

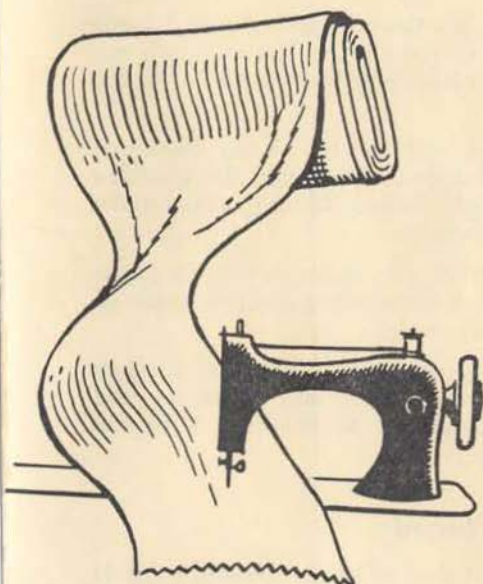
1. 4.3
364



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

Nov 9 '61
College of Agriculture



IF IT'S A PILE FABRIC

ESTHER NYSTROM

IDAHO Agricultural
Extension Service

Bulletin 364
September 1961

If It's A Pile Fabric

ESTHER NYSTROM

Extension Clothing Specialist

A pile weave, unlike a plain weave, has the addition of raised loops on the surface. The loops are sheared to form pile. The cut ends are then brushed evenly in one direction, commonly known as "with the nap."

Corduroy, velvet, and velveteen are pile fabrics. Their luxurious texture and rich color give them special appeal. However, the qualities such as fiber, yarn, weave, or finish that give beauty to fabrics may make special handling and care in sewing necessary.

Velvet is made in a variety of fibers: of silk, nylon, rayon, or rayon and acetate. **Velveteen** is made of cotton. **Corduroy** usually is made of cotton, and has narrow, medium, and wide wales.

Pile fabrics require special knowledge as to the amount of yardage needed, special treatment in laying out the pattern and in cutting and marking. They also require special treatment in stitching with the sewing machine and, finally, in pressing.

A. Select Fabric, Pattern and Thread

Pattern companies have spent a great deal of time selecting suitable styles adaptable to certain fabrics. If you choose a pile fabric, be sure to select a pattern which suggests using pile or nap fabric. Because all of the pieces of the pattern must be cut in the same direction, pile fabrics require extra yardage.

1. Fabric

Read labels on bolts of fabrics **before** you buy. Find out what fibers the cloth is made of so you can better care for it. Special finishes are often given to velvets, velveteen, and corduroy to make them crush resistant, spot and stain resistant, and water repellent.

Check the cut or torn edge of the fabric **before** you buy. If the edge is cut off grain, ask the clerk to measure yardage from the shorter end or allow an extra amount. If the fabric is a print, you'll need to check the torn edge carefully—if the print is off grain, avoid buying the fabric.

The author acknowledges the assistance of: Cornell University, College of Home Economics, Ithaca, New York; Velvet Institute of America; Corduroy Council of America; Purdue University, Agricultural Experiment Station, Lafayette, Indiana.

If you buy velvet, ask the clerk to roll the fabric smoothly and loosely on a cardboard roll to prevent wrinkles.

2. Pattern

To preserve the beauty of a pile fabric choose a pattern with a minimum of seams, darts, and tucks—in other words, select a pattern for its simplicity of style both in cut and decoration. Avoid a pattern that requires top stitching—the presser foot of the sewing machine will mat a pile fabric in stitching.

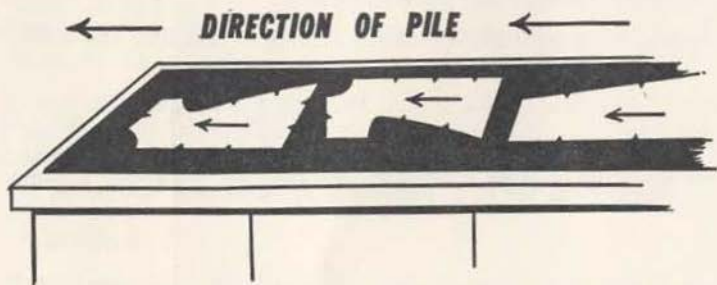
B. Prepare Fabric for Sewing

Straighten both ends of fabric piece. To straighten snip selvage and tear across. You can't pull a thread on corduroy.

Stroke the fabric to determine direction of pile. If fabric is smooth, you are with the nap; if it is rough, you are stroking against the nap. The process is similar to petting a cat. If you stroke the cat in the direction of his fur, he is happy. But stroke the opposite direction and he becomes uncomfortable.

Pile has direction and may be cut so it runs either up or down. All pattern pieces must run the same direction because this affects color. Running up, the effect is darker and a richness in color; running down, there is a lighter, shiny effect. Writers differ in their opinions regarding the nap. Some professional sewers say for a short nap, such as velvet or velveteen, run it up, and for a long nap, such as wool broadcloth and fleeces, run the nap down. Corduroy may be cut either way, but some people prefer the nap running down for more satisfactory wear.

