

Ready-Made Revamp Stabilizer and Thread Tips

Created for Sew It All PBS TV by Sue Hausmann and Sulky

Once sewing was something we did out of necessity. There were no “cool” garments or home dec accessories to purchase and even if there were I would not have been able to afford them. Today there is so much of everything to buy however I still enjoy the sewing and creating process and can make one-of-a-kind items that are exactly the colors I want.

I like to “shop” and to “study” ready-to-wear for ideas and inspiration. It is exciting to see that there are so many embroidered and embellished items. This means we are “right in style” with our personalized projects. Sometimes I will make an entire garment and embellish it along the way however today I look for “blank” ready-made garments to embellish and embroider.





Preparing Ready-Made Garments for Stitching

Embroidering finished garments can be challenging at times so a few tips follow.

Lined Jackets

Use a seam ripper to open the seam between the lining and the jacket in the area to be embroidered. Pin or clip the lining out of the way. Hoop 2 layers Sulky Tear Easy stabilizer. Mark the start position and place the jacket on the hooped stabilizer and baste it to the stabilizer. Embroider. Remove excess stabilizer. Hand stitch lining back to jacket facing or secure with a strip of fusible web.

Small Items

Items such as socks, gloves, and children's t-shirts can be turned wrong side out then placed on to Sulky Sticky or Sulky Sticky Fabri-Solvay stabilizer for embroidery. Simply place the area to be embroidered right side up on the stabilizer and pin or clip the excess garment out of the way. Embroider. Be sure you have embroideries in the right direction on socks and other directional items.

Collars and Cuffs

Hoop Sulky Tear Easy stabilizer then use the "baste in the hoop" function to mark the embroidery position on the stabilizer. Place the cuff or collar on the hooped stabilizer over the baste marking. Baste in the hoop again to hold the garment to the stabilizer. Embroider.

Pant Legs and Sleeves

Use a seam ripper to open one seam on the pant leg or sleeve. This will allow you to hoop it flat or to baste it to hooped stabilizer (see Collars and Cuffs above) and embroider.

When You Hoop—To Hoop or Not to Hoop

Key to professional embroidery is in stabilizing and hooping the fabric. I was taught to embroider and monogram free hand before embroidery machines were available to the home sewer. The hooping process was to use the hoop in the opposite direction as for hand embroidery. In the early days we were taught to put the fabric and stabilizer between the inner and outer hoop, tighten the hoop screw then pull on the fabric from every direction to make it as taut as possible in the hoop.

The embroidery machine has changed my life. I love to embroider. But in the beginning, I used the same hooping techniques I had been taught for free motion embroidery. Many of my embroideries came out puckered and not as precision as I desired.

Then I learned how to hoop. Because I was pulling the fabric so taut in the hoop I was pulling it off grain and stretching it out then embroidering on this distorted fabric. When I "let it out of the hoop" it could not go back to the original look as the embroidery stitches had stitched it all distorted and stretched out.

This was a real eye-opener for me! I realized the fabric needed to be in a relaxed state to be embroidered. Only the stabilizer needed to be taut! Once I stopped pulling at my fabric in the hoop and using the best Sulky stabilizer for the fabric and technique, the finished embroidery and/or embellishment was beautiful.

However the more I embroidered, especially ready-to-wear garments I realized that in many cases only the stabilizer needs to be hooped. The garment or fabric can be laid on top of the tautly hooped stabilizer and basted to it for embroidering. This hooping of the stabilizer and non-hooping of the project is the way I embroider many items.



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Stabilizers

When stabilizers were introduced, at first, they seemed like a waste of money--to buy stabilizer, stitch through it, then tear it away. It only took one project to convince me that using Sulky stabilizer was worth it! The finished project was proof that the quality Sulky stabilizer really made a difference! The fabric was “stabilized” well while embellishing and once removed the fabric was not stiff! Plus, stabilizer did not dull my sewing machine needle or damage my machine. I was teaching “machine arts” at the time and Sulky stabilizers became a part of our class supply list.

That was just the beginning and the types of stabilizers were limited. We needed to select embellishment techniques with care for specialty fabrics. Over the next 20+ years, Sulky has continued to develop, test, and introduce quality stabilizer products so that now we can embellish and embroider virtually any design or technique on virtually any fabric type or weight!

