Checklist: Before You Cut Your Fabric
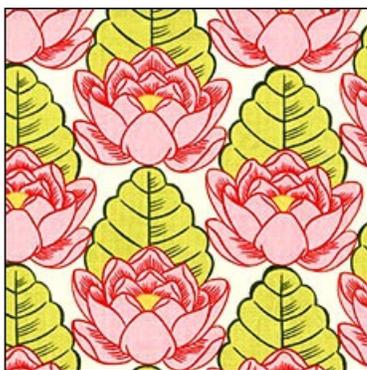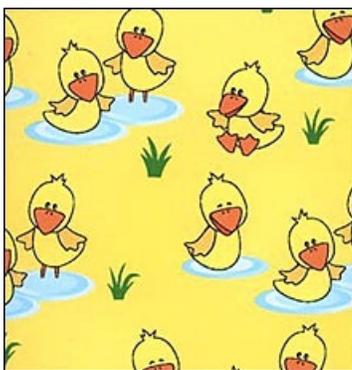
Editor: Alicia Thommas.Designer.Sew4Home
Thursday, 07 May 2009 7:00

If only there were a tool that did the opposite of scissors... a handy tool that would **uncut** fabric after a mistake. How great would that be! Until this future sewing essential is on the market, a simple checklist will have to do.

There are so many factors to consider when cutting fabric, especially a fabric with a large or one-directional print. Take your time. The difference between ordinary and spectacular is often just careful pattern placement.
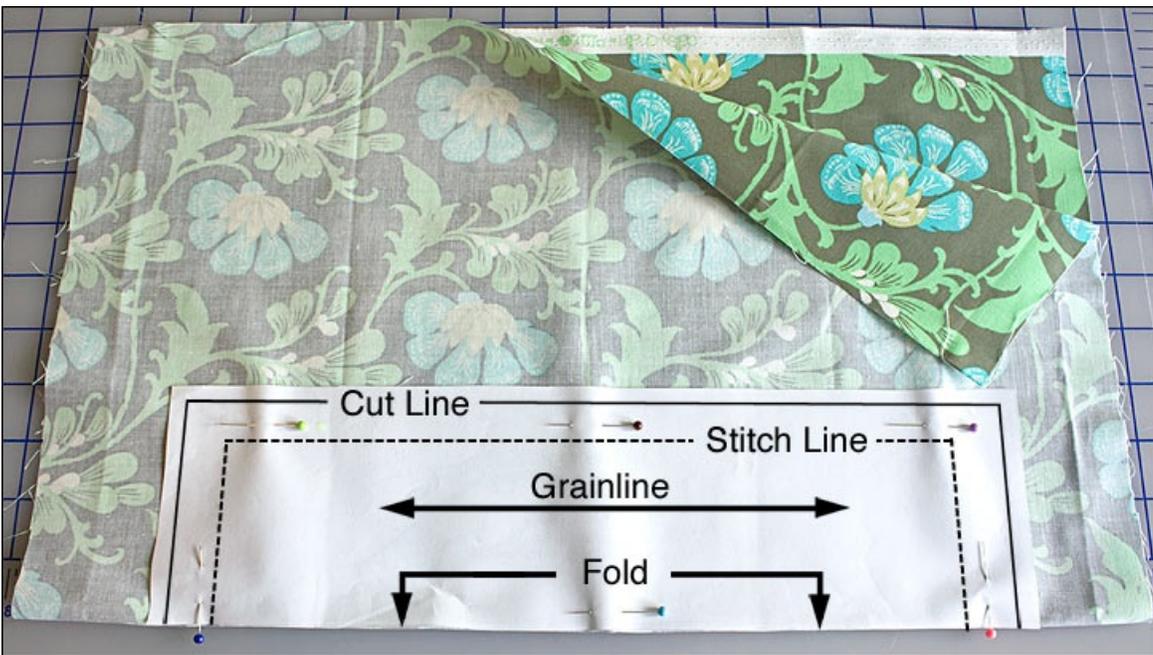
1. Prepare your fabric by preshrinking it following the care instructions found on the fabric bolt label.
2. If you are using a purchased pattern, check the envelope to determine which pieces are needed for your project. Return any unused pieces to the pattern pattern envelope to eliminate confusion.
3. Look at the project layout diagrams and select the appropriate layout for the width of your chosen fabric. A 45-inch wide fabric is likely to have a different pattern layout than a 60-inch wide fabric.
4. Fold the fabric as shown in the instructions, with right sides of the fabric together. Most patterns indicate the right side (the pretty side) using a darker shade than the wrong side. (Occasionally, you may be instructed to cut a fabric on the right side, or to "cut one" meaning to cut on single layer.)
5. Place your fabric on your cutting surface. This can be a large flat table or counter. An uncarpeted floor works too -- it's just harder on your back. A cardboard cutting board (well worth the $5-10 cost) or a self-healing cutting mat is a big plus. Actually, a self-healing cutting mat is a *necessity* if you plan to use a rotary cutter.
6. Position your pattern pieces on the fold or on the grainline as indicated.
7. Pattern pieces have a front side (printed side) and back side. The layout diagram will indicate which way each piece should be placed.
8. If your fabric has a one-way design, lay all of your pattern pieces in the same direction, with your finished project in mind. For example, you don't want to make curtains for the nursery with upside-down ducks. One-way designs can be very subtle so look carefully. All three fabrics shown below have one-way designs.

9. If your fabric has a nap, lay all of the pieces in the same direction lengthwise.
10. If your fabric has a large-scale design, think about where on the design to place pattern pieces. For example, if you are making a throw pillow and you want the spectacular flower design square in the middle of the pillow, place your pattern piece appropriately. That means you probably need extra fabric so you have the luxury of placing pieces on specific areas of the fabric design. It's so worth it. In the photos below, the first block would make a striking pillow. The middle block shows a random not-so-striking placement. The third block shows what happens when you don't place pattern pieces on the grainline.

11. If you are working with stripes and plaids, use the <u>pattern notches</u> to match patterns from piece-to-piece. If you're a beginner, it's better to avoid stripes and plaids until you've had some practice with more forgiving fabric patterns.
12. Once you are satisfied, pin the pattern pieces to the fabric beginning with pieces along the fold.
13. Place pins perpendicular to the pattern edge and inside the cutting line. Be sure the pins go through both layers of fabric. Place pins several inches apart, and at corners and notches.

14. Take a deep breath. Do you feel confident? If not, there's probably a good reason for that. Double check your steps before you cut.

Remember, everyone makes a few mistakes as they learn. It's only fabric!

<u>Pin it</u>

Section:

- <u>Sewing Tips & Tricks</u>

f Share   Tweet   ShareThis

Select Language ▼

Related Articles

Comments (5)

Source URL: http://www.sew4home.com/tips-resources/sewing-tips-tricks/checklist-you-cut-your-fabric