

Laminated cotton

Water rolls off this utilitarian yet fun fabric

Laminated cotton, a fairly new arrival to the sewing world, uses lamination technology to turn a fabric workhorse—plain-weave cotton—into a water-resistant jewel. It is lighter and has more drape than oilcloth and performance fabrics like Gore-Tex, and it's available in cheerful prints.

The fabric is created by fusing a lightweight polyurethane laminate sheet to a cotton fabric's right side. The laminate typically extends across the fabric width (though in some instances it stops about an inch from the selvage), and the resulting textile can be up to 60 inches wide. Store your laminated cotton rolled on a tube to avoid creases, which may be tricky to press out.

For small projects, you can create laminated fabric (even double-sided) up to 18 inches wide, by fusing purchased laminate with your iron. The finished product might not be as smooth or permanent as manufactured laminated cotton, however, because a home iron doesn't achieve the same even, firm pressure as industrial equipment.

Use laminated cotton for any project that would benefit from a wipe-clean, water-resistant finish. Polyurethane laminates (as opposed to vinyl-coated "oilcloth") are approved for use in infants' and children's products by the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, so you can feel comfortable using them for kids and adults. Raincoats and hats, umbrellas, tote bags, lunch bags, travel pouches, aprons, shower caps, baby accessories, and more can be practical, playful, and stylish when sewn in this multipurpose textile.

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Make a rainy day sunnier with a boldly printed waterproof jacket.

Pattern: Tabula Rasa Jacket with Rain or Shine Variations, FitForArtPatterns.com. Fabric: laminated cotton, Amy Butler Paradise Garden Midnight, WebStore.Quiltropolis.net.



Cutting guidelines

Follow these guidelines for problem-free pattern and fabric preparation.

- **Choose patterns with few shaping seams** and that can be constructed entirely by machine.
- **Lay out patterns in a single layer** using full, rather than half, pattern pieces.
- **Use pattern weights to anchor pattern pieces** when planning the layout.
- **Cut with sharp shears or rotary cutters** with clean blades.

Sewing advice

This stable fabric isn't difficult to handle, if you try some of these tools and techniques.

- **Choose a medium-size universal or Microtex needle;** size 80/12 works well.
- **Stitch with polyester thread,** which does not deteriorate when exposed to regular wet or dry conditions.
- **Reduce pressure on the presser foot if possible,** or raise and lower the foot every few inches to allow the fabric to settle.
- **Install a Teflon or walking foot** to make sewing smoother and to reduce ripples.
- **Set the machine for a medium-length stitch** to minimize holes that may weaken the seamlines.
- **Pin inside the seam allowance only with fine, glass-head pins,** or use clips to secure layers temporarily.
- **Opt for sew-in cotton interfacing if needed;** the laminated fabric can't withstand the heat needed to firmly apply a fusible.
- **Make samples** to test machine settings.

Pressing and finishing tips

High-heat pressing and elaborate seam finishes may weaken the fabric. Here are some alternative methods.

- **Pink or topstitch seam allowances** if the garment is unlined. The fabric won't ravel, but topstitching helps keep seam allowances flat and edges crisp.
- **Finger-press the seams** to test fit or seam shaping before permanently creasing the fabric.
- **Press lightly on the wrong side** with a cool iron and press cloth to avoid melting the laminate coating.
- **Apply a seam sealant** for greater water resistance.

From geometrics to florals, with many options between, there's a laminated print to suit every style.

Fabrics: laminated cotton, courtesy of Laminates.Etsy.com.

