

Knit Knowledgey

With such a variety of knits to choose from, a little knit-knowledge will help. Each type of knit has its own wearability, careability and sewability. So before buying your knitted fabrics, take a minute and brush up on your Knit IQ.

Boiled Wool Knit:

A very heavy fabric that was first knitted, then carefully shrunk into a wonderfully condensed fabric that looks like a woven. Limited amount of stretch.

Boucle Knit:

A texture rasher knit made with a loopy boucle' yarn. It appears in a variety of weights from lightweight dress fabrics to heavy coating fabrics. Limited amount of stretch.

Chenille Knit:

A form of stretch terry containing tufted, velvety chenille type yarns. Moderate amount of stretch.

Double Knit:

Fabric is made by using a double set of needles to produce a double thickness of fabric. Both sides usually look the same. Excellent body, good shape retention, and limited stretch.

Interlock Knit:

Fabric is made on a circular knitting machine and formed by interlocking looped stitches. They are similar to jersey but both sides usually look the same. Fabrics can have a tendency to run. Good crosswise stretch.

Jacquard Knit:

Fabric with complex designs and textures. Can be a single knit, double knit, or rib knit. Limited to moderate amount of stretch.

Jersey Knit:

A single knit has a smooth flat surface with definite right and wrong sides. The right side is smooth and has lengthwise vertical rows; the back has horizontal rows of half-circles or purl knit stitches. These fabrics have moderate stretch and stretch more in the width direction than in the length.

Raschel Knit:

Textured knit that has a smooth flat surface with definite right and wrong sides. The right side is smooth and has lengthwise vertical rows; the back has horizontal rows of half-circles or purl knit. Moderate stretch and stretch more in the width direction than in length.

Rib Knit:

A single knit with prominent vertical ribs on both the front and back of the fabric. It has excellent stretch in the crosswise direction. Rib knit is most often used for cuffs and waistbands.

Stable Knit:

These knits have limited degrees of stretch but move with the body better than wovens. They have good shape retention and wrinkle resistance. They can generally be sewn with the same techniques used for woven fabrics.

Stretchable Knit:

These knits with excellent stretch and recovery. Since they stretch over the body curves, they are used when a closer fit is desired. They may be considered less stable and require special handling during construction.

Stretch Terry:

A knitted fabric with a dense pile formed by small loops. It has excellent stretch.

Sweater Knit:

A loosely knit fabric with the look of a sweater. It can be a stable rasher knit or a stretchable plain or rib knit.

Swimwear Knit:

Natural or manufactured fibers are combine with 7% to 105% Lycra® spandex for added stretch and improved recovery. These knits are treated with a special finish to prevent sun, sand, and chlorine damage. They stretch in both lengthwise and crosswise directions.

Tricot Knit:

A flat simple knit known for its softness and drapability. It has a definite right and wrong side with vertical wales on the front and crosswise ribs on the back. It has limited lengthwise stretch and moderate crosswise stretch.

IMPORTANT: There are a few silhouettes that aren't suitable for knit fabrics. Check the back of the pattern envelope for recommended fabrics and type of knit. Be sure to use the stretch gauge for pattern if one is provided.

Source: Butterick Home Catalog Summer, 1986