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G93-1137 Interfacings

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Interfacings

This NebGuide tells how to select, prepare and apply interfacing to enhance garment quality.

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- [Where to Use Interfacing](#)
- [Selecting Interfacing](#)
- [Types of Interfacing](#)
- [Interfacing Preparation](#)
- [Applying Sew-in Interfacing](#)
- [Removing Fused Interfacing](#)

Interfacing is a supportive fabric placed between the facing and garment fabric. Although hidden from view, it is a critical part of clothing construction. The necessity for interfacing is dependent on garment detail, fabric type and desired effects. It can make the difference between a professional-looking garment and a disappointment.

Interfacing is used to:

1. Stabilize and prevent stretching where strain occurs, such as neckline, buttonholes, waistband, pocket edges
2. add shape to waistband, collar, cuffs, lapels, plackets and other detail areas
3. add body or crispness in cuffs, pocket flaps, pockets
4. cushion bulky seams
5. reduce the frequency of pressing and
6. increase life of garment

Where to Use Interfacing

Use interfacing wherever stability, shape or body is needed. While most patterns suggest where to use interfacing, you may want to use it in additional areas. Collars, except for cowl necks, turtlenecks and ribbing, benefit from the use of interfacing. Buttons and buttonholes have a nicer appearance when they are backed with interfacing. Cuffs and waistbands need the support that interfacing can provide. Interfacing provides stability when applied to facings in collarless and sleeveless areas. Pockets and tie belts have more body when interfacing is used. Other detail areas may need interfacing to create a specific look (*Figure 1*). Interfacing is applied to the wrong side of the garment pieces in the upper collar,

upper cuff and garment front. If it shows through, then the interfacing is applied to the facings.



When tailoring, interfacing is used in collar, lapels, jacket front, hems and shoulder area (see *EC 81-402, Shaping a Tailored Garment*, for detailed information on selecting and applying interfacings for tailored garments).

Interfacing is seldom used in very stretchy fabrics such as sweater-knits, very soft knits, and in designs that are extremely soft looking.

Selecting Interfacing

The appropriate interfacing to use in a specific garment should compliment and reinforce, not overwhelm the fabric. The best choice will depend on garment fabric, fabric care, fabric construction and desired effects. A lightweight interfacing might be used for a draped collar, for instance, while a tailored color would require a heavier interfacing. It may be necessary to use more than one type and weight of interfacing in a garment, depending on its purpose. Consider the following factors when selecting interfacing.

Care-- The fashion fabric and interfacing should have similar care requirements. Do not use a "dry clean only" interfacing in a garment you intend to launder.

Color-- Since colors do show through some fabrics, select an interfacing in a color compatible with fashion fabric. Beige coordinates with neutral shades and warm pastel tones; blue coordinates with cool tones; silver with neutral shades and cool pastels tones; red with warm; white with all tones, and charcoal and black with dark tones.

Fabrication and Application-- Interfacings can be woven, non-woven or knit fabrics. They can be applied by fusing (fusible) or sewing (sew-in). Select the fabric and application that will give the results you desire.

Give or Stretch-- Some interfacings are very stable or stiff; others have varying amounts of stretch or give. Select a stable interfacing for an area that you do not want to stretch (buttonholes, waistband). An interfacing with more stretch is used in areas that need shaping.

Weight-- Interfacing weights vary from sheer to quite heavy. Interfacing should be, slightly lighter in

weight than the fashion fabric. It should complement, not dominate the fashion fabric. An interfacing heavier than the fashion fabric might be desirable only if special shaping or effect is needed. If in doubt, choose the lighter interfacing, as one that is too heavy may give unprofessional results.

To determine if a sew-in interfacing is suitable, drape the fashion fabric over the interfacing. Shape and manipulate the combination to see if it gives desired results. The appropriateness of a fusible interfacing can be determined only by fusing a small piece of the interfacing to the fabric. In the fusing process, the fashion fabric gains extra body.

