

## SOFT FLUID FABRICS

Soft fluid fabrics are those that are lightweight and supple. They require special care in handling since they may shift, stretch, and ravel. These fabrics are lovely, but take patience.

If the fabric is a knit, such as jersey or tricot, remember it can stretch in one or both directions. Jersey also runs, and both jersey and tricot are easily snagged by rough surfaces and hands.

Soft lightweight woven fabrics, such as crepe, are also classified as fluid fabrics. They come in many textures, fibers, and fabrics.

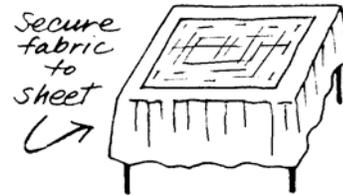
### PATTERN SELECTION

When selecting a pattern, remember to let the fabric speak for itself. Select a pattern that is softly draped and loosely fitted. Your best guide will be a pattern that recommends the use of a soft fabric. If using a knitted fabric avoid a pattern with a circular skirt or one that is bias cut, as the fabric will stretch creating an uneven hemline.

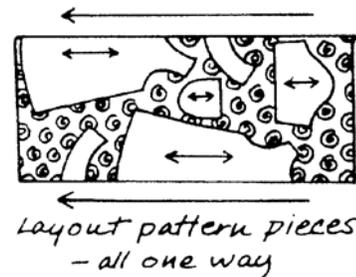
### FABRIC PREPARATION

- Launder fabrics that are washable to relax the yarns and to remove excess finishing.
- Press to remove fold lines
- Fold woven fabrics matching selvages and carefully fold along a lengthwise rib when using knit fabrics.

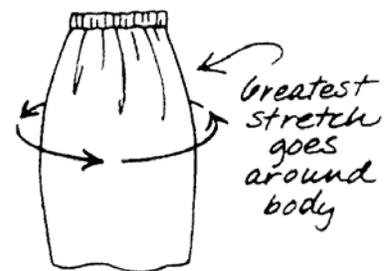
- If very slippery, pin to a sheet to help stabilize.



- Lay pattern pieces as if you are working with a napped fabric. Use a "With nap" layout view.



- Position pattern pieces so that the greatest stretch in knit goes around the body.



- When working with knits, crepes, and dark wovens lay all pattern pieces in the same direction to avoid directional shading.
- If knit fabric runs, place the pattern pieces so the runs will be up the garment, not down. This technique eliminates the possibility of a run from

the neck or sleeve down. Runs are easier to control at hemlines.



## INTERFACING SELECTION AND USE

Interfacing helps to maintain the garment's original design lines. The correct interfacing fabric(s) should not change the drape or feel of the fabric. Always check a small sample of interfacing on a scrap of fabric before making a final decision. Check the hand of the fabric and the appearance.

Fusible interfacings are frequently not suitable for soft fluid fabrics. However, there are some featherweight interfacings on the market that will work with some soft fluid fabrics. When possible, use a knit interfacing with knit fabrics.

## CONSTRUCTION HINTS

### Grain

It is very important to maintain the proper grain. Soft fluid fabric shows off-grain pattern placement more easily in the hang of the garment. Take care that doubled fabric does not shift.

### Layout

Do not let the fabric hang over the table surface during layout. Use weights to hold the pattern in place **OR** pin only in the seam allowance using very fine silk pins. Determine the type of seam finish you want to use before you begin cutting. You may need to allow for a wider seam allowance.

### Cutting

Consider placing the fabric edges between lightweight tissue paper to support it and to prevent slippage of the

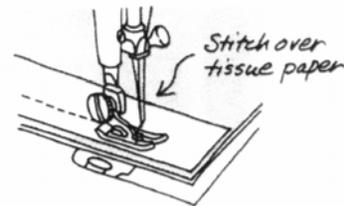
fabric. Be sure shears have smooth blades (no snags). Take long cuts.

