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### **What is interfacing?**

Essential ingredients in professionally finished garments, interfacings add shape, support and stability. Selecting one may be confusing at times. Interfacing is the inside material that supports and reinforces the outer, or fashion fabric. Interfacings can be woven or non woven, sew in or fusible. Interfacings that are too light will not provide the required support. Interfacings that are too heavy will distort the shape of the garment. Interfacings are applied in a facing, collar, cuff, placket, pocket, flap lapel and waistband.

Although the choice between a sew-in and a fusible interfacing is usually a matter of personal preference, the fashion fabric may be the determining factor. Certain fabrics, including rayon and acetate velvet, fake fur, synthetic leather, open work lace and mesh. Vinyl, rainwear, textured brocades and heat set plisses may not be suitable for fusing. Some fabrics with water repellent or stain resistant finishes may also reject the fusing process.

Sew-in interfacings are basted in place and the permanently stitched into the garment during the construction process. Fusible's have a shiny resin on one side that causes them to bond to the fashion fabric when you apply the manufacturers recommended combination of heat, steam, time and pressure. While most interfacings bond when ironed at the wool setting, several new ones designed for sensitive and super fine fabrics will bond at the lower silk setting. Fusible's are necessarily faster than sew-ins because time at the sewing machine is exchanged for time at the ironing board.

With a sew-in, drape the interfacing and the fashion fabric over your hand and observe how they interact. Performing a fuse test is the only true way to determine the interaction between a fusible interfacing and your fashion fabric. If you are considering a fusible and a sew-in that appear to be the same weight, then one might create a slightly more crisp affect than the other.

Conduct a fuse test by bonding a small piece of interfacing to your fabric. Let it condition (dry undisturbed) for about an hour, then drape the fabric over your hand. Its helpful to keep several yards of a verity of weights and types of interfacing on hand. In the long run this is more economical than the wasted yardage that occurs when you by interfacing on a project by project basis.

#### **Interface like the pros:**

Ensure that the interfacing requires the same care as the fabric. For example a permanent press interfacing does not belong in a silk blouse and dry clean only hair canvas is a poor choice for a jacket that will be washed. Select a dark interfacing for dark fabrics and a white or beige product for light coloured fabrics. This avoids interfacing show-through, this also prevents any chance of contrast along the cut edges of a buttonhole and gives the inside of a garment a more pleasing appearance.

Save an interfaced square of each garment and label it with the name of the product. These squares will provide a quick reference for future interfacing decisions.

Sandwich aluminium foil between your ironing board and its cover to serve as a heat conductor.

Anchor tricky areas where fabric and fusible may shift by positioning the materials with straight pins into the fabric and the ironing board.

**To find out more please visit [www.TheSewingGuru.com](http://www.TheSewingGuru.com)**