



INTERFACING: INVALUABLE AND INVISIBLE

There are many options for using this invaluable, invisible, yet fundamental component to successful sewing. A garment without interfacing is like a cake without leavening—it sags. Interfacing is an invisible but essential ingredient. It is an additional layer of fabric placed between the outer fabric and the facing.

Some Reasons for Using Interfacing:

In short, there are three main reasons for using interfacing—the three Ss: Shape, Stability, Support. Some common interfacing uses are:

- Support buttons and stabilize buttonholes
- Provide firmness at necklines and other edges
- Control stretch
- Add durability at stress points
- Shadow-proof seams
- Retard wrinkling
- Add softness to hemlines and faced edges
- Support and shape details such as waistbands, collars, and cuffs

Various Types of Interfacings:

Interfacings are characterized in two ways: 1) the method of application (sew-in or fusible), and 2) the structure (woven, non-woven, and knit).

Sew-in interfacings are sewn into the garment by hand or machine. They include self-fabric, lightweight dress and lining fabrics, nets and tulle, and utility fabrics, such as muslin and cotton flannel as well as traditional interfacing materials. They can be crisp or soft, transparent or opaque, light or heavy, woven, knit, or non-woven and made of any fiber.

Fusible interfacings have a resin (dried glue) on one side. They are bonded to the fabric with heat, moisture, and pressure. Fusibles cannot be applied to fabrics which are sensitive to heat and pressure, such as leathers, furs, transparent or puckered fabrics, metallic, vinyls, or velvet. After fusing, fabrics lose their tactile quality and become crisper. Available in many fibers, fusibles range from very lightweight to heavyweights.

Woven interfacings are made by interlacing yarns at right angles. They have stability in the lengthwise grain with give in the cross-grain and stretch on the bias. Available in many fibers, they are suitable for all woven fabrics and some knits and non-wovens.

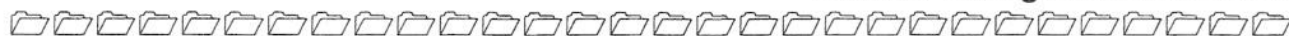
Non-woven interfacings are made with fibers which are fused together with heat and moisture or with chemicals. The format of the fibers—parallel, right angles, or helter-skelter—determines the stability and/or stretch of the interfacing since the fibers form invisible yarns in the material. When the fibers are parallel, the interfacing is stable in the length and tears easily from top to bottom. When scattered helter-skelter, the interfacing has give in all directions like a bias and is difficult to tear.

**INTERFACING: INVALUABLE AND INVISIBLE - Page 2**

Knit interfacings are made in several different ways. The simplest and most frequently used are tricot knits; other knit interfacings include stabilized tricots, weft insertions, and warp insertions.

- Tricot knits are stable in the length with stretch in the width. Compared to woven interfacings, they are softer, drape better, and are more compatible with most knit fashion fabrics. Made of nylon, tricot knits have a fusible backing.
- Stabilized tricots are stable in both the length and width with some give on the bias. They handle like a woven, drape like a knit, and don't ravel. Made of nylon, this is a very lightweight sew-in interfacing.
- Weft insertions are knitted with added yarns inserted horizontally into some of the knitted loops like the weft or crossgrain of a woven fabric. Weft insertions are stable in the length and width with some give on the bias. Well suited for tailoring and garment openings, these fusible interfacings are more supple than wovens with more stability in the width. They are also more stable than knits.
- Warp insertions are knitted with additional yarns inserted vertically in a zigzag fashion. Technically, these interfacings should be called diagonal insertions. They have some stretch in all directions.



**INTERFACING: INVALUABLE AND INVISIBLE - Page 3****Selecting Interfacing**

Interfacings are much more important than many seamsters realize and choosing the perfect interfacing can be a challenge. But with practice, any seamster can do so successfully.

