

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Historical Materials from University of  
Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

Extension

---

1954

## EC479 Sewing the New Fabrics

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>

---

"EC479 Sewing the New Fabrics" (1954). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 2212.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/2212>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

AGRI  
S  
85  
E7  
#479

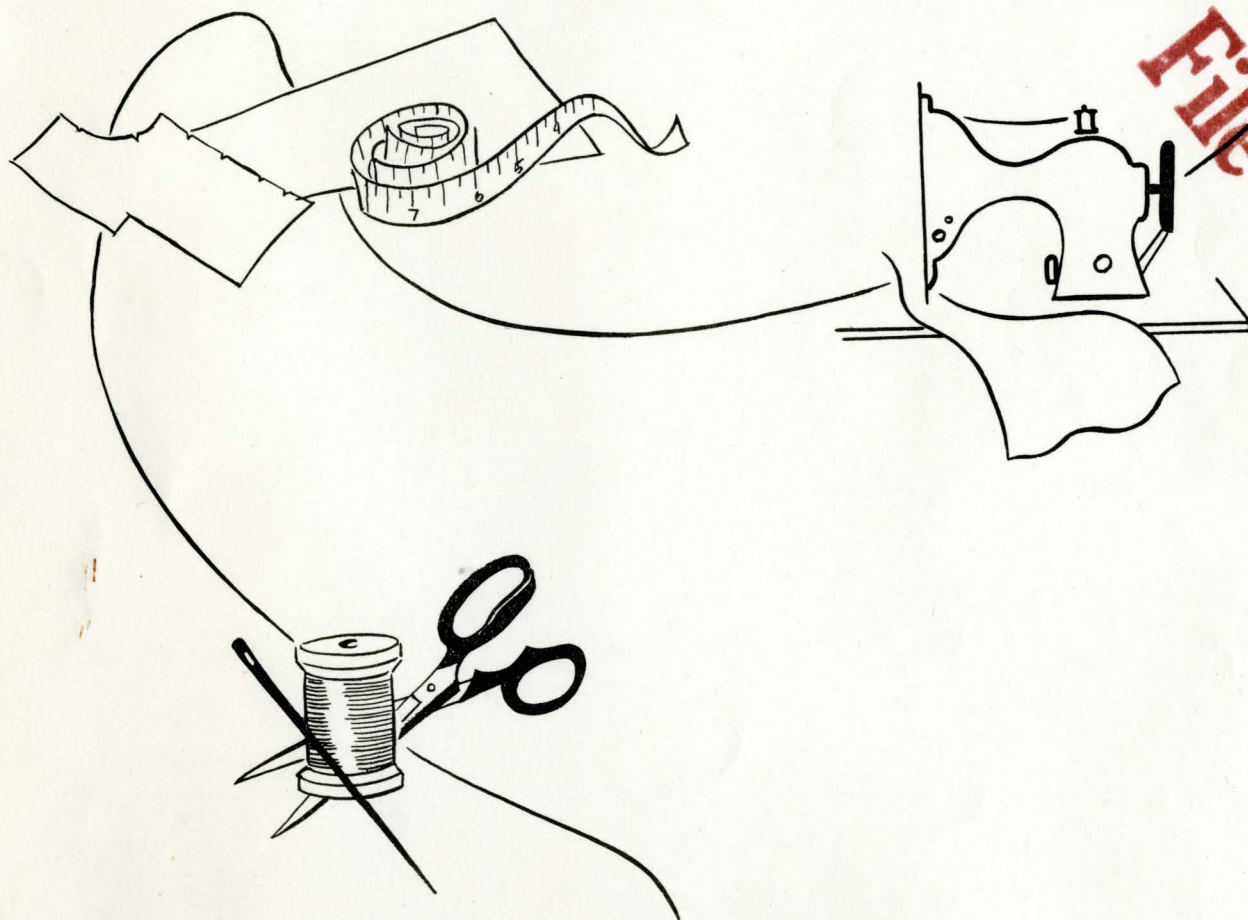
1954

*Out of Print*

E.C. 479

*File Copy*

# SEWING THE NEW FABRICS



**File Copy**

EXTENSION SERVICE  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COOPERATING  
W. V. LAMBERT, DIRECTOR



## SEWING THE NEW FABRICS

A piece of cloth has qualities which make it suited for garments of a certain style. It has qualities, too, which make it easy or difficult to handle and sew. As new fabrics come into use, we need to learn something about the qualities that are going to make a difference in the way we cut and sew the cloth. Some of the new fabrics to be considered are:

