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Sewing with Sand-washed Fabrics

Rose Marie Tondl, Extension Clothing Specialist

What is sand-washed fabric? Sand-washed fabric refers to the surface finish treatment that gives fabric a soft, chamois-like feel and luster. Other names include sueded or doeskin fabric. The fabric is made from silk, polyester or rayon.

Patterns

This lightweight fabric is commonly used in dresses, blouses, softly styled pants, unstructured tops and lingerie.

Preshrink

Rayon and polyester can be machine-washed on a gentle cycle and machine dried at a low temperature. Hand wash silk fabric.

Layout/Cutting

For slippery fabrics, pin to tissue paper to keep fabric from being distorted. Pin ends of fabric and along the selvage to hold fabric together. Use fine, sharp pins in the seam allowances. Discard dull ones as they might snag the fabric. Cut with sharp shears.

Marking

Use snip marking at the notches or mark with chalk.

Interfacing

The patterns selected generally do not need a lot of structure. For areas needing support, use a sheer weight sew-in interfacing or self-fabric.

Needles

Use a fine needle sizes 65/9 to 75/11. Test by sewing a seam on a scrap of fabric.

Sewing

Set the stitch length at 2 to 2.5 mm or 10-12 stitches per inch. Check for any rough spots on your machine and the throat plate to avoid snagging the fabric. Select cotton, a fine, long staple polyester or fine machine embroidery thread. Use taut sewing for smooth lengthwise seams. If

using a wide-spaced presser foot, move needle to the far left for fabric support. Use a single-hole throat plate and presser foot if you have one for the machine.

Seam Finishes

Serge seams or make double-stitched seams, french seams or flat felled. Using woolly nylon in the serger loopers may create a softer seam.

Pressing

Use a medium temperature. Test using steam and a dry iron. Spitting from the iron may cause water spots. Care needs to be taken to avoid seam imprints on the right side of fabric. Use a sleeve roll to reduce this problem.

Hemming

Make narrow hems using the sewing machine. Serge or turn under the raw edge before topstitching.

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