

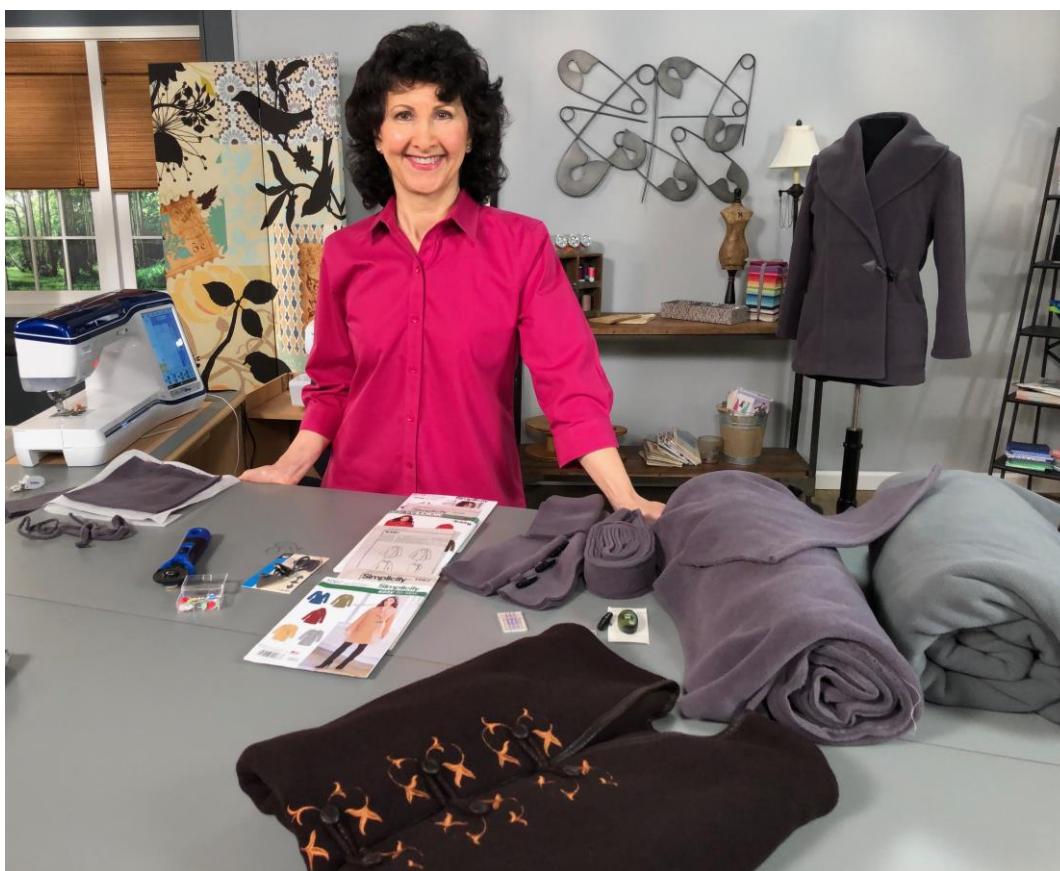
## [It's Sew Easy Series 1700](#)

### Show#1710-2 Polar Fleece Jacket with Tailored Details

**Presented by: Joanne Banko**  
[www.letsgo sew.com](http://www.letsgo sew.com)

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Fleece fabric is perfect for cool weather and a staple in mainstream fashion. With a little bit of know how you can turn a fleece jacket into a garment with special details. Let me show you how to incorporate sewing techniques especially suited for fleece. Are you ready? Let's go sew!

### **Materials and supplies featured in this show:**

- Featured machine is the [Brother](#) Dream Machine 8550D
- Jacket constructed from [MillyYardage](#) Polartec® Classic 200 double velour (Item #7614, Color Nightfall, generously provided by MillyYardage LLC.)
- [Simplicity pattern 1067](#).
- [Dritz toggle closure](#), or toggle buttons and fabric for making loops shown in the show. Small, clear backer buttons are also recommended for use with toggle buttons.
- Small curved needle from [Dritz Repair needles](#) for sewing on toggle closure.
- Water-soluble fibrous mesh stabilizer for pocket technique.
- A Walking foot is optional but helpful for sewing hems and topstitching seams, especially those that are cut on the cross grain.
- Good quality polyester thread to match fabric.
- Ball point pins and a size 14 stretch needle for the sewing machine.
- Flat flower pins, a rotary cutter, and a ruler are handy for cutting straight, smooth edges on fleece.
- Small sharp scissors for grading seams.