These tips are not meant to cover every aspect of embroidery or stabilizer but are a few of the techniques and tools I have found really help to achieve a quality result. Always stitch a test!



Sue's Sulky Stabilizer Suggestions

For Sulky's Stabilizing –At-A-Glance go to page 137 of Sulky book Sew, Craft, Quilt and Embroider Confidently with Sulky Stabilizers

Woven Fabric

My preference is to place two layers of lightweight Sulky Tear-Away stabilizer under woven fabrics for all decorative stitching, free motion and hoop embroidery. If you put the two layers in opposite directions and tear away one layer at a time they will stabilize better and tear away more easily without distorting the stitches. Another option is to use one layer of heavy weight Tear Away stabilizer such as Sulky Stiffy under woven fabrics. For decorative stitches on some woven fabrics I press a layer of Sulky Totally Stable iron on paper stabilizer onto the wrong side of the fabric. Pressing it in place keeps it from shifting as you stitch. All of these stabilizers tear away but leave some stabilizer residue under the stitching. When you want the stabilizer to completely disappear after stitching or embroidery, use Sulky Fabri-Solvay or Sulky Sticky Fabri-Solvay stabilizer and once your embellishment is complete, rinse the stabilizer away in warm water. Both these Fabri-Solvay stabilizers rinse away quickly and completely.

For embroidery, as a general rule I hoop the stabilizer with the fabric or hoop the stabilizer only as above. When the design is very dense I may hoop one piece of stabilizer and “float” a second piece under the hoop as the embroidery stitches.

Medium to Heavy Knits and Woven Fabrics With Stretch

Sulky Tender Touch

When embellishing sweaters, and woven fabrics with a stretch factor (Lycra), press Sulky Tender Touch fusible tricot stabilizer on the wrong side first. When pressing it in place, be sure your garment is on a flat surface or all on the ironing board—not hanging off which stretches the garment. The garment





must be in a “relaxed” state as you press the Sulky Tender Touch stabilizer in place. Now that the “stretchy” fabric is stable, hoop Sulky Tear Away stabilizer and place the hoop on the machine. Place the garment onto the hooped stabilizer and baste it to the Tear Away stabilizer.

Topper Stabilizer

Sulky Solvy

Often the question comes up whether to use a “topper” when embroidering. When your fabric has a nap or on sweater knits, terry cloth, etc. where the stitches may “sink in” to the fabric as you embroider, baste Sulky Solvy water soluble film as a topper stabilizer on top of the area to be embroidered. Remove when embroidery is complete.

Very Lightweight and See-Through Knits and Wovens (Silks)

Sulky Fabri-Solvy, Sulky Soft 'n Sheer

Because a fusible tricot stabilizer has tiny fusible dots on one side, I do not recommend it for sheer or lightweight specialty fabrics such as silk because you may see the stabilizer or the dots of fusible from the right side after embroidering/embellishing, especially after laundering and pressing.

Instead, I suggest Fabri-Solvy if the fabric will support the embroidery or embellishment after the stabilizer is washed out. If the embroidery is heavy and will not be supported by the lightweight fabric, select Sulky Soft 'N Sheer stabilizer for your very lightweight knits, silks and see through type fabrics that will need the support of a cut-away after embroidering. Sulky Soft 'N Sheer is the lightest weight cut away available and can be trimmed close to the embroidery after stitching.

T-Shirt Knits and Other Fabrics With Stretch

Sulky Soft 'n Sheer EXTRA

For t-shirts, sweatshirts and other knits, press Sulky Soft 'n Sheer to the wrong side of the fabric. Hoop two layers of Sulky Tear Easy and baste the garment to the hoop. Top with Sulky Solvy as needed.

Free Standing Embroidery Designs

Sulky Fabri-Solvy and Sulky Sticky Fabri-Solvy

More and more designs are digitized so that you can stitch them on a water soluble stabilizer then dissolve away the stabilizer and have only the design left. I really like to use the Sulky fabric water soluble stabilizers such as Sulky Fabri-Solvy for this. I love to embroider free standing lace. Read the instructions that came with your embroidery designs before you stitch onto this water soluble stabilizer only. Some lace designs and most other designs are not digitized to be free standing and must be stitched on an organza or other lightweight fabric hooped with the Sulky Fabri-Solvy or they will “fall apart” when the water soluble stabilizer is dissolved away.

