

Show#2012-3 Tips for Preventing Puckered Embroidery

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Puckers around embroidery designs are preventable when you follow a few rules and employ a few tips and tricks. I've been embroidering for nearly 30 years. As a result of lots of experimentation I've developed many ways to produce quality results. This show featured a variety of ideas and some of my best tips for eliminating puckered embroidery. Below is a list of tips presented on this show.

- Choose fabrics and designs that are compatible, matching lightweight (low density) designs with lightweight fabrics and more dense designs with firmer fabrics. The projects featured in my book titled [Wrapped in Embroidery](#) are examples of fabrics and designs that marry well together. In the book you'll find nine machine embroidered wraps and scarves with designs that are suited for the featured fabrics. How do you know if they are compatible? One way is to test. "It's always best to test." For embroidery on items made from scratch I purchase extra yardage for testing. When embroidering untested designs on ready-mades, I will often purchase a small amount of similar fabric to use for testing.



- Carefully choose where you place your embroidery designs, taking care to maintain drape of the garment. In this dress example I fused tricot interfacing to that entire center band area and then used cut away mesh stabilizer when I hooped the fabric.

- When embroidering on fabrics that give, you want to eliminate 100% of the stretch. Eliminate the stretch factor of fabric by bonding stabilizer to the backside, using permanent or temporary fusible stabilizer, or using temporary adhesive spray to secure non-fusible stabilizer. Sulky KK 2000 is my favorite spray.

- Consider adding a layer of interfacing to wrong side of fabric to beef it up. This works especially well for home décor and craft items. For example, I stitched this butterfly to use for a pocket on a tote bag. It's a large, dense, heavy design. I chose a firm, medium weight cotton and then added a firm fusible interfacing to the wrong side. As a last step, I added light weight tear always stabilizer, floating it under the hoop.



- Use iron-on tear away to add body to thin and soft fabrics. I stitched the embroidery on the ivory pashmina wrap shown here on a single layer of crepe back satin fabric. Crepe back satin is soft and pliable. I chose lightweight designs for this fabric but still needed stabilizer for the embroidery process. I added iron on tear-away to the wrong side and then removed all the stabilizer when I finished with the embroidery. After embroidering, I added the pieces to the scarf and covered the raw edges with ribbon.



- Stiffen lightweight fabrics like cotton with liquid, wash out stabilizer. Terial Magic and Perfect Sew are two stabilizers I use regularly. Just like the name says, this type of stabilizer washes out when you're finished. This is an ideal technique for embroidery on quilt blocks when you want the stabilizer to completely disappear. Another way to firm up cotton is by adding fusible interfacing. There are many kinds available, from lightweight to firm, woven to non-woven. Look for high-quality interfacings used in garment construction for best results. Before embroidering I test the compatibility of the fabric and interfacing by fusing a 6-inch square of fabric and then laundering using the method I'll use for the finished item.

- Always use the size hoop that most closely matches the size of your design. I like to have hoops in all the sizes available for my machine. You may even find compact hoops which are perfect for really small items.



- Pre-set the tension of the hoop before hooping fabric for stitching. Here's how - Stabilize fabric and then loosen the screw and place fabric in the hoop. Tighten screw on hoop so it's nice and snug. Pop fabric out and then re-hoop with fabric aligned for final stitching. This is really one of my all time, best ever tricks!

- Consider pre-quilting fabrics, adding thin batting or even a layer of flannel to firm up fabric for embroidery. Basically, this is a form of “planned puckers” and allows for using designs that are slightly denser than you would be able to use without the added quilting. I chose to pre-quilt the silky collar for this robe, stitching evenly spaced lines through fabric layered with flannel before adding embroidered roses.



- I add light weight tear-away stabilizer to many of my embroidered projects, using it in addition to other stabilizers or interfacing that I’ve attached to the fabric. Sometimes I hoop the tear-away with the fabric and other times I float one or more layers under the hoop. Iron-on tear away is another one of my favorite stabilizers, particularly for thin fabrics that need extra body.

For more information, including updates, project instructions and future embroidery tutorials, be sure to visit www.letsgo sew.com.



Additional Resources:

- I invite you to visit me at my Sewing and Embroidery website www.letsgo sew.com. You'll find online lessons, videos, tutorials, free downloads, plus lots of sewing and embroidery information and inspiration!
- Sign-up for letsgo sew.com news [HERE](#).
- Find me on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).
- Be sure to visit the [Stitching Sewcial](#), the Brother blog, to read my posts on a wide variety of sewing and embroidery topics.

Happy Sewing!

Joanne