- ☒ Before making a choice, first describe the finished garment. Then consider it and all of its components: the fashion fabric, the interfacing, care requirements, your sewing ability, time available, lifestyle and preferences, and the relationship of all these components to each other. Narrow your choices to a few of your favorite interfacings and experiment with them.
- ☒ The care requirements for the interfacing must be compatible with those of the garment fabric. Permanent press interfacings can be used in dry-clean-only garments, but all-cotton interfacings and interfacings that require dry cleaning or ironing aren't suitable for wash-and-wear fabrics.
- ☒ Generally sew-in interfacings are a better choice for luxury fabrics and expensive designs. Since fusibles are used by many designers in luxury ready-to-wear on garments that cost more than \$1,000, you may prefer to do the same.
- ☒ When sewing inexpensive and washable fabrics, everyday garments, or synthetic suedes, fusibles are frequently more attractive and more durable than sew-in interfacings.
- ☒ In luxury ready-to-wear, most garments have more interfacings than even the best patterns. Don't hesitate to use several different interfacings in a single garment or to add interfacings when the pattern doesn't indicate them.
- ☒ Soft fabrics can be interfaced to create more structured designs, but crisp fabrics will never drape softly.
- ☒ Since sew-in interfacings frequently lose some crispness when wet, it is important to wash (preshrink) them before use. This gives you the advantage of knowing exactly how much body the interfacing will provide, plus eliminating the possibility of shrinkage after construction.
- ☒ To evaluate sew-in interfacings, drape a layer of fashion fabric over a layer of preshrunk interfacing. If the interfacing is almost perfect but a little too crisp, cut it on the bias to make it more flexible. If it is too soft, sew two layers together so that one is on the lengthwise grain and the other is on the crossgrain.
- ☒ To maintain the fabric's character, select a sew-in interfacing that is slightly lighter in weight and just a little crisper.

**INTERFACING: INVALUABLE AND INVISIBLE - Page 4****Selecting Interfacing**

- ☒ To add crispness or body to a limp material, choose a crisp or fusible interfacing. When looking for crisp interfacings, don't confuse weight and crispness.
- ☒ To add body without changing the drape, consider bias-cut interfacings, soft sew-in interfacings, and self-fabric.
- ☒ Bias-cut interfacings are more supple and more flexible than those cut on the grain. Sew-in interfacings are more supple than fusibles.
- ☒ When sewing knits and stretch fabrics, use stable interfacings to prevent unwanted stretch at buttonholes and shoulder seams; use interfacings with stretch, bias-cut interfacings, or self-fabric on sections where you want to retain the fabric's give or stretch.
- ☒ When sewing featherweight and lightweight fabrics, self-fabric, silk organza, organdy, voile, tulle, marquisette, and stabilized tricot are good choices.
- ☒ When sewing solid-colored, transparent fabrics, consider several layers of self-fabric or a layer of another transparent fabric which will blend into the total design. For prints, avoid self-fabric interfacings. For a nude look, experiment with several shades of beige or brown that are a little darker than your skin tone.
- ☒ After fusing, fusible interfacings are crisper, firmer, more wrinkle- and fray-resistant.
- ☒ To evaluate fusible interfacings, see the block on "Testing Fusibles" in this section of the curriculum.
- ☒ The amount of fusible coating or resin on fusible interfacings increases with the interfacing weight. If the interfacing is too heavy, the fusible may bleed through or look "boardy." If it is too lightweight, it won't bond properly and will blister.
- ☒ Create new interfacings by combining two layers of the same or different interfacings. Here are three variations to consider: one layer on the straight grain with one on the bias; a fusible layer with a sew-in; and two fusibles put together.
- ☒ Create a fusible interfacing by applying a fusible web such as Stitch Witchery to any sew-in interfacing and many fashion fabrics.

**INTERFACING: INVALUABLE AND INVISIBLE - Page 5****Tips and Techniques for:**

- **Using Interfacings**
 - **Making interfacings as easy as possible to use**
 - **Maximizing interfacings' potential**
- ✂ Stockpile your favorite interfacing in 3- to 5-yard lengths.
- ✂ Label one end of all interfacings before putting them away. Cut as needed from the unlabeled end. And when it's time to purchase more, you'll know which interfacing to purchase.
- ✂ Use the plastic direction interleaves to make storage bags for the fusible interfacings they accompany. Fold in half lengthwise and sew up the side.
- ✂ Preshrink all interfacings before using them.
- To preshrink washable sew-in interfacings, machine wash at the same temperature you will wash to garment when it is completed. Tumble dry interfacings for wash-and-wear fabrics; line dry interfacings for hand-washable and dry-clean-only fabrics.
 - To preshrink washable fusible interfacings, fill a basin with hot water. Fold the interfacing like an accordion and place it in the basin. Remove the interfacing when the water cools. Roll it in a towel to remove excess moisture and hang it over a shower rod to dry.
 - To preshrink dry-clean-only interfacings, steam vigorously or press with a hot iron and damp cloth.
- ✂ To remove wrinkles from a fusible interfacing, hang it on a skirt hanger in the bathroom.
- ✂ If the pattern doesn't include an interfacing pattern, trace the garment section on a piece of wax paper and draw the interfacing pattern on it. Reshape the interfacing and make a new pattern if the interfacing will look more attractive from the outside of the garment or if the interfacing isn't large enough.
- ✂ Generally interfacings are cut with 5/8-inch seam allowances. To reduce bulk, interface only the outside half of the waistband rather than the entire band.
- ✂ Apply woven interfacings to the garment, not the facing, so they will shadowproof the seams and cause seamlines to roll to the underside.

