

Pressing special fabrics

Specific pressing techniques are needed for some fabrics because of their texture, color, or finish.

Crepe fabrics need to be pressed with as little moisture as possible to avoid shrinking or stretching the fabric. Use a press cloth, press with the grain, and do not overpress.

Dull-finished fabrics should be pressed on the wrong side to avoid shine. A press cloth may also be needed.

Glossy and shiny fabrics may be pressed on either side without a press cloth. Little or no moisture should be used.

Raised surface textures should be pressed on the wrong side on a softly padded board or terry cloth. The amount of moisture required depends on the fiber content and amount of pressure needed. Generally, light pressure is needed for laces and woven and embossed designs, and heavier pressure is needed for embroidered designs.

Napped, sueded, and brushed fabrics should be pressed on the wrong side on a softly padded board. They need to be pressed with light pressure and ample steam. If pressing on the right side is needed, use a self-fabric press cloth. After pressing, you may need to restore the nap by brushing.

Pile fabrics such as corduroy, velveteen, and velvet require very careful handling during pressing. Pressing velvet is best done with a needleboard, but self-fabric scraps may be substituted. Large amounts of steam and very little pressure are needed. Use only the point of the iron in a lower-and-lift motion on the fold of seams and darts (figure 8).

DO NOT slide the iron on the fabric, and NEVER press on the right side. After steam-pressing an area, let it dry before you handle it again. Some pile fabrics cannot be pressed, such as fake furs. Finger-press seams open with your thumbnail.



Figure 8. Pressing corduroy fabric.

References

Reader's Digest. (2005). *Complete Guide to Sewing*. (2005). Pleasantville, NY: The Reader's Digest Association.

By Pamela Rose, 4-H Youth Development specialist, family and consumer science and expressive arts, Oregon State University.

Photos by Pamela Rose, © Oregon State University.

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