

Tutorial : How to sew with knits

Sewing with knits is easy, quick and rewarding! Some seamstresses are afraid of sewing with knits, which is absolutely not necessary. When you consider these tips & tricks, you'll bring it to a good ending.

Choosing the right fabrics

1. Stretch percentage

When sewing with knits, you have to check the stretch percentage first. How can you do this? Cut a rectangle measuring 10cm x 10cm. Fold in two, perpendicular to the grain line and stretch it next to a ruler. For example: When you can stretch it to 16cm, you'll have a fabric with a 60% stretch percentage. When it's only 11cm, you only have a 10% stretch with that fabric. In my pattern I'll explain which stretch percentage works best for the Julia sweater.

2. Stretch recovery

A second important criteria for choosing the right knits for the Julia sweater, is the stretch recovery. Does the fabric return to its original length / shape when you stretched it or not. This can make a big difference for your sweater. This rule is simple: choose a fabric with a good stretch recovery. Overall good quality fabrics will recover best. So buying good quality knits is a simple but important advice!

Prewash your fabrics

Did you know that knits tend to shrink more than woven fabrics? To avoid shrinkage, it's important to prewash and dry your fabric before you start cutting.

Working with a serger

- Take your time to adjust the settings of your serger before you start.

Working with your sewing machine

- Use a stretch needle when you sew knits with your sewing machine.
- Use a special stretch stitch, when your machine has one. Otherwise I advise you to use a narrow / shortened zigzag stitch.
- You don't have to serge edges when you use your sewing machine.

Other useful advice

- Press all seams to make them more beautiful and stronger.
- Don't stretch your fabrics as you sew. This way you will create wavy seams. Of course when attaching neckband waistband or cuffs, you'll have to stretch them.