

Selecting Interfacings, Underlinings and Linings

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Fashion sets the silhouette or shape of a garment. If the fashion picture is soft and drapery, the construction techniques used for shaping and reinforcing certain areas of the garment are selected to create that silhouette. If the fashion picture is crisp and firm, techniques to create such a silhouette are used.

Methods for creating a garment silhouette vary according to the fashion fabric, the type of garment and the care procedures for the finished garment.

SHAPING GARMENTS

The silhouette of a garment can be shaped and reinforced with interfacing and/or underlining.

Interfacing

Interfacing is a layer of knitted, woven or non-woven fabric placed between the garment fabric and facing to reinforce, add body and guarantee crispness. Interfacing improves garment appearance and preserves its shape. Interfacing usually is cut by a special pattern or by the facing pattern pieces.

Interfacing usually is used for the front opening edges, especially where there are buttons and buttonholes; collars; cuffs; waistbands; and pocket flaps. Any area where stretching or loss of crispness from wear should be interfaced.

Different areas of a garment may require different kinds of interfacing fabric. Select interfacing from knitted, woven and nonwoven fabrics that can be sewn in or fused to the garment. Consider the weight of the garment fabric and select an interfacing that is the same weight or lighter.

When selecting a fusible interfacing, use a lighter weight than the fabric needs because fusing often stiffens the fabric. You may want to use an interfacing fabric that is heavier than the garment fabric for special effects.

Consider the care procedures for the garment fabric, when you select interfacing. An interfacing should have the same or similar care procedures. If the garment fabrics are permanent press, use permanent press interfacing, too.

Underlining

Underlining is a backing for the garment fabric. Cut underlining from the same pattern pieces as the garment. Stitch the pieces to the garment fabric then treat the two as one during garment construction.

Underlining is used to add body to garment fabric and to support major design lines. It adds strength and durability to the garment. Underlining can be used to add opaqueness to fabric or to create a special color effect for sheer fabrics. Garments that are underlined are less likely to become baggy in stress areas or to have pulling along seamlines.

Underlining does not add crispness or stiffness to a garment. It does not finish the inside of the garment. Knits usually are underlined only with knit underlining; a woven fabric underlining would limit the stretchability of the knit.

Fabric selected as underlining should be suited to the fashion fabric in wearability, drapability, weight and care required. Its weight should be the same or lighter; the underlining should not overpower the characteristics of the garment fabric.

Patterns seldom specify the use of underlining, but it should be used with garment fabric that appears likely to lose its shape with regular wear. In some instances, only special parts of a garment are underlined—the skirt back or the knee area of pants. Garments may require both interfacing and underlining to create the desired silhouette. When selecting fabrics to be used together, be careful to select those with similar durability and care procedures.

LINE TO PRESERVE GARMENT SHAPE

After the garment's silhouette has been established with interfacing or underlining or both, preserve it.

A lining will help preserve garment shape, especially if it is made slightly smaller than the garment. Use a lining to add a feeling of luxury to the garment, protect the garment fabric from body oils and make wearing a slip unnecessary. Lining gives a finished appearance to the inside of a garment. Wrinkle resistance often is increased when a garment is lined. If the lining fabric is "antistatic," the lining can help eliminate garment cling.

A lining should not add shape to the garment. It is made as a separate unit and then placed inside the garment wrong side to wrong side. It is attached along garment edges. Because the lining covers the garment seam allowances a seam finish is seldom required unless the fabric ravel badly.

Select firmly woven or knitted lining fabric that is lighter weight than the garment fabric. It also should be soft, pliable and smooth, so the finished garment can slip over the body easily.

For a knit garment, the lining fabric may be woven or knit. A woven lining will limit the garment's stretchiness. A knit lining will finish the inside of the garment, but will not affect the fabric's stretchiness.

Select lining fabrics in a color to harmonize or contrast with the garment fabric. However, the lining color should not affect the outside appearance of the finished garment. A printed lining fabric adds a very special fashion touch to any garment.

Be sure the lining fabric selected has care requirements similar to the garment fabric. Use a fabric protector like Scotchgard on lining fabrics to reduce dry cleaning bills. Durability is also important; the lining fabric should have a wear-life as long as that of the garment fabric.

YARDAGE REQUIRED

The pattern envelope usually indicates the amount of interfacing required. Instead of purchasing small amounts of interfacing for individual projects, it may be more economical to purchase at least a yard or more to keep on hand.

Less fabric is wasted when pattern pieces are cut from longer lengths of interfacing.

Lining requirements for jackets and coats can also be found on the pattern envelope. Yardage for underlinings and linings for dresses may not be given. In such cases, purchase the same amount required for the garment.

Table 1 indicates the types of interfacing, underlining and lining fabrics suitable for popular garment fabrics.

Table 1. Interfacing, underlining and lining options for popular garment fabrics.

Garment Fabric	Interfacing	Underlining	Lining
Very light to light-weight cottons, silks, blends, synthetics, voile, lawn, pure silk, lace, sheer, crepe, challis	Light-weight interfacing with soft or crisp finish, permanent press; soft: batiste-type woven or regular, all-bias or one-way stretch, nonwoven; crisp: organdy, organza (for silk), light-weight nonwoven	Light-weight synthetic underlining with soft or crisp finish, permanent press; soft: cotton or synthetic sheath lining; crisp: organdy, organza (for silk), light-weight nonwoven	Silklike rayon or polyester lining, china silk, acetate, sheath lining, light-weight crepe (antistatic)
Medium-weight cottons, synthetics, blends, silks, wools, linens, denim, homespun, poplin, silk linen, flannel	Medium-weight interfacing with soft or crisp finish, permanent press; soft: regular, all bias or one-way stretch. Nonwoven, medium-weight woven; crisp: medium-weight nonwoven, light-weight hair canvas, canvas interfacing, iron-on woven or nonwoven	Medium-weight synthetic underlining with soft or crisp finish, permanent press; soft: light-weight nonwoven; crisp: medium weight taffeta or nonwoven	Acetate sheath lining, polyester lining, medium crepe, silk surah, polished cotton (for cottons and linens), taffeta (anti-static)
Heavy-weight cottons, linens, wools, blends, corduroy, brocade, tweed	Medium- or heavy-weight interfacing with soft or crisp finish, permanent press; soft: heavy-weight canvas; crisp: heavy-weight nonwoven, medium or heavy-weight crisp hair canvas or canvas interfacing, wool/synthetic blends, iron-on woven or nonwoven	Medium- or heavy-weight synthetic underlining with soft or crisp finish, permanent press; crisp: medium or heavy-weight nonwoven	Heavy-weight taffeta, satin, crepe-back satin, medium crepe, silk shantung, rayon twill (antistatic)
Knits, jerseys	Used where stretch is not desired or where support is needed to maintain the shape. Use light or medium fusible knitted, woven or nonwoven interfacing, permanent press, iron-on nonwoven in regular or stretch types.	Knits are very seldom underlined as it limits their natural stretch.	Linings listed above of the appropriate weight. Swimwear linings should have two-way stretch. The lighter weights have more stretch.
Leather, suede and synthetic leather	Woven or nonwoven interfacing, muslin, hair canvas, permanent press	Usually not needed.	Satin, taffeta, vinyl, rayon twill. May place lining on wrong side of pants front in knee area to prevent stretching. Stitch in leg seams, but leave free at top and bottom.

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