### **Tips and techniques for fleece:**

- I always begin by prewashing fabric according to manufacturer's directions. While fleece doesn't shrink, it's likely that it was stretched out a bit when rolled on the bolt. Washing brings it back to its original shape.
- Never allow an iron to touch fleece. Finger press seams open or to one side. Use lots of topstitching to tame seams, keep them flat, and add a sleek decorative touch at the same time.
- To find the right side of this fleece fabric, pull fabric along the selvedge edge. You'll see that it automatically rolls to the right side.
- Cut all pieces using a with nap layout. You can use straight or safety pins to mark top edge of each piece, placing pin on the right side.
- Before sewing, be sure to test stitches on your machine using remnants of fabric. Increase stitch length for all seams and hems. I like a length of 3.5 to 4.0. You can sew most seams with a standard presser foot. Switch to a walking foot if it helps you feed fabric layers more easily.

This pattern included 5/8-inch seam allowances. Here are some tips for stitching the various seams on a jacket similar to this one:

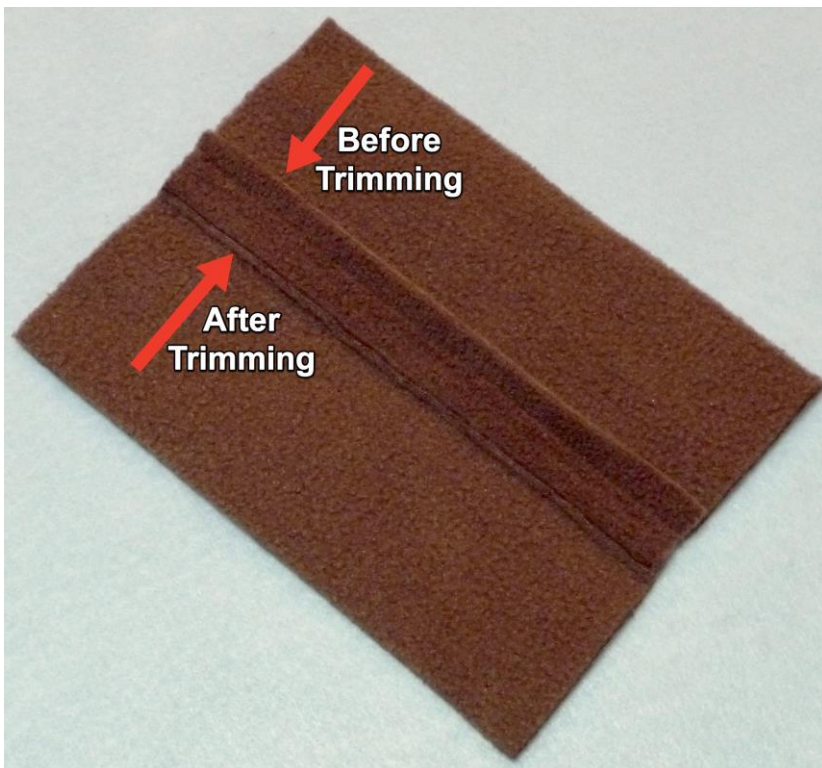
***For all seams pressed open***, such as front princess seams, begin by sewing seam using a standard foot and a straight stitch with a length of 3.5 to 4.0. Press seam open using your fingers or opt for a special wooden rolling tool, often sold in quilt shops. This is similar to a tool used for rolling seams on wallpaper. If you happen to have one of those feel free to use it! For topstitching, attach the walking foot and align edge

of foot with seamline on right side of fabric. Select a straight stitch and set length to 4.0. Move the needle position so first line of top stitching forms ¼-inch from the seam.

See red line for seamline and yellow line for top-stitching in enhanced photo below:



Topstitch opposite side of seam in the same manner. Turn to wrong side and carefully trim excess seam allowance close to stitching line. See below:





**Here are a few options for seams pressed to one side such as side seams.** #1 - Use a serger and trim away excess seam allowance as you serge. #2 - Sew seam on sewing machine then serge, trimming away excess seam allowance. #3 - Sew seam on sewing machine, trim excess leaving a narrow seam allowance, and then use an overcast stitch or a triple zig zag stitch to overcast seam allowance. Finger press seam toward back when finished.



**Tip:** A four thread serger stitch is ideal as it maintains stretch and helps compact fleece

For seams that are enclosed such as this collar, sew seam, grade seam allowance layers, and then topstitch to flatten edges. The collar and center front edge of this jacket are perfect examples of using topstitching to tame finished edges. On 200 weight fleece I usually sew hems using a standard straight stitch.

