

STABILIZERS FOR EMBROIDERY DESIGNS

Tear-away

For most designs a medium weight tear-away will be sufficient. This stabilizer is best for designs stitched on a woven fabric and that are not too stitch intensive. This type of stabilizer is also used for some “in-the-hoop” projects because it tears away clean and does not have to be washed. Be sure to use a tear-away that tears cleanly and does not leave a fuzzy edge especially when creating “in-the-hoop” projects. If the fabric or placement is too difficult for you to hoop use a temporary spray adhesive with the tear-away.

Sticky-back Tear-away

If you prefer not to use spray adhesive, a sticky-back tear-away works great when you can't hoop the garment or bulky towel, for example. Some have an adhesive, like a sticker, and some are activated by water. If you are using sticky back or wet-and-stick stabilizers, always test it on a scrap of fabric to be sure it doesn't leave residue and tears away cleanly. If you do not like the results, use the spray adhesive method discussed above.

Cut-away

This type of stabilizer stays behind the embroidery design indefinitely to help hold the stitches. There are a few different weights of cut-away: a light-weight or no-show mesh, a medium-weight, and a heavy-weight. The No-show Mesh version works great on light-weight knit or stretchy fabrics and is also used in the quilt

CHOOSING STABILIZERS FOR YOUR PROJECTS

blocks. See Stabilizers for Quilting Designs for more info. The medium and heavy weights are best used on thicker knits, thick sweatshirts, or if a design is very stitch intensive (over 50,000 stitches).

Water-soluble

Water-soluble stabilizers are great for creating freestanding embroidery designs. Be sure to look for versions that are fibrous, meaning they look like a dryer sheet versus clear like a piece of plastic wrap. We find these fibrous water-soluble stabilizers do not stretch and perforate while stitching and produce much better freestanding embroidery designs.

Topping

There are two types of topping; water-soluble and heat-away. Toppings are used when stitching fabrics that have a lot of texture. You do not need to use a topping on regular cotton. Water-soluble comes in handy as a topping for difficult fabrics like minky, fleece, and waffle weave or when embroidering on garments like sweaters or sweatshirts. When using this, make sure the fabric you use can get wet. Heat-away or melt away topping is best used on towels or terry cloth since it remains underneath the embroidery after use and washing. This topping also works well on fabrics you cannot wet, like velvet or velour.

STABILIZERS FOR QUILTING DESIGNS

Since the Mix & Match quilting designs are stitched directly on stabilizer, using the correct stabilizer

is very important. We recommend using a light-weight or No-show Mesh cut-away stabilizer as the base. To insure optimum embroidery results hoop the stabilizer as tight as possible. These designs need to have a stable base.

Light stitch designs have less than 15,000 stitches. Folded fabric designs and free motion designs fall into this category as well. Medium stitch designs are designs with 15,000-40,000 stitches. That category includes most of the Mix & Match Designs. All of these types of designs only require one layer of No-show Mesh Stabilizer.

Heavy stitch designs are designs with more than 40,000 stitches. Use two layers of No-show Mesh and you may also need to back the fabric with fusible interfacing.

INTERFACING

Some fabrics may require a little extra stability. The more durable your fabric is, the better your results will be. If you are concerned about the durability of your fabric (or if you'd just rather be safe than sorry), we recommend using a fusible interfacing, which will eliminate puckering and distortion in your embroidery designs. We use a medium-weight woven iron-on, such as Pellon Ultra-Weft 860F. You want to avoid thick craft interfacing because it will make your fabric too thick. To use interfacing, simply iron it on to the entire piece of fabric on which you are embroidering. You'll notice an improvement right away!