



Working With Knits

Supplies

- Good quality polyester thread
- Stretch or ball point needles
- Stretch double needles (optional)
- Serger (optional)
- Coverstitch machine (optional)
- Spray starch or corn starch mixture for curly knits (optional)
- painting sponge for corn starch mixture if using (optional)

Many people are hesitant to sew with knits. However, I would venture to say that you are wearing knits much of the time and learning to make knit clothing will be a wonderful way to expand your skills. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could learn the process and make your own knit top or tee shirt? You may never want to go back to buying when you can be the designer of beautiful knits, that surpass the quality of store bought.

These are a few of the types of knits you will find readily available.

Interlock: Can be cotton or polyester. Double knit construction makes this a thicker knit fabric. Interlock is the tightest knit, gives the smoothest surface and the finest hand. Many times both front and back of the fabric look identical. The fabric is extremely soft, firm and absorbent. Uses: High-end tee shirts, tanks, camisoles, receiving blankets, babies' layette items, adult and children's dresses.



Interlock

Rib Knits: A double-knit fabric in which the wales or vertical rows of stitches intermesh alternately on the face and the back. Ribbed knit fabrics of this type have good elasticity. Mostly found in cuffs and neckbands.



Rib Knit

French Terry: French Terry fabric is a knitted terry cloth fabric that features loops and soft piles of yarn on one side, (usually the inside of a garment), and a smooth, soft surface on the other side. The result is an absorbent, light-weight, moisture-wicking material that's super comfortable to wear any day of the year.



French Terry

Lycra/swimsuit/activewear: This fabric has 4 way stretch and is used for swimsuits, dancewear and workout clothing. Of course if you like the look, you can also use it for tops and skirts.



Lycra

Fleece: Good for sweatshirts and blankets. Check for the amount of stretch. Much of the fleece you see at discount stores will not have the stretch needed for clothing. Save these fabrics for blankets.



Fleece

Cotton Jersey: This is a finer single knit known for softness and stretch. This fabric tends to curl and can be difficult to work with



Jersey

Amount of Stretch

On the back of the pattern There will be a guide to determine if the fabric you plan to use has enough stretch. To use this guide, you fold over 4 inches of fabric on the cross grain. (opposite to the selvage edge. Hold up this fabric to the guide and stretch it to meet the stretched line of the guide. If it is hard to stretch it that far, you probably need to find a fabric with more stretch.



Preparing your fabric

Knits tend to shrink - a lot. Pre-wash your fabric in the temperature you plan to wash it after. Dry it how you will dry it later.

Sewing Knits With a Sewing Machine.

Zig Zag Method: If you have the option, decrease your presser foot pressure. This will make less of a chance of the fabric being stretched out while you sew. Use a small zig zag and don't stretch the fabric

as you sew. Start about a half an inch from the top because knits are notorious for dragging down into the throat plate. Come back and sew in the opposite direction to completely close the seam. To decrease the chance of a bird's nest at the beginning of the seam, hold on to both threads at the beginning of the seam.

Hemming: You can always use a simple zig zag to hem the sleeves and bottom edge, but you may like to try a double needle. Just thread 2 threads the same as one and put one thread in each needle. You may need to increase your tension to get a nice zig zag on the back.

Serger Method: If you have stitch differential, increase it one or two settings. This kind of pulls the stitch in and prevents wavy seams. Don't stretch the fabric while serging. Let the feed dogs do the work. Use a closer than average stitch on lighter weight knits and longer stitches on heavy knits.

Coverstitch hemming: I like to start at a seam. I walk my first three stitches before using the presser foot. I end my seams right after the seam, then use an step zig zag set at 0 stitch length perpendicular to the cover stitching to lock in the coverstitch. If you don't have coverstitch capabilities, you can get almost the same look with a double needle.

Patterns: If you are taking the tee shirt class, look on line at <https://www.lovenotions.com> for the Laundry Day Tee shirt. This is a good pattern or one like it with a scoop neck and sleeves.

For the Pencil skirt class we will be using Pirate Pencil Skirt from <https://www.patternsforpirates.com/> that is a free pattern.

Working with curly fabric

Curly fabric can be difficult to work with. The techniques I have used are to starch the fabric edges, or make a mixture of corn starch stabilizer with 1/2 Tbsp corn starch to 1 cup of water. Use a paint sponge and dab it on the edges. Don't stretch it. After it dries you can iron it flat.

Another method is to just use the edge of the serger to flatten out the edges just before serging.