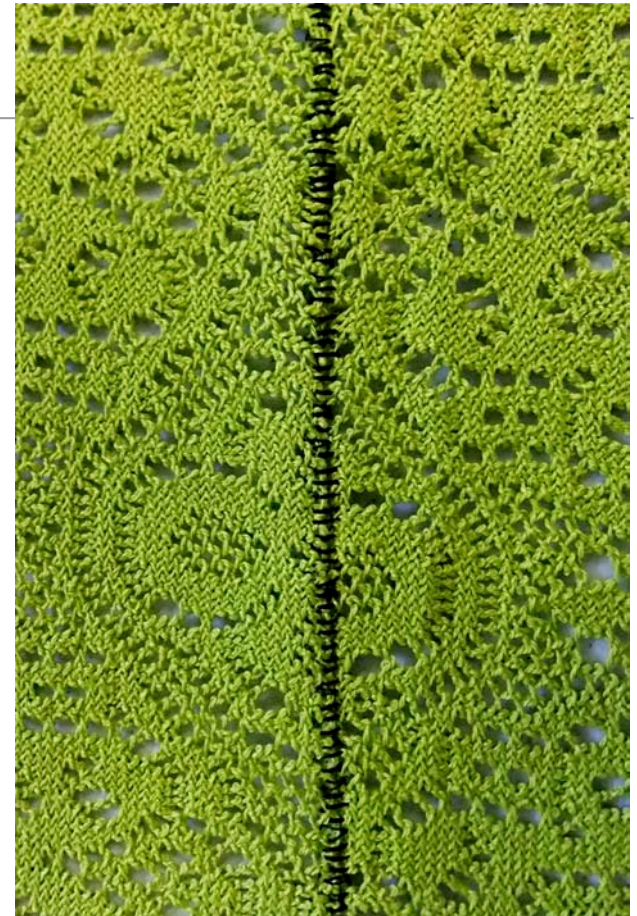
■ Use 2.5mm stitch length, 3.5mm width.

■ Set the differential to 1.5 - 2.

■ Engage the cutting knife. Cut off the seam allowances as you stitch. This seam finish becomes a butted seam.



With right sides together, sew the seam, removing the seam allowance.



Turn the work to the right side, and spread the seam, allowing the loose stitches to form a ladder.

Hem Options

■ Turn and Stitch - For the simplest hem, turn the raw edge to the wrong side and topstitch using a straight stitch or a narrow zigzag if stretch is needed. The less stitching, the better.

*Another option:
Use temporary spray adhesive to “glue”
the hems in place before stitching. Be
sure to cover areas you do not want
sprayed with paper, including your table.*

