

Hedgehog Hints

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Working with Flannel

Start with the right stuff! Use Quilt-shop quality flannels for the best results.

Wash like colors together.

Begin by opening out all the fabrics and clip 1/2" off all 4 corners to prevent fraying in the wash.

• High Efficiency Washers:

Use half the amount of mild soap that you would use on a regular load.

Wash on gentle, quick wash. Spin out on medium speed.

• Conventional Washers:

Fill washer half-way with cool water and turn off the machine. Add a tablespoon of mild laundry soap. Submerge fabric by hand until completely wet. Turn the machine back on and agitate for 3 or 4 minutes. Keep an eye on it so that the fabric doesn't get tangled. Go through the rinse cycle on gentle. Spin out on medium speed.

• To Wash any pieces smaller than 1/2 yard:

Fill basin with water, add a drop of dish soap.

Immerse fabric until fully wet. Slosh fabric around a few times and squeeze out extra water without twisting. Fill basin with clean water and rinse fabric piece thoroughly. Squeeze out excess water...again, no twisting or wringing! Roll inside a bath towel to remove most of the moisture. Hang to dry.

Tumble dry (nothing smaller than 1/4 yard) on low heat until almost dry. Keep checking to make sure the fabric isn't getting tangled. If you can't iron it right away, hang to finish drying. Skip the dryer step with any pieces smaller than 1/4 yard. Hang small pieces or lay them flat to dry.

Iron (before cutting) with steam, and avoid stretching. Use spray sizing or starch alternative, such as Mary Ellen's Best Press™ (my favorite) on any fabric that will be cut on the bias (diagonally), such as diamonds, setting triangles or half-square triangles.

Set up your Machine with a size 80 universal needle and a little longer stitch length (i.e. 3.0).

Use a walking foot, (also called a plaid matcher or even feed foot).

Use a "dual feed" setting if your machine has one.

Press pieces, right sides together before pinning to minimize distortion.

When Sewing, do not stitch over your pins! Pull them out before your presser foot gets to them. Allow the machine to feed your fabric...don't pull it through. As you approach a seam or bulky area, stop, raise the presser foot and adjust the seam. Drop the presser foot again and continue stitching. You can "guide" it along a bit with the point of a seam ripper...just keep the seam ripper away from the needle.

Finger press seams open wherever possible to reduce bulk. Then press from the wrong side. Always check from the right side to make sure that the seam is fully open and flat.

