

# KWIK SEW® *Patterns*

## Ten KWIK Tips™ for Sewing with Knits

1. It is important to use fabric with the degree of stretch the pattern recommends. To determine the correct amount of stretch, compare your fabric to the stretch chart on the back of the pattern envelope. When sewing with knits, you must use a pattern specifically designed for a particular amount of stretch. A pattern designed for a stretch knit is suitable only for fabrics with stretch. If an item is made out of a woven fabric when the pattern is intended for fabric with stretch, the item will be too small.
2. Ribbing has more stretch than most other knits. It has too much stretch for the body of a garment, but makes a wonderful finish on necklines, collars, cuffs and bottom edges.
3. Pre-wash the fabric exactly as you plan to care for the finished item. Knits have a tendency to shrink and extra fabric may be needed to allow for shrinkage.
4. The greatest degree of stretch is usually on the crosswise grain. When cutting, place pattern pieces on the fabric with the arrow on top of the grain line in the same direction and be sure to place pattern pieces with the **stretch of fabric** as marked on the pattern. Cut out pieces with a sharp pair of shears or a rotary cutter.
5. Use an all purpose thread and a size 12/80 ball point sewing machine needle. Change to a new sewing machine needle with each new project. A bent or blunt needle will have a tendency to make the machine skip stitches or pull the fabric down into the hole in the needle plate.
6. KWIK SEW Patterns designed for stretch knits include 1/4" (6 mm) seam allowances. This eliminates trimming and bulky seams.

7. Sew the seams using one of the following methods:

**On a standard sewing machine:**

Sew the seam with a stretch stitch that sews and overcasts in one step. Or, sew the seams with a narrow zigzag width and a medium stitch length and overcast the seam allowances together, using a wide zigzag stitch or a three-step zigzag stitch.

**On a straight stitch machine:**

Sew the seams with a medium stitch length and stretch the fabric as you sew. Stretch the fabric only as much as it stretches easily (if you stretch the fabric beyond its normal amount of stretch the seam will not return to its natural resting shape and the seam will ripple). Stitch the seam allowances together, close to the edge.

**On a serger (overlock) machine:**

Guide the fabric, being sure that only the 1/4" (6 mm) seam allowance is used. This is a quick way to assemble knits with a finished look. Also, the seams will have a built in elasticity and this method sews the seam and finishes the outer edge of the seam allowance in one step.

Steam press each seam as sewn and then press the seam allowances to one side, unless otherwise specified in the instructions.

8. Before beginning to sew your project, test your stitches and the way the fabric feeds under the presser foot on a scrap piece of fabric. Fold the fabric double and stitch a seam. Hold the fabric firmly. If the top layer pushes, a walking foot or differential feed on your machine can help. Or, the pressure on the presser foot can be adjusted slightly. Always pull the threads from the needle and the bobbin under the presser foot to the back and hold them firmly when beginning to stitch a seam. After stitching the seam, stretch the seam to be sure the stitches do not break.

9. If stabilizing is needed, use fusible knit interfacing. The easiest way to use interfacing for small pieces is to fuse the interfacing to the fabric before you cut out the pieces. To stabilize a seam, such as a shoulder seam, fuse a strip of interfacing, cut on the lengthwise grain, to the wrong side of the garment along the seam allowance, before stitching the seam.

10. To topstitch hems, use a narrow zigzag width and a medium stitch length, or topstitch with a twin needle. If you are lucky enough to have a cover stitch on your serger (overlock) machine, this is a great professional looking stitch to use on hems.