



## A GUIDE TO OUR APPAREL FABRICS

We hope that this guide will be helpful for those of you who are new to knits, new to sewing, or even just new to a certain type of fabric.

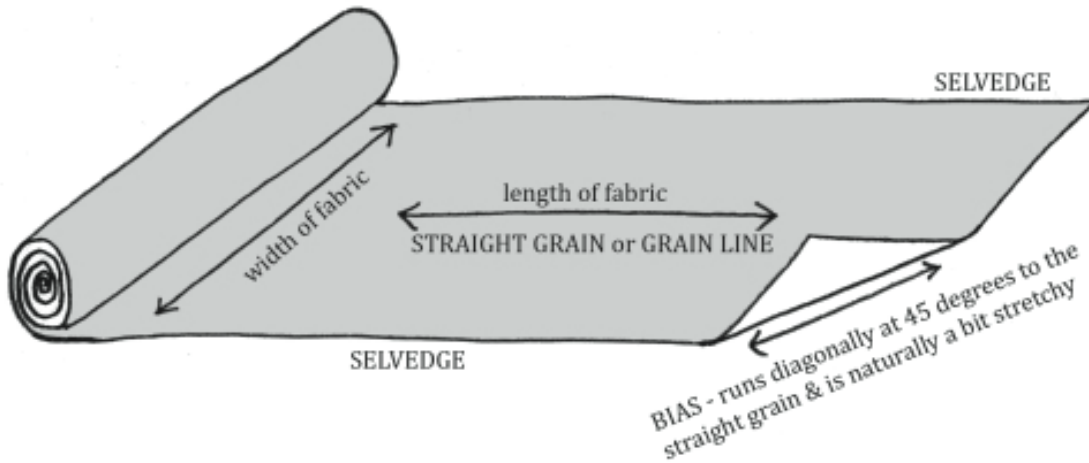
Shopping online can be very difficult when you can't physically touch a fabric. It's hard for us to compare some of our knit fabrics to those in big fabric stores because they simply don't sell the same types of knits that we do. We're working on being able to offer sample swatches, but in the meantime we're going to do our best to explain here! If you're a visual person, we also have a video that was put together by our admin, Chey, going over a majority of our fabrics: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3owclTa0p7IjgRN00HVgcw>

If you're purchasing fabric for a specific use, it's best to look at your pattern and see what the fabric requirements are. There are four main considerations when choosing fabric: WEIGHT, STRETCH, RECOVERY, and CONTENT.

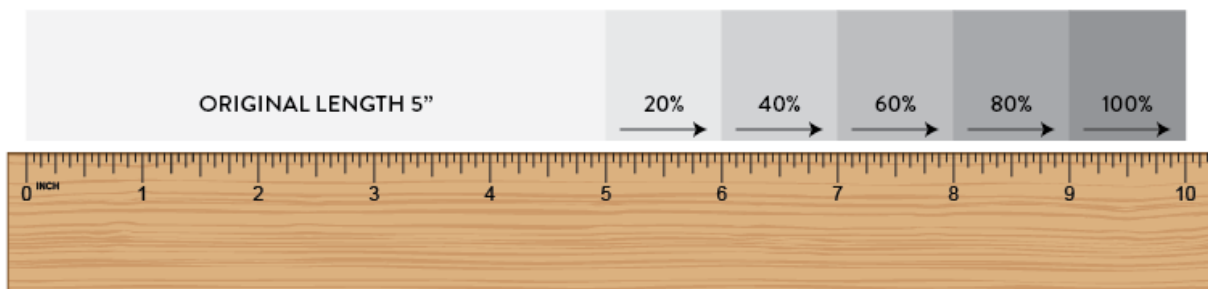
**WEIGHT** is determined by the physical weight of one yard of fabric: 36" in *length*, and a large majority of knits are 55"-60" in *width* (SSE fabrics fall in this range unless we specifically state otherwise). The weight will give you an idea of how thick a fabric is. Here at SSE, we state if a fabric is light, medium, or heavy weight. Weight can also be measured in GSM (grams per square meter): the higher the number, the heavier the fabric.

**STRETCH** will refer to whether the fabric has 2-way or 4-way stretch and the stretch percentage is important for certain patterns as well. 2-way stretch means it only stretches across the grainline, while 4-way means it stretches

both across the grainline and with the grainline. Woven fabrics (non-knits!) will not have stretch in either direction but will have a *small* bit of stretch across the bias (diagonally).



