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Seen on PBS It's Sew Easy TV
Series 1200 – Segment 1204-2

Fabric Tip Sheet for Sewing Slinky Type Knits

About the fabric: Dresses featured in on It's Sew Easy TV show #1204 are made from a fabric known as slinky type knit. It's popular in ready-made clothing marketed for "travel wear." Traditionally made from a blend of 93% Acetate and 7% Lycra (Spandex), you'll also find Polyester and Lycra (Spandex) blends. This super stretchy knit has a beautiful drape with a unique texture and sheen. When fitted properly, it's flattering on all figures as it skims over curves. Many knits work well with only 2-3 inches of ease. However, this knit requires at least double that amount. Slinky type knit is usually less than 50-inches wide. Be aware of this when you purchase yardage. This tip sheet is designed to give you some starter tips for sewing with slinky type knit. The best way to learn more is to take a class or create a sample test garment where you experiment with fitting and techniques. I recommend choosing a simple pattern with minimal seams. Cut side seams larger than you think you need and adjust the fit as you sew.

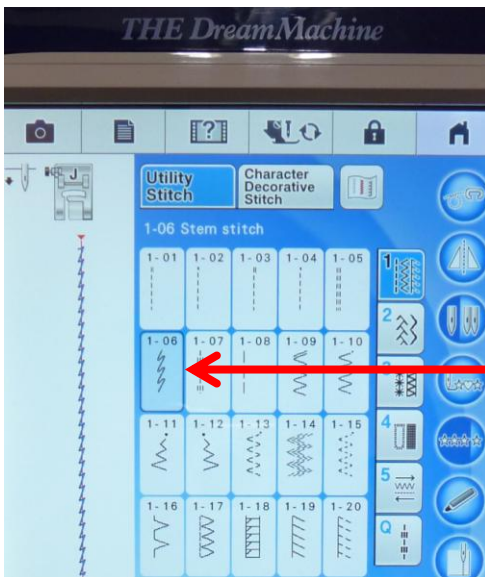
General tips:

- ✂ Cut all fabric pieces using a with nap layout. Fabric should be smooth and flat on the cutting surface. Use weights or ballpoint pins to secure patterns.
- ✂ I recommend [Dritz Fine Ball Point Pins](#) for all knit fabrics. They penetrate without leaving holes or snagging fabric. Be sure to keep these separate from sharp pins so they don't get mixed in.
- ✂ Select a size 11 stretch needle for sewing seams. For hemming I am a big fan of using a twin needle, size 4.0 mm - 75/11. Be sure to use the stretch version of this needle for hemming knits.
- ✂ Curved seams and areas such as shoulders and necklines benefit from stabilizing with [3/8-inch Clear Elastic](#) in the seam.
- ✂ Choose a good quality all-purpose polyester sewing thread such as [Gutermann](#) or [Coats Dual Duty XP Fine](#) or [Coats Dual Duty Standard](#). Do not use 100% cotton thread or the thread will snap when the seam stretches.
- ✂ Press with cool temperature. I prefer to use a removable [Iron shoe](#). Use a press cloth if you don't have an iron shoe.
- ✂ Check specific laundering instructions for the knit you purchase. These knits usually require cool water, a gentle wash cycle and drying on a flat surface. I admit that I often dry mine for a short period on a cool temperature in the dryer. Fold flat or roll for storage.
- ✂ For sewing with a standard machine, select stitches that stretch and recover. See more below:

Stitches and Techniques:



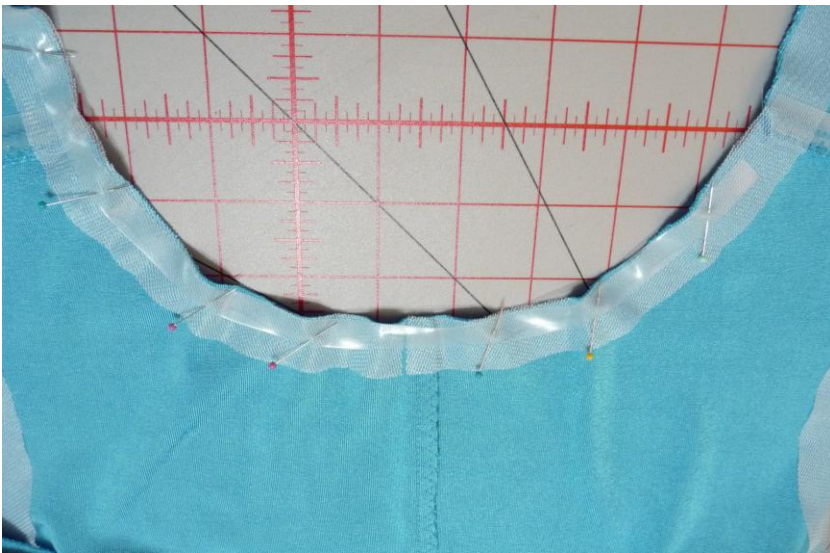
The triple zigzag stitch is perfect for keeping fabric layers together for overcasting. On most seams overcasting is done after the seam is sewn. On this type of knit I prefer to overcast narrow seams first, and then sew the seam as the next step.



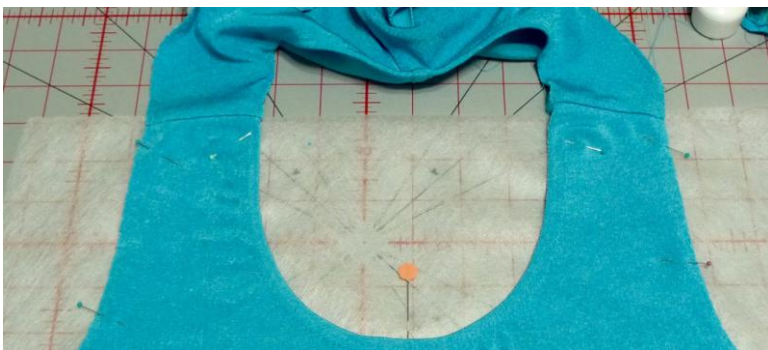
This stitch is ideal for knit seams. It offers more stretch factor than a standard straight stitch. This may be called a stem stitch on your machine. I call it the lightning stitch because it resembles a lightning bolt. The benefit of this stitch is two-fold. It will stretch without breaking but it also presses flat. This is especially helpful if you are pressing the seam open.



Example of seam sewn with stem stitch and overcast with triple zigzag.



For the embroidered dress I stabilized the neckline and armholes with a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch wide strip of fusible tricot. Then I added a piece of clear elastic zigzagging it along the raw edge using a one-to-one ratio. To finish the neck and armholes I topstitched close to the fold with a 4.0 Stretch Twin needle.



This two-step stabilization process allows the neckline to stretch a bit but helps keep its shape. It also prepares the neckline for the added embroidery motifs.

Additional Resources:

- ❖ For details on the embroidery technique [CLICK HERE](#) for a Free PDF download with coordinating instructions for this segment.
- ❖ [CLICK HERE](#) to watch the dress segment at your leisure. Video is archived on letsgosew.com.
- ❖ You can purchase the entire 1200 series in a DVD boxed set from [It's Sew Easy TV](#).

