MACHINE EMBROIDERY

Embroidery Stabilizer Guide

The right stabilizer is the secret to embroidery that does not pucker. Match it to your fabric, and add a topper on textured fabrics.

Stabilizer types

Stabilizer	Best for	How it works
Tear-away	Stable wovens: quilting cotton, denim, canvas, towels (with a topper)	Tear away the excess after stitching. Use 2 layers for dense designs.
Cut-away	Knits and stretchy fabrics: T-shirts, sweatshirts, fleece, baby wear	Stays in permanently and supports the design through washing. Trim close.
Wash-away (water-soluble)	Free-standing lace, sheer fabrics, and as a topper on towels, fleece and velvet	Rinses out in water. As a topper, it keeps stitches from sinking into pile.
Heat-away	Fabrics that cannot get wet	Removed with an iron. Test first.
Fusible (iron-on)	Light or slippery fabrics that need extra body	Fuse to the wrong side before hooping. Comes in tear-away and cut-away.
Adhesive (sticky-back)	Hard-to-hoop items: collars, cuffs, bags, toques, small pieces	Hoop the stabilizer, score the paper, and stick the item on top (floating).

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Quick picks

Project	Backing	Topper
Towels	Tear-away	Wash-away
T-shirt / knit top	Cut-away (no-show mesh for light fabrics)	—
Sweatshirt / fleece	Cut-away	Wash-away
Quilting cotton / tea towel	Tear-away or medium cut-away	—
Denim / canvas bag	Tear-away	—
Toque / hat	Adhesive or cut-away, floated	Wash-away on ribbed knits
Free-standing lace / ornaments	2 layers of heavy wash-away	—
Velvet / Minky	Cut-away	Wash-away

Tips for clean stitch-outs

- When in doubt, use cut-away. It gives the most support.
- Hoop firmly but do not stretch the fabric.
- Use embroidery needles (75/11 – 90/14) and embroidery thread.
- Always test the design on a scrap of the same fabric and stabilizer.

Shop stabilizers and embroidery supplies at allaboutsewingmachines.ca/collections/embroidery-accessories.