\*HOW TO CALCULATE STRETCH PERCENTAGE: Different patterns require a different amount of stretch. As you're preparing your pattern, double check your fabric too by making sure it has the amount of stretch you need and that you're cutting the correct direction. To calculate the stretch percentage: fold the fabric over so you have 2 layers of fabric (fabric will stretch differently at the edge, so test in the middle of your cut), hold your fabric at the edge and at 5" and hold it against a ruler. Gently pull and see what number the fabric will stretch to. If it stretches to the 6" mark, then your fabric has 20% stretch. (Note: this ruler is not to scale, it is merely a visual aid.)



**RECOVERY** is how well your fabric "bounces back" after it's stretched. Recovery is important! Think of the cuffs on a sleeve, or the waistband on a pair of pants. You really don't want those to "stretch out" and be loose. Another great example: leggings! You don't want the bum or knees to be saggy

after you've worn them for an hour, so chose fabric with the right recovery for your project.

**CONTENT** will vary per the fabric type. If we know the percentages of the content, we will state them in the description area of each fabric listing on our website so you know exactly what is in the fabric you're buying. For example, a fabric could say: 95% polyester, 5% spandex. There are rare times when we do not have exact content percentages.

## **\*OUR FABRICS!\***

### **\*POLYESTER SPANDEX KNITS**

There are several different types of polyester spandex! Watch for the type and percentage of stretch on these fabrics, as well as their recommended uses to see the differences.

**SINGLE/DOUBLE BRUSHED POLY** (aka SBP or DBP): Brushed poly is knit fabric that's either brushed on one side (single brushed) or on both sides (double brushed). The brushed side feels slightly fuzzy, but it's *incredibly* soft. Brushed poly has wonderful drape, stretch, and recovery (ours is 96/4 poly/spandex).

What you can make: leggings, tops, dresses, skirts, and all kinds of kids clothing! You can wear it year round, depending on the garment- skirts, capri leggings and tanks work great for summer while long sleeves and full leggings are awesome for winter.

**ITY** (stands for Interlock Twist Yarn): ITY is a beautiful, drapery knit. It's slightly silky feeling and referred to as a "dressy" knit. Beautiful drape, stretch, and recovery.

What you can make: Dresses, skirts, and flowy tops

**JEGGING:** This knit is stiffer than most knits. It resembles jean fabric in looks but has some stretch to it (stretch % will vary depending on the exact fabric). Some jegging material is thinner and good for leggings, some is thicker and more suitable for pants. Stretch, drape, and recovery varies.

What you can make: Depending on thickness and stretch- leggings, pants, shorts, jackets, vests, etc.

**OTHER:** There are other poly spandex fabrics out there- for example "Cotton Style Jersey" is a poly spandex blend but it's a little heavier and feels like cotton, but isn't. Drapes nicely, not all kinds have good recovery so fitted

clothing like leggings aren't generally recommended. Most double knits are a poly spandex blend too- those are further down in their own section.

What you can make: Tops, skirts, and dresses.

### **\*SWEATER KNITS**

Nearly all sweater knit is a poly spandex blend. Sweater knit typically varies in the weave. Open weaves are very loose and see through.

**HACCI** is a super stretchy sweater knit with a semi-closed weave that comes in many weights: light, medium, and heavy weight.

**BABY HACCI** more closed than hacci, super soft and has good stretch.

What you can make: Cardigans and long sleeved tops.

### **\*RAYON SPANDEX**

Rayon is broad category of synthetic viscose fibers. There are different types of rayon and they depend on the type of plant it is made from.

**RAYON** is mainly made from wood pulp.

**MODAL** is made from beech tree fibers.

**BAMBOO** is made from bamboo plants.

Modal and bamboo feel slightly more "luxurious" than typical rayon spandex. I also feel like they don't pill as easily with wash and wear like typical rayon spandex does (its just the nature of the fabric- see care instructions at the end to see how to prolong its life!). Drape is gorgeous, stretch is great, recovery depends on the type- normal rayon spandex doesn't have great recovery, modal and bamboo are better but not suitable for fitted clothing like leggings.

What you can make: Flowy tops, skirts, and dresses. Lining hoods and cuffs.

