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Simplified Sewing Interfacings
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Margaret Reed, Clothing
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INTERFACINGS

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE, MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY, EAST LANSING

By MARGARET REED

Extension Clothing Specialist

IMPORTANT PARTS IN THE CONSTRUCTION of some garments never meet the eye! The form and shape of a silhouette may depend on shaping materials never seen from the outside. An interfacing is one of these materials which is used between two layers of outer fabric to give body and shape to a garment. The roll of a collar, the front of a jacket and cuffs are supported by interfacings. In other areas, such as buttonholes, the interfacing adds strength. Crispness or stiffness is often the result of interfacing. The effectiveness of using interfacing largely depends on interfacing appropriate in relation to the outer fabric and the effect you want in the garment.

YOUR CHOICES

Many kinds of interfacing are available to you as a home sewer. Although the selection may be limited in some shopping areas, the materials offered for interfacings generally are combinations of the following choices:

- Heavy, medium or light weight
- Crisp or soft hand (feel to the hand)
- Cotton, synthetic or a blend
- Washable or dry cleanable
- Woven or non-woven (fibers bonded together, not woven)
- Straight grain or on-the-bias
- "Iron-on" or regular
- Stretch or non-stretch
- Black, white or natural

SELECT THE RIGHT ONE

Many times more than one kind of interfacing can be used successfully for a particular sewing job. The "right" interfacing is one that is adequate for its use. The following are guides for the selection of interfacings:

1. The weight of interfacing should be less heavy than that of the outer fabric. An interfacing is selected to give "body" but should not add bulk. Compare the weights of the two fabrics. Which is heavier?
2. The desired effect of the interfacing needs to be considered. Fold the outer fabric over the interfacing for an indication of how the interfacing will function. Does the interfacing give a sharp crisp edge? Or does the interfacing give a soft, less sharp fold? Selection of an interfacing should be made according to its use. Crisp organdy and soft lawn interfacings give different effects in the same garment.
3. The area where interfacing is needed is a factor in selecting interfacing. The grain of a woven interfacing matched with the grain of an under-collar helps to provide enough "give" for the collar to roll. A non-woven material used for an interfacing might be used in straight grain areas such as a front placket where little or no roll is needed. Stretch interfacings or all-bias interfacings might be selected for areas such as hem edges and collars where some "give" is desirable. Interfacings selected for stretch fabrics must be comparable in stretch or elasticity for a *true* stretch garment.

- The care requirements of both the outer fabric and interfacing must be similar if they are to be drycleaned, laundered and ironed as one garment. A garment of washable fabric is washable only if its interfacing and trimmings are washable. An interfacing such as tailor's canvas, a blend of cotton, rayon and goat hair, is drycleanable but not guaranteed washable.

An interfacing selected for a minimum care garment should have characteristics similar to those of the outer fabric. Interfacings such as those of man-made fibers are quick drying, a characteristic of minimum care garments.

- The color of the outer fabric is another guide for selecting an appropriate interfacing. Most interfacings are available in black, white and natural. The sheerer the fabric, the more carefully the color must be selected.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

- Interfacing material for a washable garment should be preshrunk before using. If it has not already been preshrunk, soak thoroughly (or even wash) in lukewarm water. Iron dry, ironing with the grain to keep it as straight as possible.
- Usually a fitted facing and its interfacing are cut on grain lines identical to the grain line of the garment piece being faced. Identical grain lines have identical direction of "give." This is particularly important in maintaining the desired shape as well as a wrinkle-free appearance in washable garments. Exceptions may be in sleeves and hems where true bias interfacing is desirable for its "give."
- Transfer center front buttonhole markings from pattern to interfacing. If markings need to be visible on outside fabric, they can be easily transferred with basting stitches. (See Figure 1).



Figure 1

- If the pattern indicates a dart in the interfacing, slash one dart line to the point and lap edge to meet other dart line. Stitch close to the edge and then stitch a second row for reinforcement. Trim

excess interfacing to about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from stitched line. (See Figure 2).

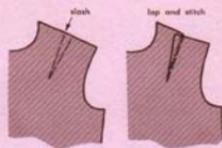


Figure 2

- After interfacing has been stitched into the seam, trim very close to seam line to eliminate bulk from the seam. (See Figure 3). If very heavy interfacing is being used, trim off the seam allowance of the interfacing so that it comes only to the stitching line of the garment. Hand-catch interfacing to stitching line (See Figure 4) or instead, machine stitch narrow rayon seam tape to edge of interfacing and include rayon tape when stitching on stitching line.



Figure 3



Figure 4

- Iron-on interfacing may be used to "stabilize" the area for a machine-made buttonhole in a loosely woven or knitted fabric. Before using, apply a small patch of the iron-on interfacing on a sample piece of fabric to determine whether or not the effect on the finished buttonhole is desirable. Does the fused interfacing give a patched effect? Expect added crispness or stiffness when a layer of fabric is fused to interfacing. This extra body is not apparent until the two layers are fused into one layer.