



Ultimate Fabric Identification Checklist

How to Use This Guide: Keep this checklist by your sewing machine or take it to the fabric store. Use these four quick tests to identify your fabric and set up your project for success.

1. The Visual & Edge Test

Examine the raw, cut edge and the surface of the fabric.

- [] **Look at the structure:** Do you see interlocking loops? (**Knit**) Or a strict over-under grid? (**Woven**)
- [] **Check the cut edge:** Does it unravel and drop threads? (**Woven**)
- [] **Check for curling:** Does the raw edge roll up onto itself but remain intact? (**Knit**)

↔ 2. The Stretch Test (The 25% Rule)

Hold 4 inches of the fabric along the crossgrain (perpendicular to the selvedge) and pull gently.

- [] **High Stretch & Recovery:** It easily stretches to 5 inches or more and snaps right back. (**Knit**)
- [] **Rigid Resistance:** It stubbornly holds its shape and refuses to stretch (unless pulled diagonally on the bias). (**Woven**)

3. Machine & Needle Setup

Never mix these up! Choose your tools based on your results above. If you have a KNIT:

- [] Needle: Ballpoint or Jersey needle.
- [] Stitch: Zigzag, lightning stitch, or stretch overlock.
- [] Edge Finish: Not strictly necessary, but a serger gives a professional look.



If you have a **WOVEN**:

- [] Needle: Sharp, Microtex, or Universal needle.
- [] Stitch: Standard straight stitch.
- [] Edge Finish: Mandatory! Use pinking shears, a zigzag stitch, or a serger to prevent fraying.

4. Pre-Wash & Care Rules

Treat your fabric right before you make the first cut.

- [] **Knits**: Wash cold. Expect 5–10% shrinkage. Lay flat to dry to prevent gravity from distorting the shape. Use gentle steam, no heavy ironing.
- [] **Wovens**: Wash according to fiber type. They can generally handle more heat. Press with a hot iron to hold crisp creases.