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## NF00-417 Sewing with Outerwear Sports Fabric

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## Sewing with Outerwear Sports Fabric

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What are outerwear fabrics? Outerwear sports fabrics are weather resistant, meaning the fabrics resist water and wind because of their tight weave. Some are breathable, others don't breathe as well. These fabrics are made from synthetics such as nylon, polyester, or a cotton blend, and have a high thread count. Others may have a finish to make them water repellent or even waterproof. A few brand names include Gore-tex, Ultrex, Commander, Versatech, Supplex and Fiesta ripstop.

### Patterns

Good choices are unlined parkas, trench coats, rainwear, ponchos, lightweight jackets and ski wear. Stay away from patterns that show easing, have princess seams, set-in sleeves and other tailored features. Consider zipper closures, snaps, grommets, drawstring casings and raglan sleeves.

### Preshrink

It may not be necessary to preshrink, but if it's a cotton blend, machine wash in cool water and machine dry at low temperature. A fabric softener in the rinse water will soften the fabric.

### Layout/Cutting

Use a "without nap" layout. Use "with nap" if fabric has a slight nap. Check the fabric. If using pins, place in the seam allowances to maintain water resistance, or use fabric weights. Cut with sharp shears or a rotary cutter with mat.

### Marking

Use chalk, tracing paper, marking pens or snip at the notches.

### Interfacing

Sew-ins or fusible interfacings are suitable if needed. If fabric has a coating on the back side, avoid fusibles. Use interfacing behind snaps to keep them from pulling out.

### Needles

Begin project with a new needle. If fabric is dense, use a sharp needle such as a microfiber needle or a fine jeans needle. For lighter weight fabric use a 70/10 or 80/12 and for heavier weight fabrics

use a 90/14.

### **Sewing**

Set the stitch length at 2 to 2.5 mm or 10 to 12 stitches per inch. Select good quality, long staple polyester thread. To keep fabric from slipping, use a walking foot or the dual-feed feature if it is on your machine. If using a wide spaced presser foot, move the needle to the far left position to reduce slipping, or use a straight presser foot and a single hole throat plate to hold the fabric firmly so it won't go into the needle hole. Topstitching will help fabric edges stay flat. For coated fabrics use a Teflon foot, talcum powder, cornstarch or tissue paper on top to keep fabric from sticking to the bottom of the presser foot.

### **Seam Finishes**

If fabric frays, use a serger or a suitable plain seam finish such as pinked and stitched, zigzag or multi-stitch zigzag. For ripstop nylon make French seams. Flat-felled seams look great on jackets.

### **Pressing**

Keep the temperature of the iron on the low side. Too high of a temperature will harm the fabric. Try finger pressing, too.

### **Hemming**

Use a casing with drawstring or elastic with ripstop nylon. Finish the hem with double needle top stitching or a blind stitch.

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