

SEWING TUTORIAL

understanding fabric selection

getting started

Each pattern includes a chart listing the essential components needed to complete your sewing project, including a list of **Suggested Fabrics** recommended by the designer for that specific design. The suggestions are not all-inclusive. With the vast array of fabric types and styles available today, it's impossible to include every suitable option.

The **Suggested Fabrics** provide a helpful starting point and give you a general idea of the types of materials that will work well for your sewing project. That said, when selecting fabric, there are several important factors to consider.

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Average

MISSES' SHIRTDRESS IN THREE LENGTHS

Suggested Fabrics: Cotton Shirting, Crepe, Linen Blends, Taffeta, Twill. **Lining:** Lining Fabric.
Interfacing: Lightweight Fusible.

Closeup of "Suggested Fabrics" contained within full chart



Pattern design options and full chart.

fiber content

You want to take fiber content and its properties into consideration when selecting your fabric.

For example:



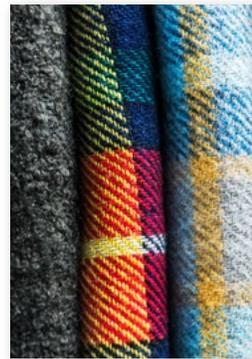
Cotton
is breathable, comfortable
and comes in a variety of
weights.



Linen
is lightweight and
breathable but tends to
wrinkle easily.



Silk
has a luxurious drape and a
smooth texture, but it can be
delicate and expensive.



Wool
is warm and good for winter
garments, but it can be heavy
and itchy.



Polyester
is durable and wrinkle
resistant but tends to be less
breathable.

There are also many Fabric Blends available that can be a great alternative to a single fiber content fabric. Examples of this are cotton/polyester blends which offer cotton's breathability and polyester's durability or silk/woolblends that have silk's softness with wool's warmth and can be less itchy than pure wool. Silky types such as polyester charmeuse give you the drape of silk without the expense.

fabric properties

Fabric properties will affect how your fabric behaves when used to sew a garment.

DRAPE describes how a fabric falls. To test your fabric's drape, gather up a corner of the fabric and see how it hangs from the straight and bias grains. Does it fall in soft folds, or does it stand out more?

HAND refers to the feel of the fabric. It can be crisp, soft, textured, or any other tactile quality.

Photos exemplify different fabric properties using the same blouse pattern



Red Blouse
Made in Crepe de Chine has soft folds and a slightly textured hand.



Taupe Blouse
Made in Silk Charmeuse has stiffer folds and a very smooth hand.

WEIGHT of a fabric should be considered with respect to what item you intend to sew and when you plan on wearing the garment. Lightweight fabrics such as voile, georgette or chiffon are suitable for summertime dresses and tops. Medium-weight fabrics like cotton poplin, crepe or gabardine are very versatile and can be used to create a wide range of garments that can be worn from season to season. Heavyweight fabrics including wool blends, canvas and denim are good for colder weather and garments such as coats, jackets or pants.

STRETCH describes how much a fabric gives in both the crosswise and lengthwise directions. Fabrics that give in only the crosswise direction are said to have two-way stretch and fabrics that give in both the crosswise and lengthwise direction have four-way stretch. Patterns designed for stretch fabric have less ease built into the garment, and if you try to make them in a fabric that doesn't give enough you likely won't be happy with the fit!

Fabric Weights and Common Uses

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	COMMON USES
Light-Weight Fabrics	Thin and airy, often used for summer clothing, linings, and delicate garments.	Voile, Georgette, Chiffon, Organza, Lace, Tulle, Lightweight Linen, Cotton and Cotton Blends, Shirting, Rayon Challis	Tops, Blouses, Dresses, Skirts, Lingerie
Medium-Weight Fabrics	A good balance between durability and drape, suitable for a variety of garments.	Cotton Poplin, Crepe, Gabardine, Midweight Linen, Twill, Flannel, Cotton Jersey, Bamboo Jersey, Sateen, Oxford, Velvet, Taffeta, Charmeuse	Tops, Blouses, Shirts, Dresses, Skirts, Pants, Light-weight Jackets
Heavy-Weight Fabrics	Durable and substantial, ideal for outerwear, workwear, and home decor.	Wool, Wool Blends, Canvas, Denim, Coating, Fleece, Ponte, Jacquard, Brocade	Pants, Jeans, Jackets, Outerwear, Drapery

intended style

Start by studying the fashion photography and sketches on Simplicity.com, the catalog page or the pattern envelope. Notice how the fabric falls in relation to the model's figure.

Some garments require soft, drapery fabrics such as jersey, charmeuse, handkerchief linen, or challis. Other garments call for crisper more structured fabrics like gabardine, suiting weight linen, or taffeta.

Garments intended to be worn for a formal function can utilize fabrics like silk satin, taffeta or brocade to elevate the design, while more casual fabrics like denim and linen are often chosen for everyday wear.

Some styles have been designed for knits only. These styles rely on the stretch properties of knit fabrics such as jersey, or interlock for the proper fit.

Sometimes the list of fabric suggestions will include both fabrics that are crisp, such as taffeta, and fabrics that are softer such as lightweight polyester twill, because the silhouette is versatile enough to be made in either type of fabric. In this case your choice will depend on what aesthetic you prefer.



