

**QUILTING COTTONS**

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perforating the finish. Start with a fresh needle in your machine

Use only sew-in interfacings, as the heat needed for fusibles can cause damage to the finish.

To hold seams open, fingerpress or use a wooden pressing stick. Even the slightest heat from an iron will sometimes melt the coating. Then topstitch seams to hold them in place. Slick finishes can stick to the presser foot and create uneven stitches. Easily solved: use a non-stick presser foot for smooth stitching. If you don't have one, put painter's tape on your regular foot's underside.

On home décor or craft projects, laminates, vinyl, and oilcloth edges can be finished simply by using decorative scissors

or rotary cutter blades to create a pinked, scalloped, or wavy edge. The coating keeps the fabrics from raveling.

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Perfect for everything from casual totes and picnic cloths to summer sundresses, cotton prints and solids are some of the easiest fabrics to sew, so they're perfect for beginners.

Preshrinking is optional, as most of today's quality cottons don't shrink much, if at all. However, if you're using dark and light colors together, it's good to prewash the darks to avoid color transfer. Wash, dry, and press fabrics before cutting.

Except for one-way prints, you can cut

cottons using the without nap layout. If you are working with a large print or a well-defined motif, match the pattern in areas where a mismatch would be obvious, like a center front closure.

When sewing cottons, use a cotton or polyester/cotton-blend thread, a universal needle, and a medium-length stitch. Exposed seam allowances can be serged, zigzagged, double stitched, or simply pressed open.

To help stabilize bias seams, spray the fabric with a starch alternative to keep edges from stretching while sewing. Mary Ellen's Best Press is wonderful for this and can also be used on a finished project to add some crispness during the final press.