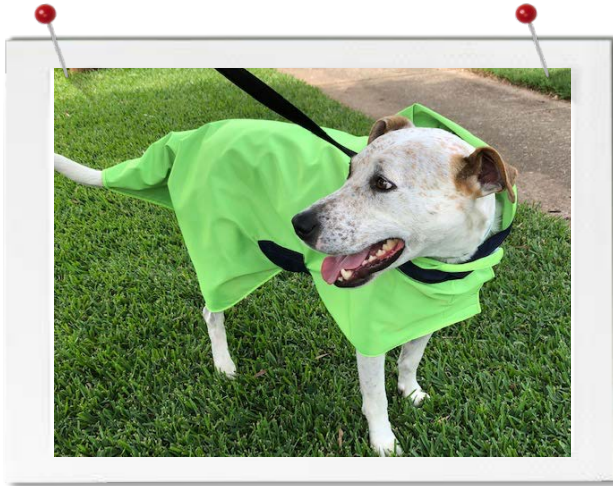


Fact Sheet: Waterproof Fabric

How to sew with waterproof fabric with Bree Ledingham



This fact sheet contains all the information you need when sewing waterproof fabric on the bernette 79. However if you own any BERNINA machine the information is still relevant to you. I put this information together whilst attempting my first piece of sewing for my dog Coops ☺

Needles

One of the most important choices that we make on our sewing machine is what needle to use. For tightly woven or plastic coated fabric, you are best to use a Jeans needle. Jeans needles have a sharper point than universal needles and are much better at penetrating difficult fabric. As the fabric I am using is a light to medium weight I have chosen a size #80 Jeans

Mettler Metrosene. Metrosene is 100% polyester and very strong. There are other good brands out there, but I do recommend that you stick with polyester and not cotton for these types of fabric



Machine

Waterproof fabric do tend to slip and slide as you stitch. To help keep the fabric straight, make sure you have the extension table on the machine.

Threads

Not all threads are created equal and a poor quality thread will really show on difficult fabric. It will be more prone to breaking and shredding as well as skipped or mis-formed stitches. It is really important to use a good quality thread like



Presser Foot

Depending on the type of waterproof fabric that you have, there are two main types of presser feet to use. If, like me, you are using a Rip Stop style fabric, you are best to use a straight stitch foot. Straight stitch feet have only a single hole rather than a large gap so the fabric has less room to slip around. If however you are using a more "plastic" style fabric, you may find that it does not feed very well and you get uneven stitch sizes. This is caused by the fabric getting stuck to the bottom of the foot. A Teflon Foot will stop this from happening. As the name suggests, the foot has a Teflon coating and plastic style fabrics do not stick.



For the bernette 70 series these feet are available in a handy multi-pack. For BERNINA customers there are many options available so please contact your local dealer for more information or visit www.bernina.com.au



Stitch Plate

When dealing with any difficult fabric, fine or thick, I recommend that you change to a straight stitch plate. The straight stitch plate has a single hole in the centre rather than the larger slot of the standard stitch plate. Fine fabrics can move around in that slot as you are stitching (a problem known as flagging) and cause your stitches to look tight and the fabric to pull and pucker. Changing over to the straight stitch plate will help alleviate this problem.



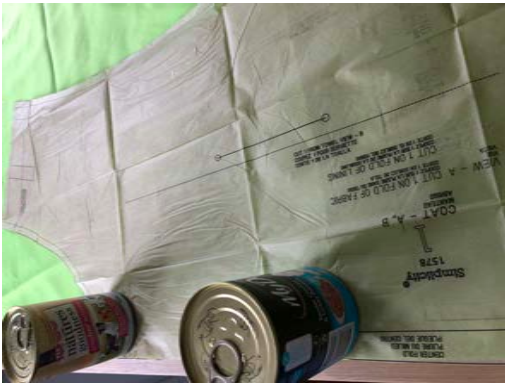
It is very important to remember to only use a straight stitch with the needle in centre position after you change plate. Any variation from this, zig zag for example will cause the needle to break. The good news is, you can tell your machine when you have changed plates and it will stop you from accidentally making a change. On the bernette 70 series the machine will give you this prompt after you have changed the plate, so simply pressing the tick will activate it.



For BERNINA users, if your machine has a safety program, you can engage this function from there.

Pinning

Unfortunately pinning is really out of the question on waterproof fabric. The fabric will not self heal so any hole left will stay there. This is true for cutting out your pattern and stitching together. When tracing out your pattern, use pattern weights or something heavy (I thought dog food tins were appropriate ☺) to hold the pattern down.



To help hold layers together whilst sewing, it is best to use sewing clips. Sewing clips are a great addition to any sewing room and are fantastic for all those things that pins just cant hold. Coops the dog wholeheartedly agrees!

plastic feel, you will need to use a pressing cloth. Traditional pressing cloths have a treatment on them to help give you a smooth finish. However if you can't find one, a piece of calico or similar fabric will work. You will need to experiment with temperature as it needs to be hot enough to get through the cloth, but not so hot it melts the fabric



Oh and don't forget to let your fabric cool down before you pick it up! Can't tell you how many times I have burnt myself on hot fabric straight from the iron.

For anything that you have seen here or further questions please contact your local BERNINA dealer. And just because he is so darn cute, here is my Coops waiting for some rain to come to test out his new coat ☺



Ironing

Yes you can indeed use an iron on waterproof fabric, you just need to take a little care. Firstly, always do a test. You would be surprised how many fabrics will take a cool iron. The Rip Stop I used was fine with the iron on synthetic and no steam. However if your fabric has a more

