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What is the best fabric to use for a standard sewing project?

When it comes to fabric and choosing the best cloth for a certain project, there are guide lines as to what fabric is best matched to what project but these are only a guide and it is up to you whether you follow it or not. The whole idea of sewing and making your own garments is to be creative and to leave a personal stamp on your sewing project. Remember that you are making the garment so you have the last say. Most catwalk shows that you see in magazines or on television are a way for the designers to express themselves and for marketing their brand. The garments can get very elaborate and very much over the top but they are only expressing and experimenting what they can achieve with fabric. The garments that you will see on the high street are very watered down versions of the experimental outfits that you would see on the catwalk. It's a way for the designers to be remembered if they do something outrageous.

There are various fabrics which are best made for various garments. A suit will be made out of a suiting such as wool or a wool mix, A dress is best made from floaty fabrics for that feminine touch and if you were going to a hot country, then linen is a perfect choice.

Here are some pointers to what fabrics go well with certain garments.

Cashmere makes a beautiful jacket or coat. Knitted cashmere makes a nice sweater top, cardigan, gored skirt or a luxurious bathrobe.

Corduroy is derived from the french *cordon du roi*, which means cord of kings. Corduroy is suitable for waistcoats (vests), straight skirts, tailored shirts, structured jackets, trousers, and children's clothes. Corduroy is especially flattering in dark colours on adults. When you are sewing with corduroy you should always sew in the direction of the pile.

Cotton Look for very fine weaves in 100% cotton shirting for the most luxurious to wear and finest quality. Cotton is suitable for tailored shirts and pyjamas. Stretch cotton is suitable for T shirts. Cotton shirting is very easy to sew with.

Denim is the work horse of cotton fabrics. Suitable for jeans, casual jackets, straight skirts, shirts, upholstery and pillows. Denim comes in two weights, lightweight denim is better for shirts and dresses while heavy weight denim is better for trousers (pants) straight skirts and jackets.

Linen is a crisp fabric that doesn't drape. The biggest mistake people make with linen is using the wrong weight for their project, such as heavy weight linen for a blouse or tissue weight for trousers. Observe linen weights used in ready to wear and choose the weight for your project accordingly. Linen is suitable for dresses, trousers, loose shirts and jackets.

Satin While all satins have a sheen, satins of different fibre content differ in drape-ability and stitch performance. Rayon is the drapiest, silk is the next and polyester the least. Both rayon and silk give better stitch results than polyester. Polyester and rayon tend to water spot, while silk does not. Satin is most often used for bridal or dressy occasion garments. Satin is suitable for blouses, full dresses and jacket linings. Use polyester satin only if you are cold natured as it does not breathe.

Silk comes in many forms such as: Silk Brocade, Silk Charmeuse, Silk chiffon, Silk crepe de chine, Silk dupion, Silk gazar, Silk georgette, Silk noil, Silk organza, Silk sand-washed, Silk shantung, Silk thai, Silk tussah and Silk tweed, Silk is suitable for numerous garments such as jackets, trousers, blouses, waistcoats, dresses, skirts and tailored shirts. Make sure you get the weight correct to match the garment that you are going to make.

Woolens and Worsteds Woolens are softer, fuzzier, have more nap, more stretch, and appear spongier than worsteds. Worsteds are harder, smoother, stronger and more lustrous. They also hold a crease and drape better. Wool worsteds are suitable for jackets, trousers, waistcoats and generally tailored garments.

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