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Coral Dress

Made in Silk Taffeta has crisp folds that stand away from the body and create a more dramatic appearance.



M8556

Red Floral Dress

Made in Lightweight Polyester Twill has a softer drape and more casual appearance.

skill level

Not all fabrics are created equally; some are easier to work with than others. Beginners can start with easy to sew fabrics like cotton or other lightweight woven fabrics in solid colors or with simple prints.

As you build your sewing skill level you will begin to expand your fabric selections. For example, intermediate sewist may begin to work with fabrics with more drape or a slight stretch like crepe, linen or lightweight wools. Those with advanced skills may consider complex fabrics like silk, fine lace, heavily textured materials or fabrics with intricate patterns that require pattern matching.

For beginner-level patterns shop <https://simplicity.com/collections/easy-to-sew/>



Simple prints often do not require pattern matching

ease of care

Read the care instructions carefully before buying your fabric. Is the fabric for a garment that you plan to machine wash regularly or is it for a special occasion or delicate garment that will be dry cleaned.

Crush a corner of the fabric in your hand. Release it and observe how much it wrinkles. If it wrinkles a lot, will you have time to iron the garment before every wearing? If not, a knit or wrinkle resistant woven may be a better choice.

Fabric should always be laundered (pre-shrunk) according to the care instructions before cutting out your garment so that shrinking or colorfastness will not be an issue on your finished garment.

Care Instructions Examples

How to Care For Cotton Fabrics

Machine-wash warm or cold water, tumble dry. Pull straight from the dryer to prevent wrinkles, or iron while damp. Prewash cotton fabrics before cutting out your patterns

How to Care for Silk Fabric

Dry cleaning is recommended for all silks

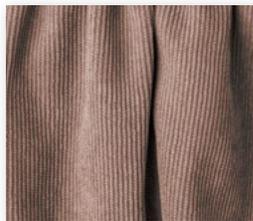
shopping for fabric

Once you have decided what type of fabric to use for your garment, look at the Yardage Chart on the back of the pattern envelope or on [Simplicity.com](https://www.simplicity.com) to find out how much fabric to buy.

For information about the pattern envelope see the video Understanding the Pattern Envelope at <https://simplicity.com/understanding-the-pattern-envelope>

Note that different yardage amounts are listed depending on the width of the fabric. If a garment is made from 45" (115cm) fabric it usually requires more yardage than if it is made from 60" (150cm) fabric. Fabrics with a nap, a texture or design that must go in one direction on the finished garment, require more yardage than a fabric without nap. Some examples of fabrics with a nap are Corduroy, Velvet, and Faux Fur. These fabrics may look different depending on the direction the nap is placed. When using napped fabrics, you will need to be sure to place the pattern pieces in the correct direction on the fabric before you cut.

For more information on working with nap fabrics see video *Choose your Cutting Layout* at: <https://simplicity.com/how-to-choose-your-cutting-layout>



Corduroy



Velvet



Faux Fur

estimating yardage

At times you may want to shop for fabric without having a specific sewing pattern in mind; here is a good way to estimate your fabric yardage

Not every fabric purchase is made with a specific sewing pattern in mind. If you find a fabric you love but aren't sure what you will do with it, use the chart to easily estimate the amount of yardage to buy.

PROJECT	45" FABRIC	60" FABRIC
LONG -SLEEVE SHIRT	2 – 2 ½ yards	1¾ yards
FULL LONG-SLEEVE BLOUSE	2 ½ – 3 yards	2 ¼ yards
SHORT-SLEEVE SHIRT/BLOUSE	Subtract ⅜ yard from measurement above	Subtract ⅜ yard from measurement above
STRAIGHT SKIRT	2x desired finished skirt length plus ¼ yard	2x desired finished skirt length plus ¼ yard
A-LINE OR GATHERED SKIRT	2x desired finished skirt length plus ¼ yard (bottom width up to 80 inches)	2x desired finished skirt length plus ¼ yard (bottom width up to 115 inches)
JACKET	2 ¼ – 3 yards	1¾ – 2 ½ yards
PANTS	2 ½ – 2¾ yards	1 ½ yards
DRESS (42" LONG)	3 – 3¼ yards	2 – 2 ¼ yards
DRESS (46" LONG)	3¼ – 3 ½ yards	2½ – 2¾ yards
DRESS (50" LONG)	3 ½ – 3¾ yards	2 ¼ – 2 ⅝ yards

NOTE: These estimates are based on a misses' size 14 and a height of 5'5". Larger or taller sizes may need additional yardage.

final tips

Think about what notions are required for the garment.

To ensure a close color match, you may want to purchase these at the same time as you buy your fabric. Also note how many yards of interfacing, lining, or trim you may need to buy. As you select these items keep your fabric selection in mind and check the labels for care requirements. You do not want to buy fabric that can be machine washed and lining that needs to be dry cleaned!

When you keep all these things in mind, you will be able to select the right fabric for any project!



Remember to check out our Sewing Tutorials at [Simplicity.com](https://simplicity.com) where you will find videos on different construction methods and sewing techniques to help you build your sewing skills.

<https://simplicity.com/sewingtutorials>

