

ROSIE & ME

VINTAGE INSPIRED PATTERNS

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FABRIC CHOICE: WOVEN VS. KNIT

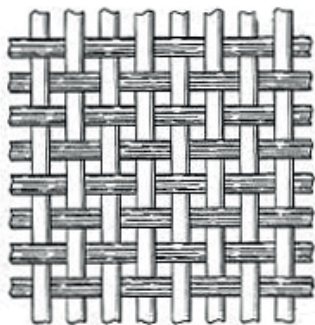
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So far, all fabric suggestions for Rosie & Me patterns have been a WOVEN fabric of some kind. Often, I get the question if this can be substituted by a knit. Other times, I get an email from a disappointed seamstress regarding the fit being too big, bust pleats being misplaced or neckline too wide/deep. When I ask if they may have used a knit, the answer is often YES.

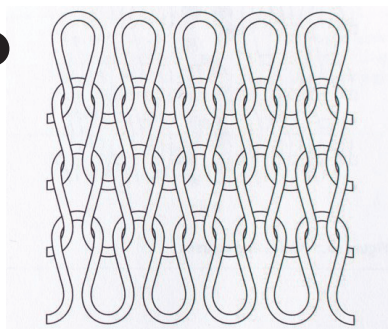
Since my mission is to provide well fitted patterns, I realize that I will need to write more about this topic. Not to make people discard all knitted fabrics...Oh no! Because I know they are extremely comfortable to wear! Plus as a seamstress, you are the designer and are free to make what you like. That's the fun part (well at least one of them) of making your own clothes. So see this more as a helping hand how to go about it and what to look out for.

LET'S START WITH UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO FABRIC TYPES:

W



K



W WOVEN:

- Woven fabric is made by weaving two threads crisscross on a loom. There is a chance you made a woven basket in kindergarten before....well it's the same idea but with thin yarn.
- Woven fabric does not stretch crosswise (weft) or lengthwise (warp), but does a little bit in the crossgrain direction (the bias). However sometimes there is lycra or spandex mixed with the fiber and that would create stretch in the width (hardly the length).
- The edges of woven fabric fray or unravel and need to be finished off with a zigzag stitch or serger.
- Woven fabric tends to be a bit more crisp and is therefore great for making tailored clothing with pleats and folds.

K KNIT:

- Knit fabric is made by knitting yarn into interlocking loops. This can be done by hand but in the textile industry it is mainly done by using a knitting machine.
- These loops can easily be stretched in multiple directions giving knit much more elasticity than woven fabrics. But knits can get even more stretch from the content when elastane or spandex was used.
- Along the width of the fabric the edges don't fray. Along the length of the fabric the edges might curl up, unless the factories applied starch or glue to prevent this.
- There are several types of knits. To not get really technical I would only like to discuss two of them: a single knit and a double knit (see page 2).

— SINGLE KNIT:

- Single knits are recognized by the little v-shape on one side and a purl-knit on the other. If you have hand knitted before you know what I mean.
- Single knits are very unstable, stretches a whole lot, is often lightweight and curls up on the edges.
- It is perfectly fine for t-shirts but I would avoid using it for sewing... it will drive you nuts.

+ DOUBLE KNIT:

- Double knits have the v-shape on both the inside and outside of the fabric.
- It varies in degrees of stretch, but is much more stable and therefore actually nice to sew with. It comes in either two way stretch or four way stretch.
- Avoid really heavy knits as it will stretch and 'grow' proportionally long on the body or hanger.

WHAT ABOUT THE ROSIE & ME PATTERNS?:

The fabric suggestion mentioned on the 'what do you need' page in the pattern booklet has so far only been woven fabric. The reason behind this is that the vintage inspired designs have focus points on bust and waist with shaping, pleats, gathers and darts which are all worked in for the best fit and look. The patterns come with tutorials that help you create the best fit for your 'personal' body shape. This can only be controlled (I'm a bit of a control freak) if the fabric keeps it's form and doesn't stretch all over the place.

BUT PLEASE I WOULD LIKE TO USE THIS FANTASTIC KNIT FABRIC THAT I FOUND.

Ok, ok....sigh. You may. Now, every knit is a little different (Oh here we go, I'm losing control). A pattern made specifically for knits come with a stretch guide so you can check if the fabric stretches enough. This is necessary as patterns for knits can have a negative ease. Meaning that the pattern is smaller than the body measurements, taking in consideration that the fabric will stretch. All Rosie & Me patterns contain a positive ease. Meaning extra width on top of the body measurements so you can move and breath while wearing your woven creation. When using a pattern meant for WOVEN fabric in combination with KNIT you will gain 2 to 4 cms (1 to 2 inches) do to the stretch characteristic of the knit. Therefore losing the intended fit.

How can you fix this? Well, that takes a little trial and error and some fitting / adjusting as you go. Like I said there is a ton of different knits with a variety of stretch, so there is no scientific calculation. But here are some points to focus on:

- The bust height, waistband, yoke placement and or V-neck depth: you can count on having to reduce some cm's in length here (depending a lengthwise stretch).
- It makes sense that you will need to reduce 'some' width everywhere. Only reducing the sides; your shoulder fit still might be excessive, neck too wide, and the gathers or darts that should be under your bust could end up on your side. So check, per style, where to reduce this width.
- Do you need to make a Full Bust Adjustment, to enlarge the bust-size? You can probably skip this step due to this extra stretch. The material will make up for it.

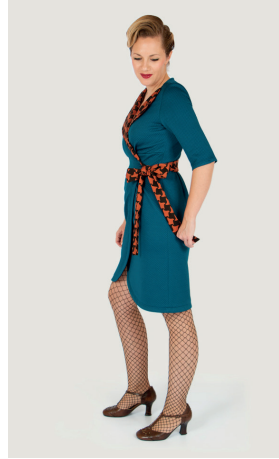
YIKES, IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE TO MAKE IT WORK?

Yes, here are two knitted examples, one of Amber and one of Charlie. But I have to say, I had to reduce quite some excessive cm's. And I'm not talking 1 or 2 cm's... no like 10 cm's (4 inches)! It takes some extra fitting and trying... and then... you just make it work!

AMBER IN KNIT



CHARLIE IN KNIT



TIPS WHEN CHOOSING A KNITTED FABRIC:

- You don't need a serger, you can use a 'regular' sewing machine. While using a regular machine, it is better to use a slight zig-zag stitch. Otherwise there will be too much tension on the seam and you will hear the seams break when you put your clothes on. The zigzag stitch gives a bit of a stretch.
- Buy sewing machine needles specifically for knits. They can either be called jersey or ballpoint needles. The slightly rounded needles push between the loops instead of punching little holes (like for woven) and will prevent you from getting little holes or 'runs' in your fabric.
- Choose for knitted trimmings as well. Knitted interfacing will help stabilize the fabric while allowing the fabric to keep its mobility.
- Make sure to check the direction of the stretch to know how to lay out your pattern pieces.

I HOPE THIS WAS HELPFUL. GOOD LUCK!

PS: I am extremely curious about your project and what you made. I would like it if you shared your experience and send me a photo! (info@rosieandme.com)