

Working with Stripes

11.260

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SEW-lutions Guidelines

Your Guide
to
Successful
Sewing

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Striped fabrics add fun and flair to garment and accessory sewing, but those long lines need some extra attention for cutting and sewing.

Stripe Hype

Stripes can go vertically, horizontally or diagonally and they can be printed onto the fabric, or actually woven or knitted into it. If they're printed, the fabric has a right and wrong side, but if they're woven, the fabric usually looks the same on both sides.

Some patterned fabrics may be considered stripes—zigzags for example—and require seam matching as well.

Pattern Choice

Not all patterns are good choices for stripes, as garment details can break up the design and cause discord. Look for patterns with minimal seaming, and no princess or curved seams. Read the back of the envelope as some designs caution "not suitable for stripes." Look for styles shown in the pattern books already made in stripes, as they often include the extra yardage for matching; otherwise, you'll need to add it.

Test-fit the pattern before cutting in striped fabric, as later alterations may result in unmatched seams.

Match Point

Ideally all vertical seams should have matched horizontal stripes, but that's not always possible, depending on the styling. All horizontal seams should have matching vertical stripes.



Match stripes at center front and center back openings, side seams and the front armhole of set-in sleeves. All matching for adjacent pattern pieces should be done at the seamline, not the cutting line—an important note to remember.

Underarm sleeve seams should be matched if they're straight cut and dartless.

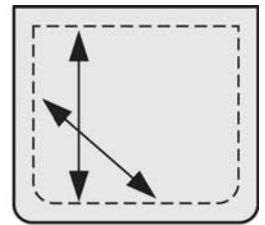
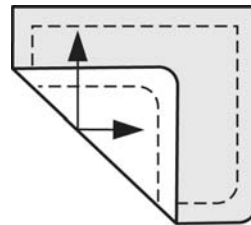
Be sure that dominant horizontal stripes don't emphasize a portion of the body you might not want to call attention to. A big red stripe across the hipline says "look at me." It's better to place a prominent stripe at the hemline instead.

Design Details

Small garment sections can be cut on the bias or opposite grain for interest. Collars, cuffs, facings, pockets, etc. work well for this touch. Piping also looks good with bias cut stripes.

The featured garment shows the asymmetric yoke design cut across the stripe, while the rest of the garment has the stripes going vertically.

To change a pattern piece grainline, simply fold the piece along the marked grainline at a right angle to itself and mark a new line (1).

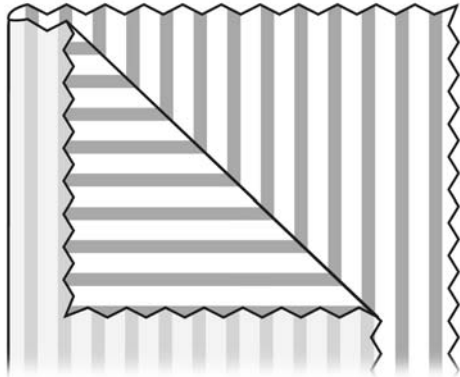


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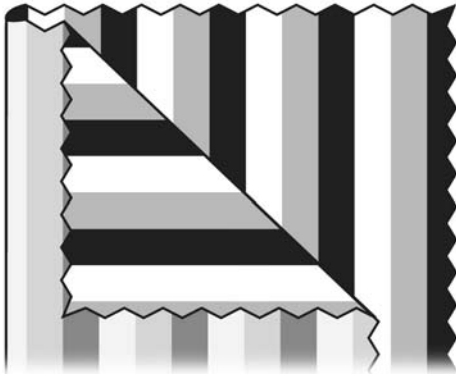
Stripe Lingo

There are two types of stripes—even and uneven. Either can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal, woven or printed.

If you look at an even stripe, the design lines will be symmetrical from left and right of any line; uneven stripes are not. To best test your stripe, fold back the fabric at a right angle to a prominent line and see if the stripes match. If all the stripes match up, it's even (2); if not, it's uneven (3).



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Cutting Cues

Matching even stripes is easier than uneven ones. Follow the pattern guide sheet for the "without nap" layout for even stripes. Uneven stripes need to be cut in one direction only, so follow the "with nap" layout.

When cutting even stripes on a double layer of fabric, poke a pin through to match up the underlayer stripe.

Uneven stripes are cut most easily on a single layer. Select a dominant stripe and position it at the garment center front, center back and sleeve center. The remaining stripe patterning should go sequentially around the body if the stripes are vertical.

Sew Right

Once you've given extra attention to the key cutting process, pin carefully to match seamline stripes. Pull out the pins as you get to them when sewing. If you have a walking foot or dual feeder, use it to prevent slipping as you sew. 🐾