

Sewing Difficult, Thin, Stretchy, or Open Weave Fabrics

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<http://www.burdastyle.com/techniques/sewing-difficult-thin-stretch>



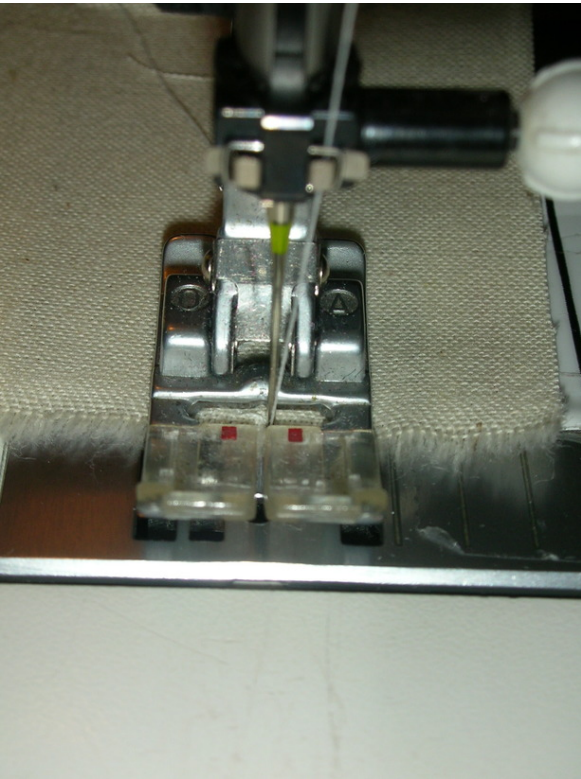
So you're decided to move away from sewing on firm and easy-to-use fabrics, and trying out a fine or open weave fabric, such as lace. One of the challenges of using these fabrics is, how do you even start sewing the seam? I think there is a tendency to want to grab the thread tails and hold them taut and just pull the work through your machine for the first several starting stitches, and hope for the best. Fortunately, there is a better way.

Step 1 — Use a Starter Strip



You're using a difficult fabric that will very likely get pulled down under the feed dogs and jam your machine. So, start off by using a nice, firm, woven fabric. This is a little square of muslin provided by Jan Bones when I took her nightie class last month. I'm using a zig zag stitch.

Step 2 — Sew to the End of the Starter Strip



Sew to the very end of the strip. Leave the needle down and lift the presser foot.

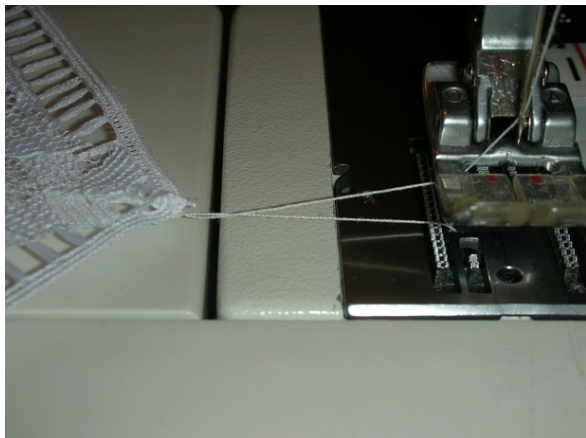
Step 3 — Transition to the Challenging Fabric



Step 2 — Sew to the End of the Starter Strip

I'm zigzagging over the tiny seam in this lace. If I'd just put this in the sewing machine and prayed I'd get it out of there again nicely sewn, I would have been very disappointed. I butted the beginning of my difficult fabric at the end of my easy fabric, lowered the presser foot again, and continued to sew.

Step 4 — Sew to the End of the Fussy Fabric



I sewed to the end of my lace, gently pulled it from my machine, and knotted the threads (no backstitching).

Step 5 — An Overview of the Technique



Here's how it looks. Carefully snip the threads joining your starter strip to the fussy fabric. You can use this method anytime you're starting a seam in a fabric that's going to give you trouble -- lace, fine silks, and any knits. Never backstitch! Your seam will suffer. You may want to start and end the seam with a shorter stitch

length. Take a moment to experiment on some scraps before you sew your garment.

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