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Tips for Sewing with Satin

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Opinion by Paid Consultant



Satin is a lovely fabric that I use to shy away from. After lots of practice, I'm finally getting the hang of this lux material. It's a holiday favorite that can be used for everything from evening dresses, tops and skirts, to pillow cases and accessories. It's a versatile fabric but can be tricky to use because of its lightweight and slippery texture. I compiled some of my go-to tips for sewing satin that I've learned, and shared a bias cut skirt along the way. The bias cut skirt offers classic silhouette that can go with all types of looks and occasions. You can even dress it down with a sweater, or add a blouse for an elegant evening look.

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Fabric and pattern:



Let's start with the satin fabric. Choose a high quality satin that isn't see through and drapes well. My go-to is Shannon Fabrics*, they have a great selection of silky satins and all the colors you could want. For this skirt I used Burgundy 232. Because of its light weight you may want to create an underlining or slip to go with the garment you create. Find a pattern that is appropriate for sewing with satin (think flowy dresses, skirts, etc). You don't want a pattern that has a lot of details if you're new to sewing with satin (such as pockets or complicated seams). When it comes to satin, simplicity is best. A simple bias cut midi skirt, circle skirt, or this Kate Skirt pattern from fellow Brother Ambassador Angela Wolf will show off your satin fabric to full effect

*Shannon Fabrics is not a product or brand of Brother International Corporation, and Brother International Corporation makes no representations or warranties regarding such products.

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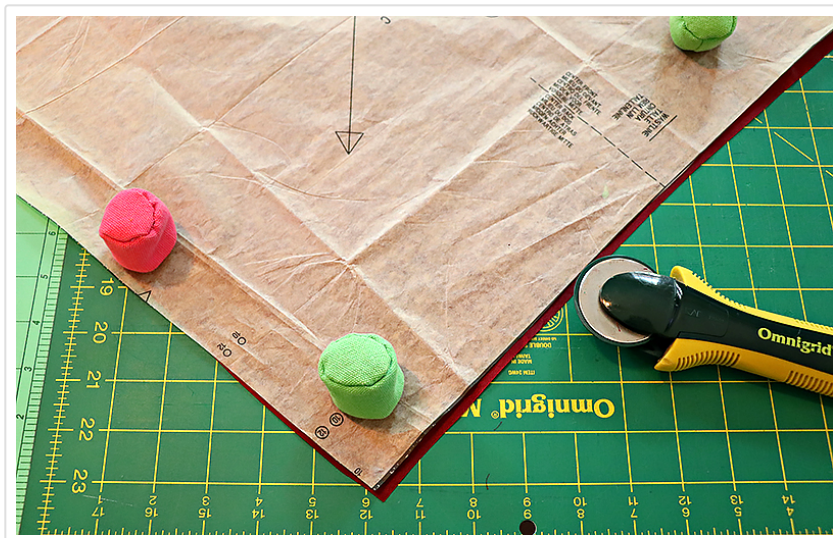


When pressing, avoid using steam when possible as satin is easily stained with water. I'll never forget hemming a friend's bridesmaid dress and steaming a huge stain in the center front. I panicked, as you can imagine. Luckily I was able to get it out, but for a moment there I thought I was in trouble!

I suggest pressing on the wrong side of the fabric and using a press cloth. You will need to adjust your heat so it doesn't glaze the fabric. Then hang fabric pieces so you don't have to

constantly press. Also when creating a bias cut skirt, they typically recommend 24 hours of hanging prior to hemming to let "gravity shape the garment."

Pattern Layout and Cutting



I typically lay out the pattern on the bias with satin fabric. This not only will drape beautifully, but it will also help with reducing fraying along the edges. For cutting I use rotary cutters and pattern weights. Pins can poke holes in the satin (if I must use

pins I will place them in the seam allowance). The sharper the blade (scissors or rotary cutters), the better to prevent fraying.



Use tailors chalk or an air-soluble marking pen for pattern markings.

Sewing and Construction



Raw ends do fray with satin. At the same time, you don't want a bulky seam allowance because it will show through the fabric. I like to cut the pattern out and serge along the seam allowance. Make sure to do a test piece first to get the tension dials correct.

You want the edges nice and flat. If you don't have a serger try a zig zag stitch or pinking shears.

When sewing, use quality thread and an appropriate needle (I typically use a universal needle). Satin is slippery so you will need to attach the pieces together when sewing. If you pin the pieces, make sure you pin in the seam allowance. Another option is to clip the pieces together, which is the method I used.

Hemming/finishing:

Satin can be a pain to hem as well. It helps to be patient with this part, especially if you did a circle skirt.

Since you're most likely going to have a curved hem, here is what works for me.



Begin by topstitching $\frac{1}{4}$ " away from the raw edge. This keeps the hem even and makes the hem easier to fold and press.



On the wrong side press just along the stitching. Once pressed, turn another $\frac{1}{4}$ " over and press.



Topstitch just along the fold on the wrong side of the fabric.

I hope this helps in your next sewing project with satin. I have a couple on my list, including machine embroidery on a satin scarf and pillow cases to try next!





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