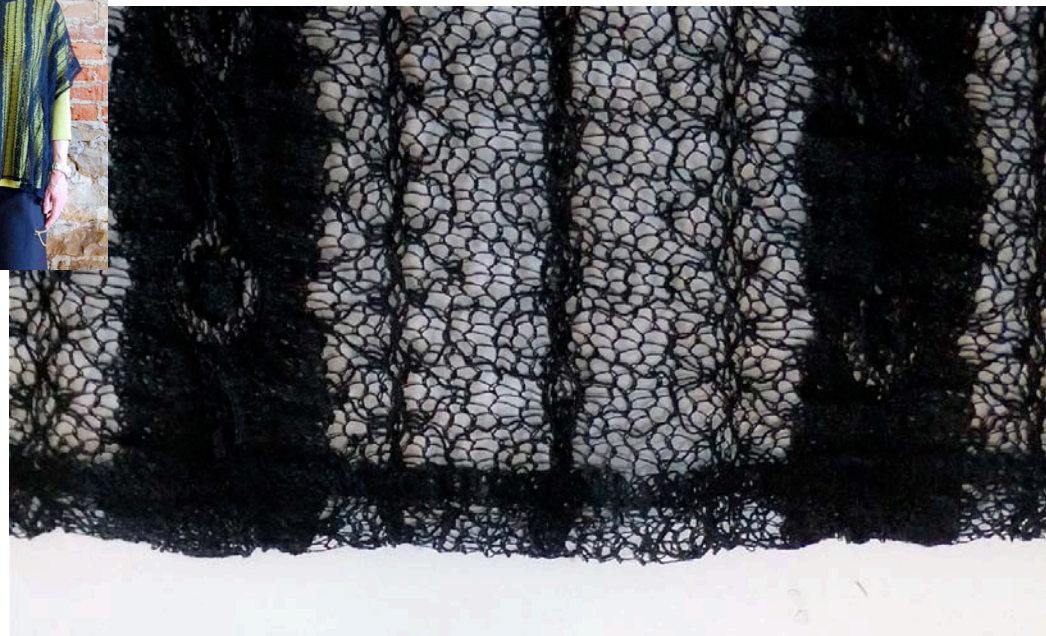


Hem Options

■ Serge, Turn and Stitch - If the fabric serge finishes without too much stretching and you prefer a more finished look, use a 3-thread serger stitch to finish the edge, then turn and topstitch.

■ Some fabrics “run”, and serging prevents this from happening.

Serging the edge first is a personal decision most of the time. These fabrics do not ravel, so it is a look that you are after.



Hem Options

■ Doublefold Hem - Many sheer and gauze fabrics are nicely finished using a hem that is turned twice, eliminating the raw or serged edge. This technique is best used when a fabric ravel.



Both the right and wrong side of this garment show, so a completely finished hem is the best choice.

How to Use Fusible Tapes

Know Your
Notions



Fusible Hem Tape. If you want to stitch a successful hem, Fusible Hem Tape will be your best friend! It holds the hem in place until you are ready to topstitch, and also adds a touch of stability that will keep the knit from stretching out of shape as you stitch.



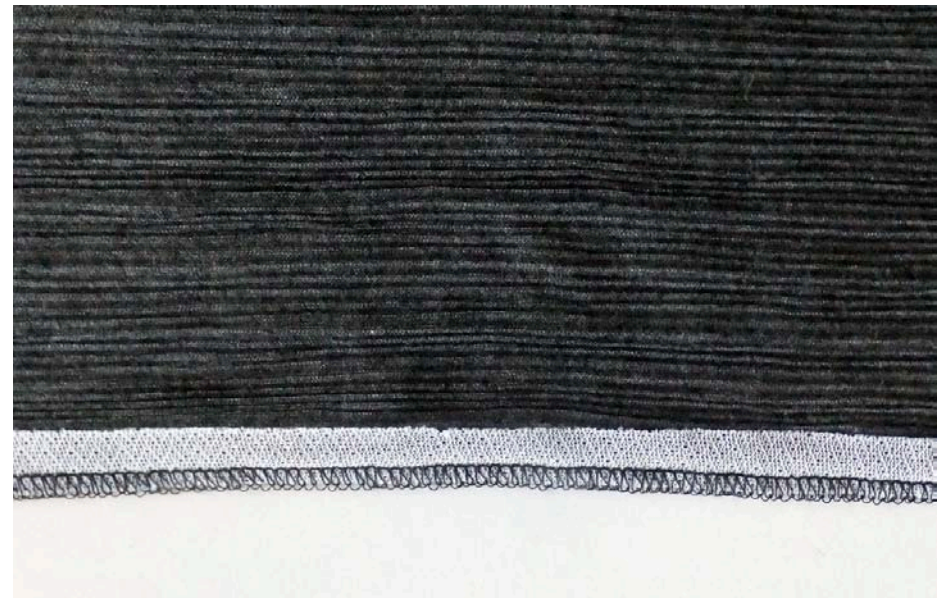
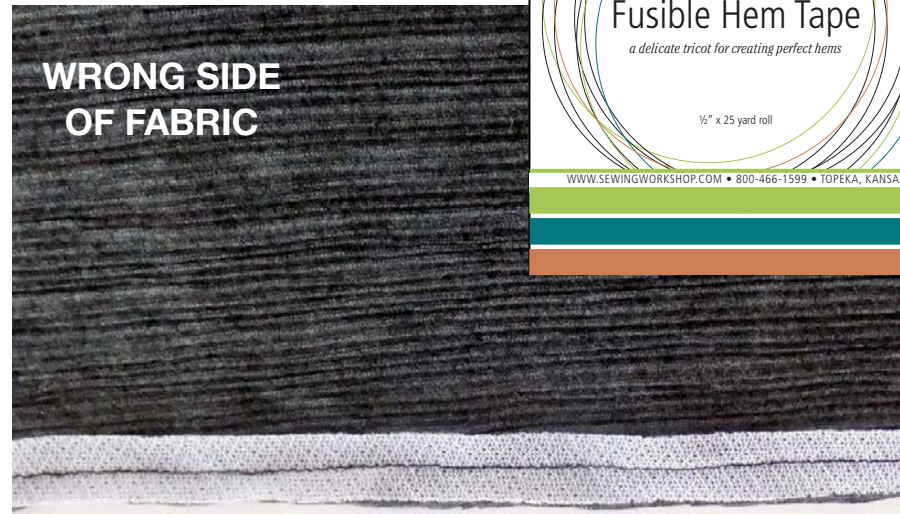
Fusi-Web. Fusi-Web is a very thin adhesive mesh used as a temporary bond. Using medium heat, press the paper-covered Fusi-Web to the wrong side of the fabric for 3–5 seconds. Carefully peel off the paper covering. Place the corresponding fabric over the exposed fusible and press again. This will temporarily adhere the fabric in place until your stitching is completed.