Projects in the Hoop

Fuse 'n Stitch

More and more embroideries are available that are projects completely stitched in the hoop. Purses, place cards, napkin rings, and “sew” much more. I like to use Sulky Fuse 'n Stitch stiff fusible cut away stabilizer for these projects. In many cases the fabric, stabilizer, and lining are layered in the hoop so the finished project is lined as you embroider. This is why you want to use Fuse 'n Stitch for these projects instead of a tear away.





Embroider and Embellish with Sulky Threads

Sulky threads are made from the highest quality raw goods available in the world. They all come on snap-end spools that allow you to store your thread ends neatly.

All are machine Washable, Dryable, and Dry Cleanable. For more information on Sulky thread types, fibers, and weights including what needle to use, what type of spool pin, tension settings, and “sew” much more, go to pages 135-136 in the Sulky Book, Sew, Craft, Quilt and Embroider Confidently with Sulky Stabilizers. Following are a few of my favorite Sulky threads.



Sue's Favorite Sulky Threads for Embellishment and Embroidery

Sulky 40 wt. Rayon

Most embroidery designs are digitized (stitches are plotted and saved) for 40 wt. threads. I love Sulky 40 wt. Rayon thread for beautiful, shiny and strong embroidery. It really looks like silk! Many of my embroidered garments have been washed or dry cleaned many times and the embroidery is still beautiful. It does not fuzz or shrink. Use a size 90 Topstitch or Embroidery Needle for most embellishment.

Sulky 30 wt. Rayon

When I desire the look of silk for decorative stitches, Sulky 30 wt. Rayon is my choice because it is 1/3 heavier than the 40 wt. Rayon and has greater stability, depth and color interest. In other words, it shows up better for decorative stitches. Use a size 90 Topstitch or Embroidery Needle.

Sulky 30 wt. Cotton Solids and Blendables®

For Decorative Stitches, Quilting and Vintage and Redwork embroidery designs Sulky 30 wt. cotton threads lend a matte finish with its 2 ply 100% premium long staple Egyptian Cotton fiber. Solid colors can be used for stitching and piecing and have beautiful color for decorative stitching. My favorites for decorative stitching are the Blendables because they come in an amazing palette of color combinations and stitches change color randomly every 2 ½” to 5”. Once you start stitching and quilting with Blendables you won't stop! Use a size 90 Topstitch or Denim Needle. When stitching decorative stitches, increase the stitch length to “make room” for the heavier thread. Clean the bobbin area and around the needle of your machine often as the cotton thread leaves more lint.

Sulky 12 wt. Cotton Solids and Blendables®

Just like the 30 wt. cotton solids and blendables, Sulky 12 wt. comes in luscious colors and Blendable color combinations. This thread is heavier and when using it in the needle of my sewing machine,



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I thread the bobbin with the matching 30 wt. Use a size 100 Topstitch or Denim needle on the machine. When stitching decorative stitches, increase the stitch length to “make room” for the heavier thread. My favorite use for Sulky 12 wt. cotton thread is hand embroidery, especially Redwork. I embroider with two strands and it is colorfast and does not tangle.

Sulky 60 wt. Polyester Bobbin and PolyLite™

Sulky bobbin thread is a very fine lightweight thread and comes in white and black. Because of the very fine weight you can get many yards on the bobbin for embellishments and embroidery and it does not build up on the underside of the fabric. The new Sulky PolyLite™ is also this very fine weight of thread and has many uses. I use it for stipple quilting, hemstitching, to wind colored bobbins for embroidery and embellishment and “sew” much more. Use a size 75 Embroidery needle unless you are quilting through multiple layers, then choose a 90 Topstitch needle. For hemstitching, insert a Wing needle.

Sulky Holoshimmer™ and Metallic

Sulky Metallic, Sliver, and my favorite Holoshimmer threads are specialty threads that stitch fabulous shimmering embellishments. Use on a vertical spool pin with size 90 Metallic or Topstitch needle. Slow your machine down for best results. I have successfully used Holoshimmer in the needle and the bobbin for reversible embroideries.