When you have decided the direction of the pile or nap, mark chalk arrows on the wrong side of the fabric to show direction of the nap.



C. Cutting and Marking

Place the pattern in such a way that the pile on each part of the garment will run in the same direction (*see illustration*). Unless you do this the adjoining parts will appear to be of two different shades.

1. **Shears**

Use sharp shears. Cut extra large notches on high-pile corduroys that ravel easily.

2. **Pins**

Use fine pins and needles to avoid marring the fabric. Pin on seam line to avoid marks on other parts of the fabric.

3. **Tailor's Tacks**

Use tailor's tacks for marking. A tracing wheel is not satisfactory. Tailor's chalk may also be used.

4. **Corduroy**

If you use wide-wale corduroy, the ribs should be matched the same as stripes.

D. Sewing the Garment

1. **Tension**

It may be necessary to loosen the tension of a sewing machine in order to satisfactorily stitch corduroy. This gives ease at seam lines.

2. **Pressure**

Loosen screw at the top of the sewing machine presser foot to lighten pressure on the pile fabric.

3. **Needle**

A size 11 sewing machine needle has been found satisfactory for stitching velvet.

4. **Stitch**

On heavy fabrics use a long stitch—10 to 12 stitches to the inch. Stitch slowly to prevent top fabric from "creeping."

5. **Basting**

Baste with short stitches all sections before stitching by machine. This prevents fabric from creeping away from presser foot and causing puckered seams. Use silk thread for basting velvet. It is unwise to do pin basting on pile fabrics as the edges will not stay securely together and pin marks may mar fabric.

6. **Thread**

Use silk thread for velvet, mercerized thread for corduroy or velveteen, and nylon or dacron thread for chemical fibers.

E. Seam Finishes

Seams may be pinked if fabric does not ravel easily and if generous seam allowances have been made. A row of stitching 1/8 to 1/4 inch in from the pinked edge may help to keep the seams from raveling.

On firm corduroys a plain seam along a straight edge may be left unfinished.

To reduce bulk trim and grade seams on facings and hems, trim wide darts and press open.

F. Buttonholes

In some cases it would be wiser to use hooks-and-eyes or loops rather than buttonholes.

If bound buttonholes are desired, a lighter fabric could be used to reduce bulk and thickness. A bias grain is used for making buttonholes on pile fabrics.

G. Facings

To avoid bulk in facings use a fabric without a pile. Facings may be clean finished (turned once and stitched) or pinked and edge stitched.

H. Zippers

Put zippers in by hand.

I. Hems

For velvet use rayon bias tape, or if not available in matching color, a rayon seam binding may be used.

For velveteen and corduroy use cotton bias tape, or if good color match is impossible use rayon bias tape, or as a third choice rayon seam binding.

Avoid stretching bias tape as you apply it to the hem edge—instead ease it slightly. Avoid making hand stitches too tight as you put in the hem.

When stitching the hem, pick stitch from underneath the tape. If you catch stitch over the edge of the hem, it holds it too close to garment and leaves a press mark on the right side.

J. Caution

Avoid ripping seam lines or stitched darts as it might leave marks. Always make sure that alterations and lines of stitching are correct before the final stitching.

K. Pressing and Care of Pile Garments

When pressing seams open, steam them in the direction of the nap.

Place a scrap of velvet or turkish towel on the ironing board, right side up. Place right side of seam to right side of velvet scrap. Apply steam without any pressure of the iron. Never try to press dry! Instead, place dress aside flat until dry before you handle it again. Never press nylon velvet. Steam it.

Another way is to place a damp pressing cloth over a hot upstanding iron. Open the seam flat, draw the wrong side of the seam over the steaming cloth.

During the life of your velvet, velveteen or corduroy garment, frequent steaming will enliven the pile. Hang garments over bathtub of steaming water. Use a soft brush (natural bristles) once during steaming to brush the garment from the hem up. Allow your garment to dry thoroughly before you handle it. When precious velvet garments need cleaning, send them to be dry cleaned. Reputable dry cleaners have special equipment which helps keep problem fabrics "like new."

Most corduroy is cotton—therefore, it usually can be washed and ironed. Because there are so many different corduroy qualities and finishes used for different purposes be sure to follow washing instructions on the label. Damp drying is best for corduroy. Then ironing is easy, or in the case of children's clothes, often unnecessary. If corduroy needs ironing, press it on the wrong side over a terry towel. For an extra lift use a steam iron. Press with the ribs using a lifting motion. Use no pressure. Turn the garment to the right side and brush the pile to raise it.

For occasional home care use a soft brush to remove lint and dust from fashions in velvet, velveteen, corduroy. Brush with the nap. Use padded hangers for these dresses. Hang strapless gowns wrong side out from loops on inside of the waistband. Do not use clamps or metal skirt clips.

L. Wearing Your Velvet Garment

Protect velvets with dress shields as you do all fine fashions.

• • •

Published and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, by the University of Idaho Agricultural Extension Service, James E. Kraus, Director; and the U. S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating.