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INTERFACINGS

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An interfacing is an extra piece of fabric placed between the facing and the outer fabric of the garment. Although hidden from view it plays a leading role in the successful appearance of the garment.

Purpose of Interfacing

1. Keep garment from stretching. Some fabrics such as crepes, jerseys, loosely woven woolens, tend to stretch and become ill-fitting. Interfacing is used where strain occurs such as: neckline, front edge, pocket edges.

2. Add stiffness and body to outer fabric. Collars, cuffs, and pocket flaps must be stiff and perky to give the desired effect. Limp fabrics need the extra weight of interfacing in some areas to enhance their natural beauty. Belts and waistbands need to be stiff and firm. Some fashion details or unusual silhouette effects such as yokes, peplums, and stand-away flares require an interfacing.

3. Cushion bulky seams and hems. This prevents an unattractive ridge from bulky seams and hems when garment is pressed. Bound buttonholes need the cushioning effect of interfacing.

Types of Interfacing

1. Woven - Lengthwise yarns are laced with crosswise yarns at right angles to make a fabric with a definite grain. Interfacing is cut on same fabric grain as outer fabric except when bias is required. Fabric has "give" so it can be shaped and molded to give a nice roll to collars and lapels. Woven interfacings include:

- a. Fabrics especially made for interfacing such as: Armo, Everflex, Formite, Sheer de Swa, Siri, Sta-Shape, Veriform, and others.

- b. Fabrics used for interfacing but not planned for this purpose such as: batiste, lawn, marquisette, muslin, net, organdy, taffeta.

2. Non-Woven -- A web of fibers is bonded together either by heat or by an adhesive to form a cloth. Any textile fibers available in staple lengths may be used. Non-woven interfacing has no lengthwise and crosswise grain and therefore has less "give" than the woven. Bias tape has more "give" than other non-woven fabrics. Either kind may be satisfactory when there is no roll or darted shaping of the garment in the area where the interfacing is used. Some kinds of non-woven are: Dextex, Interlon, Keyback, Kyrel, Lantuck, Pellon - regular and bias.

3. Iron-on Interfacings (both woven and non-woven) -- Crystal-like granules are applied to one side of the fabric. This side is placed next to the fabric that requires interfacing. By pressing with a heated iron the granules melt and the two fabrics are fused together. "Iron-ons" have little "give" and are hard to shape and mold. When applied to a fabric it may seem heavier than it originally appeared. Make a test sample before using on garment and follow directions carefully. It is not recommended for use on 100% filament synthetics such as Dacron Polyester or nylon, but it can be used on blends.

"Iron-ons" may be effective on fabrics that ravel for reinforcement of bound buttonholes, gussets, seams. Some woven "iron-ons" include Staflex, Instant Armo, Face Mate. Some non-woven "iron-ons" include Keybak, Hot Iron, Pelomite, Staflex non-woven, Adheron.

Selection of Interfacing

To help you decide which kind to use ask yourself these questions:

1. What is the weight of the fabric: heavy, medium or light?
2. How crisp or soft should it appear?
3. Are there certain areas that need reinforcement?

Some general suggestions on selection are:

1. Quality of interfacing should be comparable in quality to outer fabric.
2. Tailored or heavy garments require a firmer and heavier interfacing. Hair canvas is good because it contains some wool, mohair or goat's hair which makes it more resilient.
3. Medium weight fabrics require interfacing of medium weight.
4. Sheer fabric needs interfacing that won't show, such as net. Any interfacing should blend or match in color.
5. Interfacing should be lighter in weight than the outer fabric.
6. Interfacing should have the same laundering or cleaning qualities as the outer fabric.
7. Woven interfacing is easier to press and shape when molding is needed.
8. Self fabric can be used as interfacing in some cases.

9. To help you decide if the interfacing will give the effect you want, fold the outer fabric over the interfacing. Shape and manipulate it with your fingers. Does it give the effect you want?

General Suggestions on Using Interfacings

1. If interfacing will improve the garment, it should be used even though pattern instruction doesn't suggest it. Front facing, cuff, under collar patterns may be used when cutting.

2. It is better to shrink interfacing if garment is to be washed. Some interfacings such as muslin, may need to be shrunk even though the garment is to be dry cleaned.

3. Interfacing should be straightened and pattern laid on the straight grain. Under collars and interfacing used in hems of sleeves and coats are cut on a bias grain. Sometimes interfacing for front facing is also cut on the bias.

4. Mark interfacing with all construction symbols found on the pattern.

5. Grade or layer seams to eliminate bulky edges. Trim off interfacing corners (as collar point) about 1/4" inside stitched corner line.

6. When using "iron-ons" interfacing trim off seam allowance to about 1/8" before applying. Seams can't be layered after it is pressed on.

7. Eliminate bulk when interfacing is darted. Cut through center of dart and lap cut edges. Then stitch flat on stitching line. Seams may also be lapped.