Apply Fusible Hem Tape

■ Machine stitch or serge Fusible Hem Tape to the wrong side of each hem edge *with the fusible side up*. The fusible side has a slightly gritty feeling. The hem tape will prevent rippling when stitching hems on the crosswise grain.

■ Use the serged method for the best stretch.

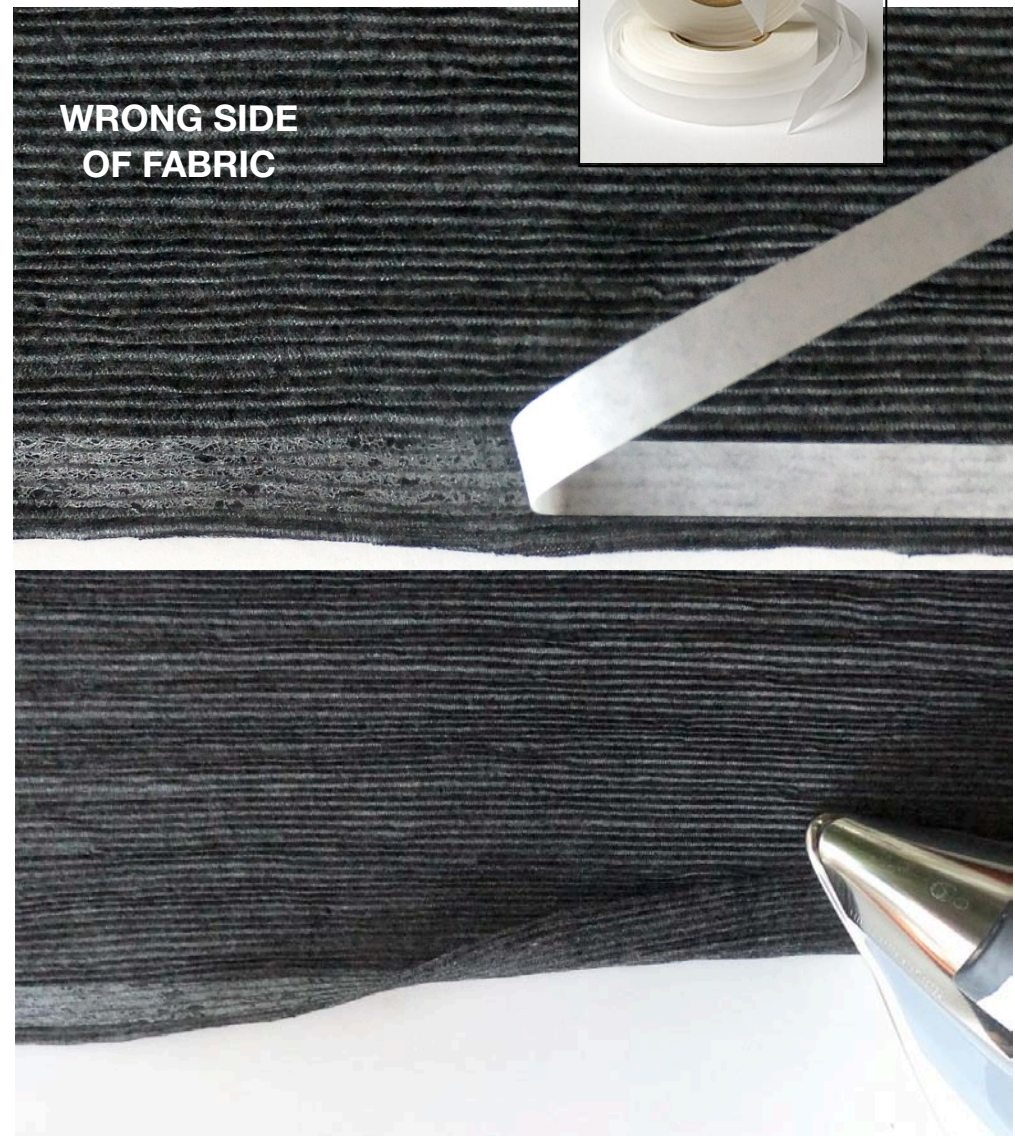
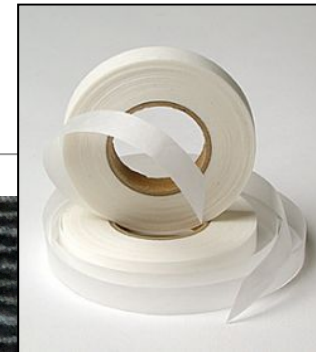