Sulky Polyester Invisible

When you do not want to see the thread at all, use Sulky Polyester Invisible Thread. What makes it different from other invisible threads is the fiber is polyester. Most invisible threads are nylon. You can iron over Sulky invisible thread and can put it in the dryer. Plus it does not kink like some threads do. When winding a bobbin with Sulky Invisible Thread, always wind at the slowest bobbin winding speed and wind the bobbin about ½ to ¾ full. Because this thread is so fine, a ½ full bobbin will have more thread on it than a full bobbin wound with a normal sewing thread. Use a size 75-90 Embroidery needle depending on the thickness of the fabric you are sewing or quilting.



Hand Embroidery Tips

Transferring Pattern to Fabric with Sulky Sticky Fabri-Solvy Printable Sheets

Instead of tediously tracing your embroidery pattern onto the fabric, print your pattern on a Sulky Sticky Fabri-Solvy stabilizer printable sheet with your inkjet printer. I like the packages of 12 sheets already cut to the 8 ½” x 11” size that can be put into the paper tray one at a time.

1. Put the sheet into your inkjet printer/copier to print on the Fabri-Solvy side, not the paper side. The paper is on the Fabri-Solvy to carry it through the printer.
2. Once the pattern is printed, remove the paper and “stick” the Fabri-Solvy pattern on the right side of your embroidery fabric.
3. Thread your needle with Sulky 12 wt. Cotton Thread and embroider! You do not need an embroidery hoop because the fabric is stabilized however hoop the fabric if you desire.
4. When your embroidery is complete, run the fabric under warm water, soak or wash and the Fabri-Solvy dissolves away quickly and completely!

Sulky Fabri-Solvy not only saves you the pattern tracing time, your pattern is perfect down to every detail



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and the Fabri-Solvy on the right side of the fabric keeps the fabric clean as you embroider. Especially if you like to eat potato chips and embroider at the same time!

Free Motion Appliqué Artistry

It's easy to create with free motion, using fabric as your inspiration! Pick a large flower or other shapes print fabric or scarf and pretty Sulky threads and you are ready to go!

Open Toe Free Motion Foot

Size 90 Topstitch Needle

Sulky 30 wt. Blendable Thread OR 40 wt. Rayon Thread

Sulky PolyLite Thread for bobbin

Medium to Light Weight Cotton or Sheer Fabric with Large

Flower or Shape Motif

Denim Garment

Sulky Totally Stable Stabilizer

Sulky KK2000 Temporary Spray Adhesive

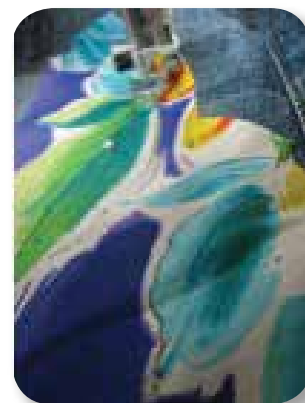


1. Insert a size 90 Topstitch needle. Thread with a Sulky 30 wt. Blendable Thread in the colors of your fabric on top and Sulky PolyLite thread on the bobbin. If you prefer a shinier look, thread with Sulky 40 wt. Rayon on top and Sulky PolyLite in the bobbin.

2. Set up your machine for free motion sewing/quilting. Consult your Instruction Manual. This may be called Darning in your manual. The basics are: put on a free motion foot, lower the feed dogs, release the presser foot pressure (on some machines). Many computer machines today do all this with the touch of a button!

3. Rough Cut out the flowers or shapes. You don't want to fussy cut around the flower, you want 1" extra fabric around the flowers or more.

4. Spray the wrong side of the cut flower fabric with Sulky KK2000 Temporary spray Adhesive™. Place the fabric piece on your jacket or garment.



5. If your machine does not lower the presser foot automatically or warn you that it is not down, I suggest making a little sign for the front of your machine to remind you to lower the presser foot before stitching! With the free motion foot, it is difficult to remember this step as it does not come down all the way on the fabric.



