

Stabilizing Embroidery Designs

One of the most frequently asked questions I get is, how do you get your designs to lay so flat and nice? Let's talk about that for a minute, it starts at the very beginning - your fabric, and how important it is to pre-wash in hot water and a hot dryer (as hot as possible according to fabric care), getting all the sizing out of the fabric and never iron after drying it will stretch your fabric back out, voiding out the reason you washed in the first place, if you put a dry towel in the dryer it will help prevent some of the wrinkling, if that doesn't work I spray it with magic sizing to relax the wrinkles and air dry. You put a lot of time into your embroidery so if you take that little bit of extra time to prepare the fabric it's worth it in the end. I know a lot of you don't pre wash fabrics before making quilts, but it is very important when doing embroidery, if you don't pre-wash you will have more trouble with puckering.

I hope to share with you some of my secrets to help you have more fun with your embroidery and creating good stitch outs. I keep it real simple, but it is very effective. This took several years and the loss of a lot of merchandise, time, thread & fabric, every bad stitch out I was sure I was doing everything right. I was determine to figure out what was going wrong.

Do keep in mind there is an exception to every rule, 98% of the time I only use three stabilizers, and I always use 505 spray adhesive on every stitch out. I know most of you have your favorite stabilizers and you're sure you're already doing everything right and you maybe, but there is always room to try something new, even now I am always open to try something new. It is not necessary to have a different stabilizer for every type of fabric.

Products I always have on hand when I embroidery.

1. **Wash & Gone** by pellon, there are many wash and gone products by different venders so I would imagine they all work about the same, this product will appear as if it has fibers, not the stand alone plastic looking wash away stabilizer. The only down fall to using this product is you must cut your fabric pieces larger than needed and it must be washed after the embroidery is finished once in warm water to dissolve the wash and gone if you are washing several blocks you may want to wash it twice to make sure all the glue is completely removed from the fabric before cutting the block to size, Remember to air dry the designs, then iron the design using a press cloth before cutting the block to size. I use this product on cotton, tea towels, terry towels and fleece.
2. **No Show mesh**, some of them will shrink after washing so ask questions when purchasing them to find out if it is nylon or a polyester, nylon can shrink when dried. I use this on knit fabric such as tee shirts and sweatshirts. It's used on designs that are not real dense, or somewhat open.

3. A nice **soft heavy cutaway**, if it feels nice to start with it will always feel nice, if it is real stiff and hard to begin with it will always feel hard. When washed a soft heavy cutaway should lose all its body after it's washed a few times and you won't even know it's there. I use this product on cotton, when I don't want to wash the design after I'm done with the embroidery, I just take the time to trim it real close to the design, tee shirts and sweatshirts on the heavier stitch outs.

Note; I know many of the companies say you need a different stabilizer for every fabric, it's not necessary; you can achieve good results knowing how to use these three products well.

4. **Topper** (it looks like cellophane and is water soluble it is not a stabilizer but used on the top of towels, fleece, any fabric with a nap, it helps keep the stitches to the top of the fabric.
5. **505 spray adhesive**. I always spray this product outside to prevent the over spray getting everywhere (that's up to you). I spray the stabilizer back and forth then in circles around to the center.
6. **Magic Sizing**, this is a light spray starch, I use it to remove hard wrinkles from the fabrics before I stabilize the fabric (make sure you air dry before stabilizing the fabric) this product also removes hoop marks from fabrics.
7. **40 weight polyester thread**.

Let's Begin

If you're having a hard time getting your designs to stitch out real nice, take the time to try this, you might just like the results.

1. Prepare your fabric – hot wash and a hot dryer (as hot as possible according to fabric care).
2. Place fabric wrong side up, remember do not iron.
3. Decide what stabilizer you're going to use.
4. Spray the stabilizer with 505 spray adhesive.
5. Place the sticky side of the stabilizer to the wrong side of the fabric.

Try to remember it may take a little time to get it right, every time you try something new there is a learning curve.

Enjoy!

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