

Interfacing Guide

Let's face it. We'd be pretty limited in our bag-making ability without interfacing. In order to make all those beautiful bags and totes, we need to stabilize those pretty cotton quilting fabrics to get the stability and strength needed to hold weight and maintain the desired shape of the purse.

Here are a few go-to stabilizers for bag-making:

1. Medium woven cotton fusible interfacing

Example: Pellon® SF101 Shapeflex

Material: 100% cotton

Qualities: Stabilizes cotton quilting fabric without making it overly stiff. Because it is woven cotton, it is about the same weight as the cotton and fuses well to it. As a cotton, it doesn't pucker or leave wrinkles. It is easy to work with.

Manufacturer's Directions: Place fusible side against fabric. Cover with a damp press cloth. Set iron at wool/steam setting and press down firmly for 10 seconds or until press cloth is dry. Repeat until entire surface is fused.

Suggestions: I don't use a press cloth since quilting cotton can withstand high heat. Place fusible side against fabric and spritz with water, then fuse, starting in the middle and working your way toward the outside of fabric.

Around the Bobbin patterns: All

2. Firm fusible interfacing

Example: Pellon® 809 Décor Bond

Material: 90% Polyester/10% Rayon

Qualities: Stiffer than Shapeflex and can't be stretched so it is great for a little extra durability or added shape. As a poly-rayon, it does melt. It also can wrinkle.

Manufacturer's Directions: Place fusible side against fabric. Cover with a damp press cloth. Set iron at wool/steam setting and press firmly for 10-15 second or until press cloth is dry. Repeat until entire surface is fused.

Suggestions: Great for small areas needing a little more stiffness. I like it for interior pockets because over time, they hold up really well and do not sag even if you stuff pockets full of items. Because it can wrinkle, consider fusing it really lightly just to hold it in place; after all, it will be completely stitched into the seams, so you can avoid the frustration of wrinkled fabric by going light on this one.

Around the Bobbin patterns: Recommended for almost all interior pockets and reinforcement on magnetic snaps

3. Extra-Firm Sew-In Stabilizer

Example: Pellon® 926 Extra-Firm Sew-In Stabilizer

Material: 100% Polyester

Qualities: Provides body to bags and totes so that they stand-up and maintain shape. Quite a bit stiffer than décor bond, but not as stiff as Peltex so it is much easier to feed through a sewing machine. Often you can press the seams open and not need to trim this stabilizer from all your seams. Warning, though, this one melts as well so make sure you use a press cloth.

Manufacturer's Directions: Not fusible. Sew-in product.

Suggestions: Baste into place with a long basting machine stitch. It can be trimmed from seam allowances or often presses flat enough without the trimming, depending on bag construction methods (i.e. how many layers are in one place and whether the seam has a curve). Seams will press open even better if you spritz a little water on your press cloth prior to pressing.

Around the Bobbin patterns: Nina Bag, Bridget Handbag, Twister Tote, Book Club Bag, Sassy Tote, Saffron Bucket Bag

Interfacing Guide Cont'D

4. Foam Core Stabilizer

Example: By-Annie's Soft and Stable

Material: 100% polyester

Qualities: Softer than Pellon's 926 stabilizer, but thicker, so it provides a different look and feel. It has a fuller, more padded look that makes quilting/decorative stitching look fantastic. Because it has a little puffiness to it, it needs to be trimmed from seam allowances after stitching. It provides body without stiffness. Even though it is polyester, it doesn't melt using a moderate iron temperature.

Manufacturer's Directions: Not fusible. Baste into place

Suggestions: Definitely the go-to interfacing for any quilted bags showcasing stitching and quilting designs. A little extra care is needed if used in a bag in which the seams of several stabilized pieces meet together in a small area. I like to stabilize the fabric with a woven cotton interfacing (shapeflex) first for a really professional look.

Around the Bobbin patterns: Nina Bag, Twister Tote, Olivia Bag

5. Ultra Firm Sew-In Stabilizer

Example: Pellon® 70 Peltex

Material: 100% polyester

Qualities: The stiffest of the stabilizers listed here. When you really need body for a project, this is a great product. It is a little thicker and definitely stiffer than Pellon's 926 stabilizer. It is actually thinner than Soft and Stable and it holds a press if you need a good crease (using a press cloth and steam).

Manufacturer's Directions: Not fusible. Baste into place.

Suggestions: While the fusible Peltex is even stiffer, it is prone to wrinkling. I like to stabilize the fabric with a woven cotton interfacing (Shapeflex) first for a really professional smooth finish. Some inexpensive machines can have difficulty with the stiffness of this product if used with too many layers but with the right design, it is not a problem and it gives the durability and shape you need for a basket or the bottom of a purse.

Around the Bobbin patterns: Flared Top Baskets