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SEWING BASICS FOR MINKY FABRIC



WHAT IS MINKY FABRIC?

Minky Fabric is a synthetic fabric made from polyester, and because it is a synthetic fabric it does not “breathe”. It does retain warmth well. There are different types of Minky ranging from a short-pile cuddle Minky to a long rose swirl or faux fur that such as luxurSince

1. Minky, as a polyester does not shrink, therefore you do not need to pre-wash the fabric. Yay! However, you will need pre-wash (pre-shrink) any other fabric that is not a synthetic (such as cotton) that you plan on using with the Minky.

Pay close attention to the care instructions listed the Minky bolt. Generally, you can machine wash in cold water and machine dry on low. However, some Minky is, “Dry Clean Only”. Always wash in mild detergent and no softener. Partially dry on low then finish by air drying. Avoid petroleum-based fabric softeners which build up on the Minky fibers and make them brittle.

2. Avoid “bargain” Minky. It may look nice on the bolt, but it quickly loses its silky texture and shine. Considering the amount of effort you will be putting into sewing with Minky, you might as well invest in a quality brand. A Quilt shop quality is preferred over Joann’s.
3. When cutting Minky, be prepared for a mess; it produces a lot of fuzz. Always use a new rotary cutter blade when cutting the fabric. It is recommended that you only cut one layer at a time. If you intend to cut two layers at a time, place a sheet of tissue paper between the layers.
4. Remember that Minky has a nap (direction of the fabric pile) and position it the way you would like it to lay. When buying Minky...buy more, (up to 1/8 of a yard) because of the distinctive nap, patterns must be cut according to the “nap layout”, meaning more fabric will be used. The troublesome “movement” of the fabric is also a yardage consideration!

A suggestion is to cut non-stretch (like cotton) material to the correct size and leave a little extra Minky around the edge or seam allowance and cut off the excess after sewing the seam. You can follow edge of the non-stretch material for a seam guide to allow for any fussiness the Minky might have.

5. **A walking foot is a must!** It helps to evenly feed all the layers. (Use a long stitch length usually set at 3-4).
6. Use a good quality needle; size 90/14 Schmetz works well.
7. All Purpose Polyester Thread, and a ton of long pins or Wonder Clips.

8. Dritz Washaway Wonder Tape or other washable basting spray helps prevent the Minky from stretching, sliding, and puckering. Even an Elmer's glue stick works and washes out!
9. If you are not using any basting tape or spray, then pin at least every 1". Minky fabric moves-- keep the fabric firmly in place! This is no time to skimp on the straight pins! Even pinning only every 1 to 2 inches can cause the Minky to become very fussy and difficult to work with. Just know that it is not a real reflection on your sewing skills!

A suggestion is to pin your fabric in place. Then, go around your fabric and fill in any empty spots with more straight pins! Since it moves so much, you can minimize some movement with overzealous pinning.

10. When sewing Minky with another layer of fabric such as cotton or flannel, put the Minky on the bottom and allow the feed dogs of the machine to help guide the fabric and prevent extra stretching.
11. Use a minimum of a half-inch seam with Minky since it is very heavy (especially when wet) and tends to pull on narrower seams, sometimes even causing the seams of the other fabric to be pulled out. Since it moves so much and requires careful feeding/watching, always err on the side of at least 1/2" sewing allowance. If you are new to sewing with Minky, go for 3/4" or in-between where-ever you feel comfortable.
12. Minky stretches horizontally across the grain, but it has much less stretch vertically with the grain. It often works well to sew the seam with the grain first.
13. For the best seam, increase your stitch length to 3.0 /4.0 and decrease your stitch tension. You can use a straight stitch, a zig-zag stitch, or a stretch stitch.
14. If your seam looks "wavy", try reducing your pressure gauge.
15. If working with a long pile Minky, like Rose Swirl Minky, you can always shave down the area in the seam allowance to make it easier to sew.
16. Hand-baste tricky seams. You'll also have better results if you stay-stitch curves before sewing at the machine.

Note: The Minky fibers build-up under your machine foot. You will need to clean your sewing machine afterward. Use your sewing machine manual instructions to open the area under the feed- dogs and using a soft brush to pick up the extra fibers.

17. Minky doesn't fray, so you don't have to finish the raw edges. However, raw edges do tend to "curl". If the curl is bothering you, trim off your excess material. The edges won't be pretty, so just cut them away or finish the edges with a zig-zag stitch, an overcast stitch, or even with a serger. If you use a serger, you'll have to deep clean your machine once your project is finished.
18. **Top Stitching**, when finished, will help reduce bulkiness and help the Minky lay flat.
19. DO NOT Iron or microwave Minky – it will cause it to melt. If you must iron -press the wrong side, set to low heat, and always use a pressing cloth.
20. ENJOY YOUR FINISHED PROJECT!