Build up a supply of interfacings so you will have the kind you need. Purchase 3 - 5 yards of any interfacing you use frequently. Having a supply of interfacings also makes it easier to test fusibles to see if they provide the desired results (including ease of fusing and quality of adhesion). The variety and quality of interfacings have increased in the past few years. The decision between fusible and sew-in is dependent on fashion fabric, degree of firmness and personal choice.

Types of Interfacing

Interfacings can be grouped by type according to fabric, application and stretch. Almost every combination of these three types is available in an interfacing fabric.

Fabric

Fabrics used for interfacing can be woven, nonwoven or knit. Characteristics of fabric construction give different properties to fabrics. While many fabrics are produced exclusively for use as interfacing, others may also be suitable. Woven fabrics, such as batiste, muslin, broadcloth and some lining/interlining fabrics, may be very suitable as interfacing. The garment fabric can sometimes be used, especially if it is a solid color.

Woven interfacings may be cotton, rayon, wool, polyester or a blend of fibers. Lengthwise yarns are interwoven with crosswise yarns at right angles to make a woven fabric. Those containing wool can be shaped and molded with steam. Generally, woven interfacings are cut on the same grain as the accompanying garment section. However, when cut on the bias they have more give and are more suitable for shaping (*Figure 2*).

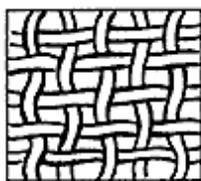


Figure 2



Figure 3

Nonwoven interfacings are usually made of polyester, rayon, nylon, or a blend of fibers. The fibers are distributed at random and held together by chemical binders and heat. Since they do not have a yarn direction or grain, they will not ravel and can be cut in any direction. The weight and amount of stretch can vary significantly among non-woven interfacings. Give careful consideration to selecting the most appropriate one (*Figure 3*).



Figure 4

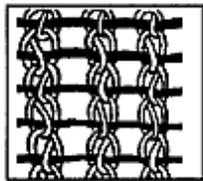


Figure 5

Knit interfacings are available in tricot, weft insertion and warp insertion forms. Nylon tricot has crosswise stretch and lengthwise stability. It adds shape and body to practically any knit or woven fabric (*Figure 4*). Weft insertion has additional yarns inserted in the crosswise direction that enables the interfacing to provide stability in both the crosswise and lengthwise directions (*Figure 5*). It is used when you want more stability than a tricot, but less stability than a woven interfacing. Warp insertions have additional yarns inserted in



the lengthwise direction and provide stretch in all directions (Figure 6). They are used for soft shaping.

Application

Interfacings can be applied to garment sections by sewing or fusing. Both woven and nonwoven interfacings can be purchased as sew-ins or fusibles. Knit interfacing is currently available only as a fusible.

Sew-in -- Use thread to attach these interfacings to the fashion fabric by hand or machine. When attached to a seam allowance they are often basted in place. A glue stick can be used to baste interfacings, but use it with caution and only in the seam allowance.

- *Advantages* -- Gives softer, more supple shaping; may used with both woven and knit fabrics; a variety of woven fabrics not specifically designed for interfacing can be used.
- *Disadvantages* -- May shrink, so preshrink before cutting; may need to be basted in place; a nonwoven sew-in may buckle in an area (such as collar) where it is completely enclosed; may need machine or hand padstitching for extra firm tailored shaping.

Fusibles -- Fusible interfacings are designed with an adhesive on one side of the fabric. When heat, moisture, pressure and time are applied, the adhesive melts, attaching the interfacing to a second surface. Because extra body is added to the garment as a result of fusing, select a lighter-weight fusible. Always test a fusible interfacing on a sample of garment fabric to determine if it is the proper weight, adheres well and gives the desired results. Test by fusing a circle onto a fabric scrap. The form of the circle will definitely be noticeable if the weight is too heavy. Wash the sample to see how the garment will look after it is laundered and to determine how well the interfacing remains bonded to the fashion fabric.

- *Advantages* -- Quick to use; no basting needed; shape can be built into garment with additional layers; adds firmness to an area.
- *Disadvantages* -- Gets firmer after fusing; may damage some fabrics that cannot be steam pressed; fusing adhesive may come through lightweight fabrics or sheers; fusing process flattens the fabric surface and may not be suitable for the following types of fabrics: pile, nap, rough or textured surfaces, heat sensitive fabrics, open work fabrics, silks, and silicon treated or water repellent finishes.