**INTERFACING: INVALUABLE AND INVISIBLE - PAGE 6****Tips and Techniques**

- ✂ For easier handling, glue-baste sew-in interfacings to the seam allowances of the fashion fabric with a washable glue stick.
- ✂ When applying fusible interfacing, avoid a demarcation line on the garment by interfacing the entire garment section. If that's not possible, apply interfacing to facing. When interfacing synthetic suedes, trim away the seam allowances plus 1/8 inch so the interfacing won't show at the edges.
- ✂ For extra crispness on collars and cuffs, apply one layer of interfacing to the garment section. Trim away the seam allowances of a second interfacing layer and glue-baste or fuse it to the first. Using the trimmed edge as a guide, join the garment and facing. Topstitch the finished section to secure the second interfacing.
- ✂ When interfacing the buttonhole area, position the interfacing with the least amount of stretch parallel to the buttonhole. If the section is already interfaced or this isn't practical, apply a small fusible scrap to the original interfacing at each buttonhole.
- ✂ For softer edges, use 1-inch- to 2-inch-wide bias strips to interface necklines, armholes, and hems. If there is a seamline, stitch the bias into the seamline and clip as needed so it will lie flat. If there is a fold, center the interfacing over the foldline and secure it invisibly with a loose running stitch.
- ✂ To interface washable garments with a woven interfacing, face the facing. Beginning with right sides together, join the interfacing and facing on the unnotched edge with a 1/4-inch seam. Fold and press the interfacing to the wrong side, trim and clip as needed so the interfacing is the same size as the facing. Join the faced facing to the garment.

**INTERFACINGS: INVALUABLE AND INVISIBLE - Page 7****Fusing With Success:**

The secret for success when fusing is heat, moisture, and pressure. The heat and moisture melt the resin, and the pressure pushes it into the fibers.

- ✂ Read and follow the directions which accompany the interfacing. To save time and ensure a good bond, always fuse with a press.
- ✂ If there are no directions, place the garment section, wrong side up, on the ironing board. Place the interfacing, resin side down, on the fabric. Cover with a press cloth, dry or wet, depending on the interfacing instructions. Align the grains, and baste press lightly in several areas. Set the iron on "wool," and press hard with steam, unless the directions indicate otherwise, for 10 to 15 seconds. Overlap the fused areas carefully to avoid a bare section. Do not slide the iron. Allow the fabric to cool, then test to be sure all corners are securely fused. If they are not, fuse again.
- ✂ When fusing tightly woven and dense materials, such as synthetic suedes, denim, and gabardine, repeat the fusing process from the right side. Always use a press cloth when fusing from the right side. For synthetic suedes, be sure the cloth is damp but not wet to avoid creating permanent bubbles.
- ✂ To remove fusibles, cover the interfacing with a damp cloth. Press with the iron set on "wool", then pull the interfacing away from the fabric before it cools.

TESTING FUSIBLES

Always test fusibles before applying to evaluate the weight and check for bleeding, blistering, or a demarcation line.

Cut a 6-inch square of fabric and a 3-inch by 6-inch rectangle of interfacing. Fuse the interfacing to one-half of the fabric square. Let the sample cool. Evaluate the hand, resilience, stability, and general appearance of the sample. To be sure the bond is permanent, check for a demarcation line, bleeding, or blistering.

If there is bleeding, try a lighter weight interfacing. If there is blistering, try a heavier weight. If there is a demarcation line, pink the edge and apply the interfacing to the entire section or to the facing only, or substitute a lighter weight fusible or sew-in interfacing. If the fusible lifts at the corners or edges, then fuse it again.