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6. Stitch around the flowers and leaves. You don't have to be precise! This is "art"! Highlight the centers, and stitch into the leaves, following the directions of the flowers.
7. Trim away excess fabric approximately 1/4" outside the stitching.

Tips and Techniques for Embellishing with Sulky® Iron-On Transfer Pens

When people think of iron-on transfers, many think of patterns and/or designs to be ironed on to fabric. Today, with Sulky® Iron-On Transfer Pens, you are the artist and can create virtually any image to transfer to fabric, paper and even wood! I have most enjoyed the designs created by our granddaughters and transferred to t-shirts.

1. You will be drawing or tracing a design onto paper. Any smooth paper will work well like copy paper or loose leaf paper.
2. Shake the pens well and follow the directions on the pens to get the ink started.
3. Draw on the paper. What you draw will transfer to the fabric, paper or wood.
4. This is a reverse transfer process so when drawing letters, words, numbers, they must be backwards. Consult the instructions with your Sulky® Iron-On Transfer Pens.
5. When drawing with the pens, press down lightly for a fine line and harder for a broad line.
6. Practice transferring designs on scraps of similar fabrics before your final design transfer.
7. Place a non-stick applique press sheet under the fabric to keep the ink from going through to the pressing surface.
8. Use a dry iron only. NO steam. I had great results on my Steady Betty pressing surface. Heat the area to be transferred to, then place the transfer paper with ink side down on the fabric.
9. Hold the transfer in place and press down firmly with the dry iron. Move the iron slightly to avoid light transfer impressions under the steam holes.
10. After 20-30 seconds, without shifting the transfer pattern, lift a corner to check the design. Continue pressing for a darker transfer.



Consult the instructions included with your Sulky® Iron-On Transfer Pens for many more ideas including shading, mixing colors, creating shadows, and more!

Little Artist T-shirts

Young people love to draw and what could be better than to draw an original "picture" then transfer it to the front of a t-shirt! This is a great activity for a child's birthday party. Each child draws a "picture" with Sulky Transfer Pens then Mom or another adult (usually Grandma!) transfers them to shirts to take home.

1. Purchase a t-shirt with at least 35% polyester blended with cotton for the best transfer and permanency of the ink. Wait 3-5 days before laundering and use a mild soap.
2. Cut a piece of copy paper to the size of the desired finished "picture" to transfer to the t-shirt. This keeps the "picture" size the right size for the t-shirt front.



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3. Protect the table with additional paper, etc. to keep the ink from going through the paper onto the table, etc.
4. Ask your child artist to create a “picture” using the transfer pens. Review the basic steps of getting the pen started on a scrap of paper or start the pen for the child. Shake the pen well, remove cap then push down on the tip several times (on a scrap of paper) until the tip is saturated. To re-ink, press down once. Assure your artist if they don't like their first “picture”—they can throw it away and create a new one! It is not permanent until transferred to the shirt.
5. Avoid letters and numbers because this is a transfer process they would come out backwards on the t-shirt.
6. Once your artist has created the “picture”, empty the water out of your iron and heat your iron to the hottest temperature the t-shirt fabric will accept without scorching. This may take some practice on scraps because all irons are different.
7. I have had the best results using my Steady Betty pressing surface and putting my non-stick applique sheet between the two layers of the shirt so the ink does not go through to the back side of the shirt.



8. To position the “picture” on the shirt, I usually fold the shirt lengthwise down the center and press lightly to create a crease. Then center the “picture” right side down on the crease and keep it as high up to the neck as possible. We want people's eyes drawn to the face, not to the stomach!
9. Before placing the “picture” press the surface to heat it. Then place the paper with picture with the inked side down. Be sure the picture is right side up. Sometimes it is hard to tell with our little artist drawings!
10. Place the iron down on the paper and count quickly to 20 over each area. You may need to move the iron ever so slightly to move the steam holes in the iron soleplate to a different area so the entire area will transfer. Do not move the paper. Lift one corner carefully to check the transfer and continue to heat as needed.
11. Set aside to cool. Enjoy!
12. You should be able to get at least one or two additional transfers from each “picture” so why not create a matching t-shirt for yourself!

*Happy
Creating!*