Cottons with crease-resistant finishes, metallic threads, or mixtures with other fibers.

Rayons and acetates, alone or blended, with crease-resistant finishes.

Wool--with shrink-resistant finish or that has been treated for washability.

Fabrics from the new man-made fibers, nylon, orlon, dynel, dacron, vicara, acrilan--alone, or in blends with natural or other man-made fibers.

It is evident that some of the special characteristics of man-made fibers need to be considered from the selection of the style of the garment to the final pressing. We need to learn what methods and techniques in cutting, sewing and pressing give the most satisfactory results.

### PATTERN SELECTION

For fabrics made entirely of the newer synthetic yarns and for glazed and embossed cottons, choose a style with few pieces and uncomplicated details.

Blouse or dress styles with sleeves cut in one with the bodice, or with set-in sleeves that have little ease are more satisfactory than those with regulation set-in sleeves.

These fabrics have little "give" and it is difficult to ease in fullness in a sleeve or to ease one piece on to another, as a fuller or curved section to a yoke. Slightly larger armholes give a more comfortable fit and also make sleeve fullness easier to handle.

Check your pattern to see that there is ample width across the back, over the bust, in upper sleeve and hip.

Skirts with reasonably straight hems are easier to handle than those with circular fullness.

In general, a slightly fuller cut and ease in fitting make a more comfortable garment from the fabrics which have little "give."

### PREPARING THE FABRIC

Straighten the ends of the fabric by the usual methods. If the weave of the fabric is set off-grain in the finishing process, it is impossible to straighten it by home methods.

When dacron or other fiber which does not shrink is blended with wool or other fibers which shrink, the cloth should be shrunk before it is made into a garment.



## CUTTING THE FABRIC

It is difficult to pin some of the 100% synthetic fabrics. Pattern pieces may be held in place with weights, very fine dressmaker pins, or needles.

Use well sharpened shears and cut with firm, long strokes. Use extra caution when cutting into corners or slashing. Some of the fabrics from new fibers, and cotton with crease-resistant finishes and high gloss are somewhat crisp and brittle and it is easy to cut too far.

Check the seam allowance--if the fabric frays badly, leave additional seam allowance.

## MARKING

The marking method is determined by the weight and texture of the fabric. All marking should be done on the wrong side of the cloth. A tracing wheel and dressmaker's carbon are satisfactory on many fabrics. Use a dull-pointed wheel for smooth fabrics and a long-toothed wheel on fabrics like Orlon fleece. Test on a scrap and trace lightly. Tailor's tacks are also satisfactory, especially for thick, bulky material. Tailor's wax chalk is suitable on some wool materials, but not on smooth fabrics where it may leave an oily mark.

## STITCHING

Plan to test the stitching on your fabric to determine the length of stitch, kind of thread, and tension adjustment that will give you the most satisfactory results. Be sure your sewing machine is clean and well adjusted. Have some fine, sharp needles (for both hand and machine sewing) ready for use with nylon and dacron thread. Test your stitching on lengthwise, crosswise and bias of fabric. It is not possible to give definite rules for stitching the new fabrics, because of the great variation in fibers and texture.

The suggestions given in the following paragraphs may serve as a guide for you in deciding how best to handle your fabric.

### Kind of thread

Mercerized cotton, silk, nylon, or dacron threads may be used for stitching. Nylon and dacron threads are strong, dry quickly, and may be preferred for fabrics made of the same fiber. Do not use these threads for fabrics such as cotton or linen which will be ironed or pressed with a hot iron.

