

## Selecting & Using Supportive Fabrics, Linings, Underlinings & Interlinings

**LINING** -- a separate, but attached, supportive or inner garment fabric or fabric construction which conceals or covers the inside garment construction.

Garments may be fully or only partially lined; completely or partially attached to the fashion garment. Linings are used in most tailored garments; however, they are not confined to use in these garments alone! A lining eliminates the need for time-consuming seam finishes and reduces "wear and tear" on the inside garment

construction. It will lengthen the life and durability of a garment. A lining provides some body and support to a garment, but it never takes the place of interfacing. It often makes the garment easier to wear over other clothing--as in a jacket or coat; it can eliminate the need for some undergarments such as a slip--as in a dress or skirt.



### Fabric Selection

There are a multitude of fabrics suitable for use as a lining. The deciding factors include:

- 1) type of fashion fabric (weight, fiber content/method of care, hand or "feel," personal likes and dislikes)
- 2) type and style of garment
- 3) type of lining--partial or complete; and how the lining will be attached.

Fabrics may be woven or knit; they should be able to "give" and recover as necessary to accommodate body movement. The lining fabric should be durable, opaque, colorfast to perspiration and body oils and the same care method as the fashion fabric. Lining should match or harmonize in color with the fashion fabric, and have a smooth surface texture to permit the garment to be taken on and off the body easily.

**It is important that the lining be the same weight** (a lightweight polyester or microfiber jacket or dress) **or lighter weight** (wool slacks or suit) **and softer than the fashion fabric so that it does not dominate the garment.**

Lining fabric should be preshrunk before using following the same procedure you plan to use for the finished garment.

### Purchasing Tips

Pay very close attention to fiber content and fabric weave as they provide some very important clues to lining durability. If garment is to be worn close to the body--i.e. dress--be sure lining is absorbent or "breathable." This often eliminates some synthetic linings made of polyester, nylon, etc. Rayons, rayon/acetate blends or cotton may be more comfortable. Purchase or invest in the highest quality lining available. Although it can be replaced, re-lining a garment is time-consuming!

**UNDERLINING** -- a supportive or inner garment fabric which "backs," or is attached to, each major garment piece (jacket front, jacket back, sleeve, etc.).

The underlining and fashion fabric function together as one piece throughout the construction process. The entire garment or only parts of the garment may be underlined depending on the garment design, fashion fabric and the chief function of the underlining. Underlining can give support and shape, prevent sagging and stretching, add crease resistance, provide evenness of color when the fashion fabric is not opaque or firmly woven, and help create certain fashion detail effects. It is not designed to take the place of interfacing. A combination of underlining and lining maybe used in a garment. Underlining should be preshrunk. Use the same grain as corresponding garment pieces unless a separate pattern is included.

**Fabric Selection:** The weight of the underlining is usually lighter, but compatible to the fashion fabric. Underlining and the fashion fabric must be compatible in terms of care. Examples of underlinings include voile, organza, lightweight polyester/cotton blends, silk, muslin, lightweight percales, batiste, fusible tricot, and some commercial lining fabrics. Underlining should be preshrunk before using.

**INTERLINING** --- a separate layer of fabric or fabric construction between the lining and the fashion fabric generally for warmth. Interlining is usually cut by the same pattern as the lining. In the case of foam, fleece or felt-type fabric which adds some bulk, lining would need to be cut some larger to accommodate interlining. Interlining does not take the place of interfacing.

**Fabric Selection:** Some lining fabrics are backed with or come with interlining substances: a metallic reflective finish, backed with wool, quilted, or napped-backed lining fabrics, etc. Bulk often becomes a serious consideration; "warmth without weight" is another. Interlinings must be compatible with all other fabrics in the garment in terms of care.

## References

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[selecting supportive fabs.doc.wpd [Disk: LMH Construction #1]  
Revised January 2018.

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