

# THE ROTARY CUTTER AND MAT

## **Teacher Instructions**

Enlarge the rotary cutter rules and post them in the cutting area for teacher and student reference. Each student needs to have the opportunity to use a rotary cutter and mat. Have the fabric and cutting patterns ready for the projects so the students will have the opportunity to actually cut something they will be working on.

Discuss cutting on the grainline and explain the concept of straight of grain, along with demonstrating how to cut at the edge of the fabric (instead of the middle) to conserve fabric.

The cutting pattern sizes are given at the beginning of each construction project. Patterns made of masonite or some other type of hard plastic will best assist the students in their cutting. Mark the patterns with a permanent marker to identify which project it belongs to, the size, the number of pieces, etc.

This information will also help students to complete the TEXTILES EQUIPMENT worksheet.

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When you think of equipment technology for clothing construction, what is the first piece of equipment you think of? Many people think that technology applies only to sewing machines. This is far from correct! One of the most useful pieces of equipment that has recently been invented is the rotary cutter and mat. This equipment can be used instead of scissors or shears to cut fabric.

The main advantage of this equipment is that it cuts fabric quickly and smoothly. The main disadvantage is that it is very easy to cut your fingers. You must be very careful to keep your fingers away from the cutting edge.

The procedure and rules for using a rotary cutter and mat:

1. Only one student at a time is allowed in the cutting area.
2. Place the mat on a flat surface in a corner or a confined area.
3. Place your fabric on the mat.
4. A 6-inch wide plastic ruler should be used as a guide for accuracy and safety in cutting straight edges.
5. Place the pattern on the fabric. Use weights instead of pins to hold the pattern in place.
6. Cut the fabric by pressing down on the rotary cutter. Some cutters have a lock on the blade of the cutter; it must be unlocked before it will work. Other cutters are built to hide the blade until you place pressure on it. When pressure is placed on the cutter, the blade is exposed and will cut the fabric.
7. Use a one-way stroke away from you to cut, not a back-and-forth motion.
8. Push the guard back over the blade when you have finished cutting.