

# Fabric Guide

Melby Sews

Fabrics are differentiated by fiber and construction. Fiber refers to what the fabric is made from - for example cotton, linen, silk and polyester are all fibers. Construction refers to whether the fabric is woven or knitted. Woven fabrics are comprised of threads crossed over and under each other, knits are formed from one thread continuously looped through itself. This guide talks about woven fabrics; for more about knit fabrics see [melbysews.com/knit-fabrics](http://melbysews.com/knit-fabrics)

\* This guide refers to fabric names in common usage; sometimes that names the construction and sometimes the fiber

## Quilting Cotton



Quilting Cotton is woven cotton fabric primarily used to make quilts. It can be used successfully in structured garments, but does not drape much.

## Silky Solids & Prints



“Silky” is a generic term given to apparel fabrics made of polyester. These fabrics often have a shiny surface, but not always. Appropriate uses include dresses, tops and linings.

## Canvas



Canvas is a heavy weight cotton fabric that is generally not suitable for clothing. Better uses include home decor, bags and upholstery.

## Chiffon



Chiffon is a sheer fabric, widely available in polyester, but also available in silk and silk blends. Chiffon is used in formal attire, when sheer layers are desired, and sometimes as a lining fabric.

## Linen



Linen is fabric made from the fibers of the flax plant. It is breathable and cool, however it is also prone to wrinkling. Depending on the weight of the linen, it can be used for tops, dresses, and even pants and shorts.

## Denim & Twill



Denim and twill are both created with a twill weave. Denim is commonly differentiated by being woven of both white and indigo dyed fibers, while twill is generally woven with threads of only one color. Both are suitable fabric for pants, shorts, and structured shirts and dresses.

## Flannel



Flannel is cotton fabric that is brushed on one or both sides to create pile for softness and warmth. It is suitable for pajamas, lounging pants, and shirts.

## Shirting



Shirting is typically made of cotton or cotton blends and is recommended for men's shirts and women's shirtdresses. Poplin, broadcloth and oxford can all be types of shirting.

## Cotton Lawn & Voile



Cotton lawn and voile are thin cotton fabrics. Lawn is typically woven with a higher thread count and is generally crisper than voile. Voile is often semi sheer. They are appropriate for lightweight tops and dresses.

## Rayon Challis



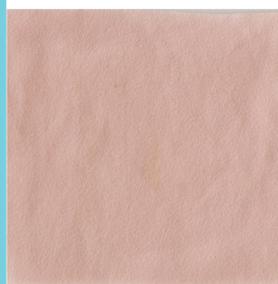
Rayon challis is a fabric woven from man made threads from plant based fiber pulp with a lot of drape, and is generally lightweight and breathable. It is good for flowy tops and dresses.

## Double Gauze



Double gauze is two layers of loosely woven cotton gauze that have been woven together. It is extremely soft and gets softer with washing. Use it for scarves, unstructured tops and baby blankets.

## Polyester Crepe



Polyester crepe is semi-sheer fabric similar to rayon challis but with a pebbly surface texture. It can be used for flowing tops, dresses, skirts and lining.