Low-temperature fusibles-- These interfacings have a special adhesive that applied with a cooler iron temperature. They are used on heat-sensitive synthetics such as micro-fibers, ultralight polyesters, silks and faux suedes. These low-temperature fusibles help prevent fusing adhesive from coming through lightweight fabrics.

Stretch

Today's interfacings have different amounts of stretch or give. Do not use stretch in areas where stability is desired.

No give or stretch -- Nonwoven stabilized interfacings do not give or stretch in any direction. They are primarily used for purses, draperies and craft projects, although they may be desirable for waistbands.

One-way stretch -- Interfacing stretches in the crosswise direction and is stable lengthwise. It can be used in areas that need to stretch, or to stabilize areas such as waistbands. It can be non-woven or knit.

Modified one-way stretch -- This type stretches mostly crosswise, but has some give in lengthwise and bias. The direction of stretch can be used to advantage by cutting the interfacing to use the stretch in the needed direction.

Bias -- The most "give" is on the true bias. Typical of woven fabrics, it will give like woven fabrics when sewn or fused in place.

All-bias -- This type stretches in lengthwise, crosswise and bias directions. It is a nonwoven fabric.

Interfacing Preparation

Preshrinking-- Preshrink interfacings to be used in washable garments. Launder sew-in interfacings the same as the fabric. Preshrink fusible interfacing by soaking it in warm to hot water for 15-20 minutes. Add a small amount of dishwasher liquid to help emulsify, and rinse thoroughly. Use a towel to blot out excess moisture. Lay the interfacing flat to air dry. **DO NOT PRESHRINK FUSIBLE INTERFACING IN THE WASHING MACHINE. DO NOT WRING DRY OR PUT IN THE DRYER** as this may remove or damage the fusing agent.

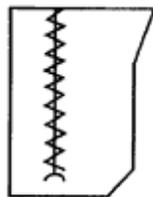
Layout, Cutting, and Marking-- To stabilize a section, cut woven interfacings on the same grain as the garment. For shaping or use in hems, cut interfacing on the bias. Cut nonwoven interfacings to take advantage of any give or stretch in the interfacing. Cut fusible interfacing with one 1/8 inch seam allowance. Do not mark fusibles with tailor tacks as they will be fused in place. Water erasable marks may be removed by steam when adhering fusibles. Be sure any marks on the interfacing that face the fashion fabric can be removed.

Tricot and weft insertion interfacings should be cut lengthwise to provide the greatest stability. For flexibility, weft insertion interfacing should be cut crosswise. If the interfacing is being used as an underlining, it should be fused to the fabric before the individual garment pieces are cut.



Cut Out Dart

Figure 7



Zig-zag Cut Edges Together

Figure 8

Eliminate Bulk-- Reduce dart bulk in sew-in and fusible interfacings by trimming the interfacing along dart lines (*Figure 7*). Zig-zag the butted edges together on sew-ins (*Figure 8*). Trim off excess seam allowances after basting sew-ins in place; all but 1/8 inch of seam allowances is removed from fusibles before attaching them to garment.

Interfacing can be trimmed diagonally at corners before it is attached to reduce bulk at points.

Applying Sew-in Interfacing

Cut the interfacing the same size as the garment section being interfaced. Baste it to the seam allowance 1/8 inch from the seamline by hand or machine. Use hand basting if machine stitching cause puckers. Trim the interfacing seam allowance close to stitching (*Figure 9*).



Figure 9

Collars, cuffs and waistbands cut in one piece (without separate facing) need interfacing in only half of the garment section. Position the interfacing edge along the fold line for a sharp edge (*Figure 10*), or extend it approximately 1/2 inch beyond the fold for a softer, rounded edge (*Figure 11*). When interfacing is placed along the fold, use a hand sewn catch stitch to hold it in place. Baste interfacing extending beyond the fold line in place with uneven basting stitches beyond the fold. If these are carefully placed, they need not be removed.