### Marking

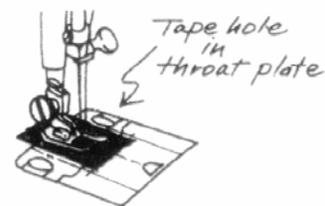
Pins, chalk, soap slivers, or tailor's tacks may be used. Avoid any method that could stretch the fabric, accurate markings are always important.

### Machine Stitching

Carefully staystitch curved areas – neckline, armhole, shoulder, and waistline. Be sure to stitch with the grain. Use a new fine sewing machine needle, size 9 – 11 (60 & 70), with 10 to 12 stitches per inch. A universal or ball point needle should be used on knits. Hold the seam taut, but do not stretch. If seams are puckering, stitch over tissue paper or use a very narrow zigzag stitch.



Be sure to hold threads behind and under the presser foot as you begin stitching. If you have skipped stitches, check the needle for rough edges, and/or place a tape over the throat plate so that only a



small hole is made for the needle to go through. Never stitch over pins as they can damage soft fabrics.

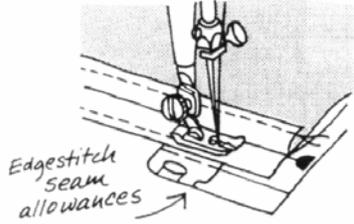
### Fitting

Be careful when fitting garments made of soft fluid fabrics. Making changes and ripping out fabric may result in needle holes left in the fabric.

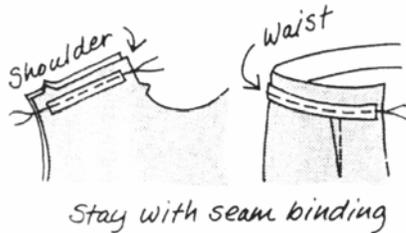
### Seams and Finishes

It may be necessary to edge stitch the edges of the fabric to help prevent the fabric from curling. Consider a turned

under and edge stitched finish or using a narrow French seam.

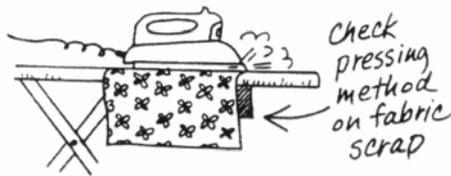


Shoulder seams (except dolman, raglan, kimono) and waist seams are to be stayed with preshrunk woven seam binding or stay tape to prevent stretching.



**Pressing**

Always check the pressing method on a scrap. These fabrics require light pressure to avoid seam imprints and "flattening" of the fabric. Some soft fluid



fabrics cannot be steam pressed, since they may water spot.

**Zippers**

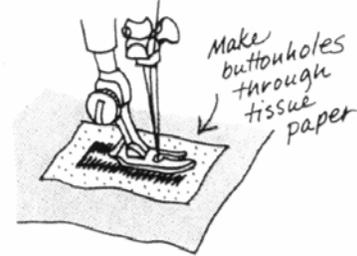
A soft fluid fabric needs a soft zipper. To check the flexibility of a zipper, hold by one end and see how it bends. The more it bends, the more flexible it is and the better suited it is to this type of fabric.

Avoid using metal teeth zippers. Be sure to preshrink the zipper. A hand-picked zipper application looks best in these fabrics.



**Buttons and Buttonholes**

Select a very lightweight button so it is compatible with the soft fluid fabric. Machine buttonholes are most frequently used. However, be sure your fabric can support the extra stitching. To prevent stretching, make the buttonholes through tissue paper or a water-soluble stabilizer. Always interface areas where buttons and buttonholes are to be placed.



**Hems**

Let the garment hang at least 24 hours before marking the hem. After marking, trim to an even length. Edge stitch to prevent runs in knit fabrics. Hem with a narrow rolled hem applied by hand, or a narrow topstitched hem is recommended.



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April 2006