OR Apply Fusi-Web

- Press strips of Fusi-Web to the inside raw edges. Press over the paper covering—remove the paper.
- Press the hem up to fuse it in place in preparation for topstitching.
- Using this product not only keeps the hem in place while stitching, but prevents stretching the hem.

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Know Your
Notions



How About Raw Edges?

- Raw edges are in fashion. If the look works for your garment, try it.
- Sometimes a straight stitch reinforcement next to the raw edge helps to keep the garment from stretching out too much, especially at neck and arm openings.

Cut a foldover collar along the fold to expose two raw-edges, or stitch next to the raw edge for a more “finished” look.



Edge Finish Options

- Cover raw edges using traditional bias binding in contrasting fabrics for fun.
- Use packaged single-fold bias binding. Apply to the edge and fold completely to the inside of the garment (or how about the outside?)

If there is not a color that you like in the pre-packaged bias binding, make your own using a fine silk, rayon or cotton.



Integrating Selvages

- Using the selvage of a fabric simplifies your life.
- Remember to eliminate hem allowances when using selvages on an edge so the garment doesn't get too big.

Check to make sure the selvage doesn't draw up the fabric. Try steaming it flat, or cut off and re-apply.



Re-use Selvages

- Cut off an interesting selvage and save it.
- Use the serger flatlock technique to attach it invisibly. It's magic!

Selvages can be re-attached along hemlines, sleeve edges and center fronts - any place you want a little interest and an ordinary hem just won't do.



Easy Necklines & Armholes

- Use a 4-thread stitch formation on your serger along the raw edges of necklines or armholes.
- Set your differential to about 1.5 (experiment!) to slightly draw up the edge.
- Turn the serged edge to the wrong side and topstitch along the folded edge.



This simple technique reinforces curved edges so the garment doesn't stretch out.

A Few More Details

■ For an artistic treatment, cut off some of the motif inherent in the fabric and appliqué back onto the edges.

■ Find interesting fabrics, such as Ultrasuede™, to use as reinforcements for buttons and buttonholes.

Use the reinforcements on the inside or the right side of the garment.



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