

## Stabilizer Summary

*There are ONLY Four (4) Basic Stabilizer Types:*

**Cut-Away** for permanent, on-going support. Gives the best support when stitching.

**Tear-Away** for temporary support. Stabilizer that remains under the stitching disintegrates with wear and laundering.

**Wash-Away** for support during stitching but then completely goes away with water soaking.

**Heat-Away** for support during stitching but completely goes away under the heat of an iron. (Use a press cloth to prevent scorching.)

Variations within types include – Weight (light, medium, heavy), Iron-on fusible, Peel-and-stick, Water-activated sticky, ‘No-Show’

### Basic Stabilizer Inventory for your Sewing Room

--- *Susan Recommends* ---

(Note: “BL” used below are Babylock brand stabilizers. Other brands have these stabilizer types, too.)

For most embroidery

- Tear-Away - Medium weight (BLT 103 *firm* or BLT 104 *soft*)

**AND**

- Wash-Away – Medium weight (*BLS 500 which is a fibrous, cloth-like product, NOT a film.*)

**AND also consider**

- A wash-away/tear-away (*BLT110 Rinse-Away Tear-Away*) – combines both a tear-away and a wash-away in one stabilizer. Caution: some fibers remain permanently under the design. It does not completely wash away.

For terry towels, fleece, deep knits, anything that has a pile or ‘soft depth’ that the stitching may sink into:

- Wash-Away film ‘topper’ (*BLS 400*) placed on top of the project during stitching. Keeps thread from sinking into the pile of the fabric.

For embroidering on knits:

- Cut-Away stabilizer - Light Weight (*BLC 201 white or 202 black*) **OR** “No-Show” Mesh (*BLC 301 white, 302 black or 303 beige*)

So you can make any of the above a ‘sticky’ stabilizer:

- Sulky KK-2000™ Temporary spray adhesive (*with the green top – non-toxic and environmentally friendly. Dissipates within a few days*)

**OR**

- Wash-Away Wonder Tape – a 2-sided water-soluble tape (Dritz and Collins brands)

**AND NOTE** that a wash-away stabilizer can be made ‘sticky’ by dabbing it with a moistened paper towel or spritzing it lightly with water.

To cover the stitching on the backside to prevent scratchiness or to give a nicer look:

- a soft fusible tricot stitch cover-up (Soft Stitch BLC 601) **OR** “No Show” Fusible Mesh (BLC 306 *beige* or BLC 304 *white* or 305 *black*)

## Stabilizer Decision Guide

1. What ongoing support do you want or need? then consider this stabilizer type	Permanent <b>Cut-Away</b> <i>recommended for stretchy fabrics</i>	Semi-lasting <b>Tear-Away</b>	None <b>Wash-Away</b> <i>if project can be washed</i>	None <b>Heat-Away</b> <i>if project cannot be washed or if project will water spot</i>
2. Will you hoop the project? If <b>YES</b> and ...the project <b>is not</b> stretchy:	Consider non-sticky stabilizer			
...the project <b>is</b> stretchy:	Consider a sticky or a fusible <sup>1</sup> stabilizer to help prevent stretching			
3. Will you hoop the project? If <b>NO</b> and your machine ...has an embroidery basting feature	Consider either a non-sticky stabilizer <sup>2</sup> or a sticky stabilizer			
...does NOT have an embroidery basting feature	This is a good candidate for a sticky stabilizer			
4. Does your project fabric have a pile or heavy nap (e.g. Terrycloth, fleece, velvet, velveteen, corduroy, knits)?	Use lightweight wash-away or heat-away stabilizer <b>on top</b> of the fabric ( <i>in addition to the stabilizer in the hoop behind the project</i> )			
5. Do you want to cover the stitching on the back to prevent scratchiness or make it look neater?	Iron on a soft lightweight fusible cut-away or a soft fusible tricot stitch cover up (Soft Stitch BLC 601) after the embroidery is stitched out.			
6. Is the project quilt-in-the-hoop (i.e., layered fabric, batting, fabric) and the embroidery design a typical open-spaces quilt design?	There typically is no need for a stabilizer. Just hoop the quilt. If stabilizer is needed, consider a wash-away or a heat-away. <i>Tear-away can be used but manually removing all the stabilizer can be tedious.</i>			
7. Is the project <b>quilt-in-the-hoop</b> (i.e., layered fabric, batting, fabric) that you <b>will NOT HOOP</b> and the embroidery design a typical open-spaces quilt design?	Use an adhesive wash-away. You may need to use two stabilizer layers. <i>An adhesive tear-away can be used but manually removing all the stabilizer can be tedious.</i>			
8. Rules-of-thumb for what weight stabilizer to use:				
Design Density	The denser the embroidery design, the heavier the weight of stabilizer that should be used; with less dense designs, use lighter weight stabilizer. <sup>3</sup>			
Fabric Weight	With heavier weight fabrics use heavier weight stabilizers: with lighter weight fabric use lighter weight stabilizers.			
For <b>free standing lace</b> or <b>cutwork with free-standing stitching</b> in the cut out spaces	Choose medium to heavy weight wash-away stabilizer			
9. Do you need to hide fabric 'peek through'?	Consider a colored 'Cover Up' topper.			

<sup>1</sup> Fusibles can be permanent or temporary. Read label to determine which it is. If it does not say it is temporary, it is probably permanent.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly use pins or 2-sided water soluble tape outside embroidery area to hold project in place until machine basting is completed.

<sup>3</sup> "If your stitch counts range between 10,000 and 12,000 stitches, one layer of the diagonal no-show mesh will be sufficient. If your design has more than 10,000 stitches or the stitches are very dense, or they are satin stitches, you will want to pair a layer of no-show mesh with a layer of mid-weight tearaway." Fred LeBow, 'Choosing the Right Stabilizer for Embroidery on Performance Wear'