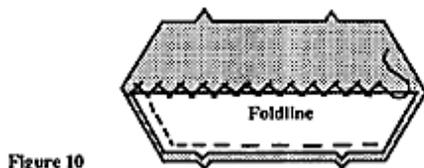


Figure 10

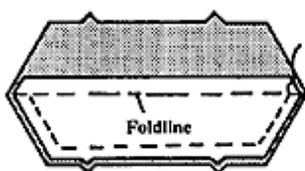


Figure 11

Applying Fusible Interfacing

Cut the interfacing with only 1/8 inch seam allowances. (If the area will be topstitched, trim out the entire seam allowance.) Follow the manufacturer's instructions to fuse the interfacing in place. **READ THE DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY-- FUSIBLE INTERFACINGS DO NOT ALL FUSE THE SAME.** Generally, a hot iron, 10 - 15 seconds of heat application and firm pressure on the iron are required for successful bonding. Many fusibles also require moisture in the form of steam from the iron or a damp press cloth. **ALWAYS PRETEST FUSIBLE INTERFACING ON A FABRIC SAMPLE** (*Figure 12*).



Figure 12

For low-temperature fusibles use a silk setting on the iron. Apply the iron for 10 seconds with steam and light pressure. After the fabric has cooled, turn it over and using a press cloth, repeat the pressing process from the right side to ensure a smooth, even bond.

If fusing directions are not available for a particular fusible interfacing, try the following directions on a sample of fabric and interfacing.

1. Set the iron on steam or wool setting.
2. Place fusible side (may feel rough or look shiny) of interfacing on wrong side of fabric.
3. Place a damp press cloth over interfacing and fabric.
4. Set the iron on interfacing and fabric and leave for 10 - 15 seconds. Do not slide iron. Raise it and lower it to a new position slightly overlapping the area just adhered. Count slowly or use a clock to insure the iron stays in place at least 10 seconds.
5. When fusing large areas, spot fuse. Fuse the top, bottom and middle to position the interfacing, then fill in the other areas. Spot fusing will keep the fusible from stretching.
6. For a heavy interfacing and fabric, let cool, then turn the fabric and interfacing over and repeat steps 3 and 4 on the right side of the fabric. Use a press cloth to prevent a shine or press marks. (This may also produce a nicer finished product on many light and medium weight fusibles.)
7. **COOL COMPLETELY WHILE LAYING FLAT BEFORE HANDLING.** If you handle the fabric before it has cooled, the fuse may be damaged. Do not try to pull the interfacing from the fabric

while it is warm as the adhesive has not had time to set.

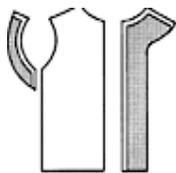


Figure 13

If the interfacing changes the outside appearance of the fashion fabric, place it against the facing pieces (*Figure 13*).

If the interfacing pulls loose after the sample has cooled, try again using a longer time.

A very firm ironing surface is essential for successful fusing. In addition, some people have better fusing success if the entire procedure is done on a piece of poster board that can be covered with foil and kept on the pressing area. **DO NOT CONFUSE FUSIBLE INTERFACINGS WITH IRON-ON.** Fusible interfacing is used for garments and is applied with downward pressure and steam. Iron-on is used for the backing of crafts and home decorating. It is applied with dry heat and a side to side gliding pressure.

A poor bond or a bad fuse of interfacing to the fashion fabric may be caused by the incompatibility of the interfacing to fabric (e.g., a water-repellent finish and a non-absorbent fiber); improper technique (unfused cold "spots," too much moisture) or appearance (fusible resin shows since interfacing is too heavy, bubbling caused by shrinkage of interfacing or fabric).

Removing Fused Interfacing

To remove interfacing that has been fused in place, hold a steam iron over interfacing for 5 - 10 seconds. Immediately peel off the interfacing. If it is still adhered, set the iron on the interfacing, but do not use pressure. To remove any fusing agent that remains on the fabric, cover it with a damp, lightweight fabric scrap and press. Peel off while warm. Continue with new scraps until all the adhesive can be removed by sponging the area with rubbing alcohol--but be sure the fabric or dye will not be affected.

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