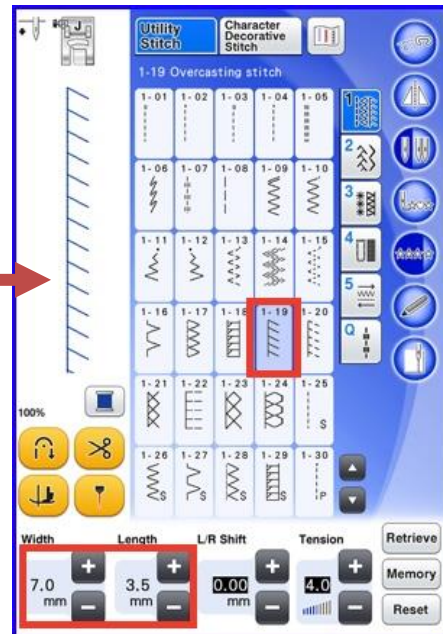


It's important to note that fleece doesn't ravel so a seam finish is optional. However, finishing seams with topstitching, the serger, or the sewing machine, keeps seams smooth and flat and produces a nice, professional look on the inside of the garment.

## Pocket edging technique:

This pattern features pockets sewn into the center front and side seam.

To create my pocket adaptation, begin by trimming away hem allowance on top edge of pattern piece and seam allowance on lower edge. For a stitch that simulates a hand blanket stitch with a slight slant, select the slanted, open overcasting stitch, increasing length and width. This stitch is common on many machines.



Cut an oversized strip of water-soluble stabilizer for upper and lower edge. Pin stabilizer in place. Stitch from end to end, with the right-hand swing of the needle falling off edge of fleece. If your machine has the Sew Straight™ Laser guide, position it along the raw edge to use as a guide while you sew.



Repeat steps for opposite edge. See right and wrong side of pocket stitching below:



Trim excess stabilizer, then wash out remainder and let dry before constructing jacket. When attaching pocket to jacket simply stitch close to the straight line formed by the overcast stitch. **Note:** For a patch style pocket, repeat the process for each side of the pocket.

**Tip:** A three thread wide serger stitch is another great way to finish fleece edges.

#### **Ideas for closures on fleece:**

In my experience buttonholes are unsuitable for sewing directly on most fleece. In ready-made garments you're likely to find traditional buttonhole closures replaced with wrap styles, zipper closures, toggles, and buttons and loops. For this jacket I selected a toggle closure like the one featured on the pattern envelope.

**Tip:** Use a small curved tip needle and button sewing thread to securely sew the toggle to the jacket. Instructions on back side of package show options for hand sewing.





For an alternative closure you can create loops from self-fabric. Cut a cross grain strip measuring 1/2-inch wide. Stretch strip, causing it to roll, then stitch over it with a wide zig zag stitch. Loop closures made from fleece make a great closure!



The brown wrap shown here is from my book titled [Wrapped in Embroidery](#). This warm and wearable fleece wrap features covered buttons paired with self-fabric loops. As you can see, machine embroidery is a beautiful embellishment technique for fleece!

