

Sewing with Minkee-like Fabrics

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SEW-lutions Guidelines

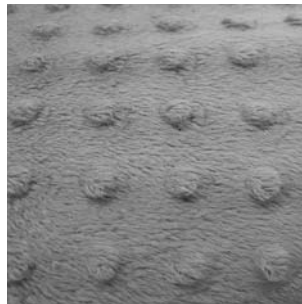
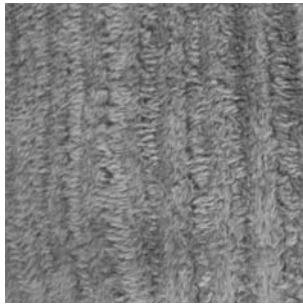
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to
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The term Minkee is a trademark of Benartex Fabrics, but you'll also see similar fabrics called Minky, Minkee and Minkie. All of these names refer to a polyester microfiber plush that's softer than soft, and perfect for robes, sleepwear, quilts, baby blankets, children's toys, and anything else snugly and lush!



Fabric Notes

Microfiber plush fabrics are usually 60"-wide knits, so there's no need to worry about raveling. They're available in many different textures, from flat, dots, ribs, diamonds, stripes and swirly plushes to curly longer surfaces sometimes referred to as "poodle."

The fabrics come in solid colors, polka dots, stripes and prints, and they can be single or double sided plushes. Some flatter piles are embossed with design motifs.

Because the plushes are polyester, there's no need to preshrink fabrics before sewing. However, if you're combining plushes with other fabrics that do shrink, pre-wash them all before cutting.

Cutting Cues

Microfiber plushes will stretch. Like most knits, there is more stretch crosswise than lengthwise. Follow the pattern guidesheet for layout, but be sure that the greatest amount of stretch goes around the item, especially for garments where fit may be dependent on some stretch.

Plushes have a nap. Color shading will occur if adjacent project pieces are cut in opposite directions. To minimize the chance of cutting discrepancies, mark the top of each pattern piece with an arrow, then be sure to place them in the same direction on the fabric.

Securely pin the pattern pieces to the fabric, as layers may shift easily due to the lush plush texture.

Cutting microfiber plushes is simple using either a rotary cutter or scissors. For easier handling during construction, add to the original seam allowance to make it at least 1/2" wide if the pattern doesn't already have that width. This helps to minimize the seam edges curling while sewing.

Shedding Solutions

Because of the soft pile fibers, this fabric is very messy to sew, so keep a lint remover handy. It helps to take the cut pieces outside and shake them vigorously to remove loose cut pile before sewing.

It's also important to keep the sewing machine clean while sewing plush fabrics. Clean the bobbin case often during your sewing spree.

S-t-r-e-t-c-h Seaming

A size 80/12 universal needle works well for most microfiber plushes. If your machine balks or you have problems with skipped stitches, try a ballpoint needle instead.

Pin seams every inch or so to keep them from stretching and curling, and place pins at right angles to the seamlines. To help control the fabric's stretch, use a walking foot on the machine to help keep the two seam layers of aligned.

On a conventional machine, use a slightly longer than normal stitch length for sewing seams—about 3.0. If the seam needs to have flexibility, use a narrow zigzag stitch. To prevent seams puckering as you stitch, use the taut sewing technique: Hold the fabric firmly both in front of and behind the presser foot as you sew—don't stretch it, just hold firmly.

A serger is ideal for stitching plush seams, as it trims the excess seam allowance and finishes the edge at the same time. Differential feed can be used to help keep the seamline from stretching as you serge.

Trim off the excess seam allowance width as you sew if you're using a serger; otherwise, stitch on the seam allowance, then trim the extra width with scissors.

Hold It!

If pinning doesn't hold the seams securely while you sew, try water-soluble basting tape between the layers, but only within the seam allowances. This narrow tape will hold the edges in place while you sew, then wash out later.

Pressing Issues

The plush textures of this microfiber fabric are easily damaged with pressing, particularly if the iron is too warm. It's easy to obliterate the texture completely if the temperature is too hot.

Finger-pressing works well, but if you must press with a warm iron, do so from the wrong side and cushion the plush on a folded towel or needle board to avoid flattening.

Embroidery Essentials

To embellish a microfiber plush project with machine embroidery, use a cut-away stabilizer to keep the stitched motif from distorting.

Select designs with some openwork or light fill in keeping with the fabric weight, as opposed to heavily filled satin stitched areas. Designs should have good quality understitching to help flatten the pile before covering with the fill stitching.

Most importantly, use a topper on the fabric surface before you embroider to keep the plush fibers in check, and to keep them from poking through the design stitching. Water-soluble stabilizer or a permanent color-matched topper both work well for this purpose. 🖨️

