

Sewing With Coated Fabrics

from Crafty Chris of Creative U

Vinyl Coated Fabrics are one of our favorites and they're really quite easy to work with when you know a few tips. Here are the things we've found that make it fun!

Preparation

1. Coated fabric can be ironed on the WRONG side, but NEVER on the right side. Use a dry iron and no steam for best results. Ironing on the RIGHT side will result in ruined fabric and the need for a new iron!
2. For the same reasons, fusible interfacing is not suitable for coated fabrics.
3. To transfer pattern markings, try a non-wax tracing paper and a smooth edged tracing wheel.
4. When cutting out or assembling your project, use straight pins sparingly to avoid leaving holes in the coated side of your fabric. Whenever possible, pin into the seam allowance.
5. Coated fabrics no longer have a grain as this has been stabilized by the coating. This also means that your raw edges will not fray and do not need finishing.

Sewing

1. Special thread is not needed and any brand of all-purpose thread will work just fine. Generally a size 12 or 14 sharp point or universal needle and a longer than usual stitch length will be best.
2. Dritz Wash Away Wonder Tape is a great aid to holding your project pieces in place while you are sewing. Use this double-sided tape on the WRONG side of your fabric. It is especially helpful if you need to hold an opening closed while you are stitching.
3. Try stitching a few trial seams on a scrap to find just the right needle and presser foot combination. If your regular presser foot is not advancing the fabric well enough for you, you may want to use a roller or non-stick coated presser foot (available from your machine dealer). You may also want to try applying a cut-to-fit piece of blue painter's or masking tape to the bottom of your presser foot if you do not have another foot option available.
4. Slow down a bit and guide the fabric under the presser foot with your fingers to avoid wrinkles. If you are having difficulty sewing across a seam, guide the machine by hand turning the wheel.
5. Rather than ironing your seams open, finger press the seam allowances to one side. To hold seam allowances in place, edge or top stitch from the right side so that you are catching and holding them in place. This will keep your seams flat and provide a nice, neat finish.

Care

1. To keep your coated fabric clean and spot free, use a soft wet cloth with mild soap or a gentle spray cleaner. Although not recommended by coated fabric manufacturers, if you are careful, you may want to try machine washing a swatch on a gentle cycle with cool water.
2. DO NOT EVER dry coated fabric in a dryer.
3. DO NOT EVER iron coated fabric on the right side. (See Preparation #3 above.)