### **\*COTTON SPANDEX**

Also known as Cotton Lycra- Lycra is just a brand name for spandex, but they're the same thing. Cotton is typically easy to dye. It has great stretch and recovery; the drape is decent but not as "flowy" as other, lighter knits.

What you can make: Leggings, tops, dresses, cuffs. It's especially good for children's clothing as it's pretty durable.

### **\*FRENCH TERRY**

Most all of our French Terry is a poly rayon spandex blend and is a light medium weight. It's smooth and soft on one side and has tiny, soft loops on

the wrong side. It has good drape and stretch, but the recovery isn't the greatest.

What you can make: Cardigans, lightweight hoodies, joggers, dresses, long sleeve tops.

## **\*DOUBLE KNITS**

There are several types of double knit. These are structured, stable knits that have more body than normal knits.

**LIVERPOOL:** Liverpool is poly spandex blend that is textured on the right side of the fabric and smooth on the wrong side. It's typically 2-way stretch. Great stretch and good thick drape, as well as good recovery.

What you can make: Pencil skirts, peplum tops, full circle skirts, blazers.

**SCUBA:** Scuba is another poly spandex blend that is smooth on both sides. It's thick and has great stretch and good thick drape, as well as good recovery. It typically only has 2-way stretch.

What you can make: Pencil skirts, peplum tops, full circle skirts, blazers.

**PONTE:** Ponte is made up of poly spandex but is sometimes spun with rayon and cotton as well. It has stiff stretch and good thick drape, as well as good recovery.

What you can make: Pencil skirts, peplum tops, full circle skirts, blazers, pants.

## **\*PERFORMANCE & SWIM KNITS**

These fabrics can be interchangeable at times. They are made in blends of poly spandex, nylon spandex, or poly nylon spandex. The presence of nylon makes for a "stiffer" stretch and is most frequently used in swimwear. These fabrics have great stretch and recovery as they are made to stretch with you as you move and return to their original shape.

What you can make: Workout clothing and swimwear.

## **\*WOVENS**

Woven fabric is made differently than knits and rarely, if ever, has vertical or horizontal stretch to it. There will be a slight amount of stretch across the bias (diagonally).

**CREPE** has a "wrinkled" texture to it.

**PEACHSKIN** is smooth and incredibly soft.

**CHIFFON** is a lightweight and sheer woven fabric.

**RAYON CHALLIS** is soft and almost feels like t-shirt material but doesn't stretch.

What you can make: Woven fabrics make great skirts and dresses, some tanks and tops are also great in wovens (think: button ups, professional and "dressy" clothing). Many kid's clothes are great in woven as well.

## **\*FABRIC CARE GUIDE\***

Different fabric should be cared for in different ways. If you're ever unsure of how to wash or dry a fabric, test a scrap piece and see how it does but I usually default to washing on cold and hanging dry or tumble drying.

We *always* recommend pre-washing your fabric so that any dirt or chemicals from manufacturing, shipping, cutting, and handling are removed before it is sewn and worn. Although synthetic fabrics have little to no shrinkage, cotton fabrics, fabrics with natural fibers (like rayon) and many wovens will shrink slightly. You don't want to spend your time cutting and sewing only to have the garment shrink in the first wash!

\*Try to always avoid washing fabrics with jeans and towels- they are abrasive and can cause pilling as well.

**COTTON:** Cotton can handle being washed in all temperatures & dried on low or hung to dry. Separate like colors and use a color catcher (found in the laundry aisle of nearly any big store) to prevent dye bleeds. Iron: medium to hot or steam.

**BRUSHED POLY:** Wash on warm or cold & hang dry or tumble dry. Iron on VERY low or steam on low.

**RAYON SPANDEX:** Wash on cold & tumble dry or lay flat to dry. Modal can handle warm washes, but cold will help it last longer. To prevent pilling- wash the garment inside out. Iron: turn inside out and steam on rayon setting.

**NYLON:** Wash on warm & hang dry or tumble dry. Iron: steam on medium.

**SWEATER KNIT:** Wash on cold & tumble dry or lay flat to dry (if you hang sweater knits they will stretch out).

**WOVEN:** Wash on warm & tumble dry. Remove promptly from the dryer and you shouldn't have any wrinkling but you can iron out wrinkles on low.