### Tension adjustment

For nylon and dacron threads the tensions need to be adjusted so there is little pull on the thread. Both tensions may need to be loosened. Try easing the top tension first. Use medium pressure on the presser foot.

### Length of stitch

Test the stitch length from medium to finer stitches. With some fabrics a long stitch (7 to 10 stitches to the inch) may be satisfactory, but usually a medium (12 to 14 stitches) or a finer stitch may be used, depending on the texture and weight of the fabric.



### Stitching technique

As you begin stitching, hold the ends of the thread, since nylon thread tends to draw back and catch in the first stitches formed. Stitch at slow to moderate speed. Rapid stitching may cause puckering. After you have made your test stitching, it is a good plan to press the sample and let it "relax" to see that it does not pucker after pressing.

### Suggestions to prevent puckering of seams

For stitching with nylon, winding the bobbin by hand without stretching helps prevent seam puckers.

Hold the seam taut as you stitch to give more elasticity to the stitching.

Stitching over paper may help. Another device is to paste a piece of gummed tape over the needle hole, allowing the needle to make its own hole as it comes down through the tape.

Changing the needle may help. Stitching fabrics made from strong synthetic threads, especially nylon, quickly dulls a needle.

## CONSTRUCTION

### General Suggestions

Faster threads at ends of seams by retracing stitching for a short distance.

Cut nylon and dacron thread at the end of a seam. Do not try to break it.

Before clipping corners for gussets, etc., stay-stitch on marked lines, cut, then reinforce with seam binding before making seam. Top stitching is another method of making firmer seams.

Be sure the garment fits correctly before stitching and pressing seams and darts. In some fabrics, pressed-in lines are difficult to remove and stitching may leave a mark if lines are changed.

If ripping is necessary, cut thread at intervals, as pulling and snapping may damage fabric yarns.

It is difficult to obtain crisp edges in nylon by pressing. Sometimes top stitching may be the best method to obtain the desired effect.

### Seam Finishes

Seam finishes are determined by the kind of fiber, the type of yarn, and the weave and weight of the fabric.

For sheers, French seams are best. On firmly woven fabrics which do not ravel easily, pinking may be satisfactory.

Fabrics which ravel badly may have seam edges turned and stitched. If a flatter finish is required, seam edges may be stitched, then overcast.

On deep-napped fabrics, or those which do not take pressing well, use stitched fell or double top-stitched seams.

Tricot or jersey, and net do not ravel and require no seam finish, but seam edges



may have a tendency to roll. To prevent rolling of seam edges, a row of machine stitching 1/4 inch from the seam line may be made and the edge trimmed close to the second stitching.

#### Buttonholes

In most cases, machine buttonholes are easier to make than bound ones on fabrics of 100 per cent synthetic yarns. Machine-made buttonholes are sometimes made with nylon top thread and mercerized bobbin thread. It is said buttonholes made in this way are firm and hold their shape during wear.

On fabrics that fray badly, test a scrap by pressing a patch of iron-on tape on the wrong side. If it does not change the appearance of the fabric, the tape may be used before making either machine or tailored buttonholes.

#### PRESSING

As suggested with stitching, test a scrap of your fabric for iron temperature and amount of moisture that may be used. Keep the following general directions in mind.

For good pressing results on fabrics of newer man-made fibers and blends:

Use low to moderate iron temperatures.

Press on wrong side.

Protect fabrics with a press cloth.

Apply moisture to press cloth, with a steam iron, or with a slightly dampened cloth or sponge--never to the fabric itself.

Pressing may need to be repeated several times. Press lightly and use the amount of moisture desirable for your fabric.

Crease-resistant finishes make it difficult to press seams, collars and hems so they lie flat.

Embossed designs on some fabrics are flattened if pressed with moisture.

Metallic printed fabrics may take on a greenish cast if moisture is used.