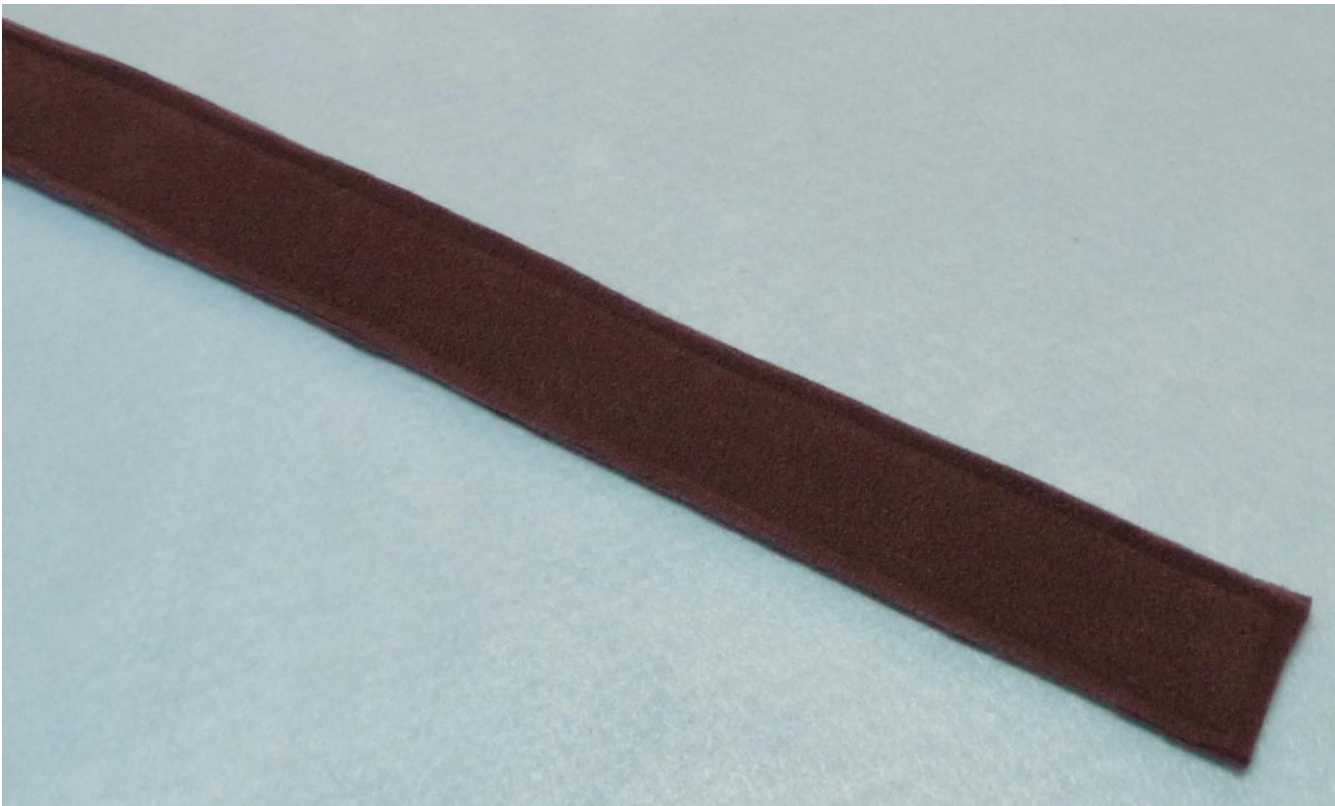
### Warm and Wearable Fleece Wrap



Hand sew loops to your jacket or incorporate loops into front seam or binding. When sewing buttons on fleece, it's a good idea to use small "backer" buttons for added strength. See example of front and back side with loops, toggle buttons, and backer buttons below:



A tie belt can be tricky to sew conventionally from fleece. Bulky layers make it difficult to turn right side out and pressing isn't possible. As an alternative, layer the two pieces wrong sides together, topstitch along the seam line, and finish by trimming with a rotary cutter and ruler to neatly even out the edges.





### Pattern and fabric notes:

When selecting a pattern you can look for one that specifically recommends fleece. However, following the ideas and tips here you may be able to select a pattern that calls for more traditional coating fabrics. Be aware that standard pressing is an issue and fleece fabric has more give than woven fabrics. These guidelines as well as the tips and techniques presented here should help you make suitable pattern choices. I found this pattern to be easy and fun to work with. Note that I did make a few alterations, including shaving off ½-inch from the width of the shawl collar and narrowing the sleeve opening about an inch. I also eliminated all interfacing. As with any new pattern, be sure to measure to determine proper pattern size and make a trial garment from bargain fabric to fine tune fit if necessary. Always check the fit as you sew before trimming away any seam allowance.

I hope the ideas and tips from this episode of It's Sew Easy help you add style to your own custom crafted fleece garments. Beautiful and long wearing, the Polartec® Classic 200 fleece used for this jacket is superior quality. Identical to the fleece found in premium apparel, it's my top choice for sewing a quality garment!

### Helpful links for more information:

- You'll find a Free Fleece Fabric Tip Sheet [HERE](#) on my website.
- You'll find more information about embroidering on fleece and complete instructions for the brown wrap included in [Wrapped in Embroidery](#).
- [Millyardage](#) carries Polartec® Classic 200 as well as Polartec® 100, Polartec® 300, and many more fabulous fabrics. Visit their website at [www.millyardage.com](http://www.millyardage.com) and their Facebook page [HERE](#).



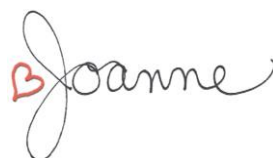
### Questions? Comments?

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Happy Sewing!

Joanne