

A Beginners Guide to Sewing with Fabrics-store.com Linen Fabric

Description



A little while ago, I received a comment on one of my articles for *The Thread* asking if I could put together a guide on stitch settings for the *Fabrics-store.com* range of linens.

I thought it was a great idea, especially because choosing fabrics online can pose some challenges at times. You are often relying on images or small samples, making it sometimes difficult to gauge how the fabric will behave while sewing.

I was recently provided with a selection of *Fabrics-store.com* linens to experiment with, so I have put together this deep dive into a selection of their beautiful linen fabrics. For each fabric, I will look at needle and thread choice, suitable stitch lengths, seam finishes, topstitching settings and hemming options.

Iâ??ll be sharing my observations, along with the techniques that I would personally be inclined to use, so these are recommendations rather than hard-and-fast rules. This is intended as a beginner guide, and will hopefully be a good starting point or practical reference you can return to when considering which linen to buy from *Fabrics-store.com* or when youâ??re sitting down to sew it.

Fabric 1: IL030 Gauze



Width: 145 cm / 57 inches

Composition: 100% linen

Colour featured: Bleached (off white)

Weight: 95 gsm / 2.8 oz/ydÂ² (very lightweight)

General description: The first thing you will notice about this linen is its sheerness. But it is called gauze, after all! Itâ??s a lightweight, open weave fabric, with a lovely, airy feel about it, while still having just the right amount of crispness.



stripped of its natural colouring. This creates a really versatile foundation fabric, which would be a great option if you are looking to later dye your fabric.

I could see this IL030 Gauze being made into a lovely oversized shirt, sheer curtains, or something with delicate embroidery.

Sewing with IL030 Gauze:

- *Needle type:* As this is a lightweight linen, I would recommend a fine Universal or Microtex needle in size 70/10.

Note: If youâ??d like to understand sewing machine needles in more detail, check out the article, **â??**Understanding Sewing Machine Needlesâ??.

- *Thread:* High-quality, all-purpose 100% polyester thread, such as GÃ¼termann. However, if you plan to dye the finished project afterwards, polyester thread may not take well to some dyes, so cotton thread may be a more suitable option in that circumstance.

Note: Again, if youâ??d like to learn more about choosing the right thread, take a read of the article, â??Sewing Essentials: A Guide to Sewing Threadsâ??.

- *Straight stitch settings:* Due to the fabricâ??s lightweight and more open weave, I would start with a stitch length of around 2â??2.3 mm to ensure neat and durable seams that arenâ??t going to pucker or distort.
- *Suitable edge finishes:* Because this fabric is so sheer, seam allowances and edge finishes are probably going to be visible from the right side of the garment. Therefore, my go-to finishes would be either a French seam or a self-bound seam, depending on the construction of the garment.



- *Topstitching:* I would suggest increasing the straight stitch length used for construction seams to around 2.5 mm.



- *Hemming:* I would recommend a narrow double turned hem as it will look neat on both the right and wrong sides of the fabric. To add a little weight to the bottom of a garment you could always use a deeper double turned hem.



Fabric 2: IL020 Handkerchief



Width: 147 cm / 58 inches

Composition: 100% linen

Colour featured: Hedge green (a soft green, almost eucalyptus colour)

Weight: 125 gsm / 3.7 oz/ydÂ² (lightweight)

General description: This lightweight linen has a fine weave, and a smooth, slightly shiny surface. Despite this, it still has enough strength and structure to hold its shape beautifully.

It has been softened, giving it a beautiful fluid feel and drape. Itâ??s also slightly sheer in this colourway, but with more gathered or fuller styles, you will probably be able to get away without a lining.

Being available in a great range of colours, I could see this IL020 Handkerchief being made into light and airy garments such as a flowy dress, relaxed blouses, or really anything that would benefit from some movement and drape.

Sewing with IL020 Handkerchief:

- *Needle type:* Again, as this is a lightweight linen I would recommend a fine Universal or Microtex 70/10 needle.
- *Thread:* High quality, all-purpose 100% polyester thread, such as GÃ¼termann.
- *Straight stitch settings:* I would suggest a stitch length of around 2.5 mm.
- *Suitable edge finishes:* I found this fabric frays quite a bit, so I would definitely opt for a secure overlocked edge finish. This particular shade is slightly transparent so I could imagine lighter colours would also benefit from a French or self-bound seam for a neater finish on both sides of the fabric.



- *Topstitching:* I would simply increase the stitch length used for the construction seams to around 2.7 mm.



- *Hemming:* This is a lightweight linen, but it would still work well with a simple overlocked edge that is then turned up, or a double turned hem that conceals the raw edge. A wider hem in this fabric would also add some lovely weight to the bottom of a garment.



IL019 All-Purpose



Width: 147 cm or 58 inches

Composition: 100% linen

Colour featured: Terra (a burnt orange/brown)

Weight: 180 gsm or 5.3 oz/ydÂ² (medium-weight)

General description: Just like the name suggests, this is a great â??all-rounderâ?? that is available in a huge range of colours. Itâ??s incredibly soft, even before washing, and I can only imagine it becoming even more beautifully soft with each wash and wear. An added bonus is the *â??Signature Finishâ??* it has had applied, which contributes to its softness, and removes almost all of the initial shrinkage that can typically come with linen.

I agree with the websiteâ??s description that this linen is substantial without being heavy. It isnâ??t sheer, but isnâ??t completely opaque either, and it drapes beautifully. It definitely has more body than the IL020 Handkerchief though.

I made the gathered, *Helios Wrap Dress* from Indigo Indigo in this linen. Specifically, the IL019 Dried Herb FS Signature Finish. It was an absolute dream to sew with. The fabric draped really nicely and held the gathering so well. If youâ??re interested, you can take a look at the finished product.

This IL019 All-Purpose could easily be my go-to for most of the garment sewing I tend to do, being suitable for everything from pants, skirts, dresses, topsâ??you name it!

Sewing with IL019 All-purpose:

- *Needle type:* I would recommend a fine Universal 70/10 needle.
- *Thread:* High quality all-purpose 100% polyester thread, such as GÃ¼termann.

- *Straight stitch settings:* I would suggest using a more typical straight stitch settings for construction seams for this weight of linen, with a length of around 2.7 mm.
- *Suitable edge finishes:* This linen also tends to fray quite a bit. Therefore, it would work with edge finishes such as overlocking the seams open or closed, French seams, and binding. I have also self-bound the edges of a garment with this fabric, but and it was probably as heavy as I would like to go for self-binding. But, you could always opt for a different, lighter weight fabric; I would just make sure it behaves in a similar manner.



- *Topstitching:* I would recommend a stitch length of 3-3.2 mm for this line n, depending on how pronounced you want the stitching to be.



- *Hemming:* An overlocked and turned-up hem works well for this linen, as would a simple double turned hem concealing the raw edge. Again, a slightly wider hem in this fabric would add some lovely weight to the bottom of a garment.



Fabric 4: 4C22 Rustic



Width: 145 cm / 57 inches

Composition: 100% linen

Colour featured: Lagoon (a grey-blue)

Weight: 240 gsm / 7.1 oz/ydÂ² (heavyweight)

General description: This is a typical heavyweight linen with the textured look and feel that, in my opinion, only linen can really provide. It also lives up to its name, having a lovely rustic hand feel.

Despite its weight, it is not overly stiff or rigid, still feels surprisingly soft, and actually has a nice level of drape. While this linen hasnâ??t been bleached or pre-shrunk, it has been softened, and I can only imagine it will continue to soften even more beautifully with time.

The 4C22 Rustic feels incredibly durable, and comes in a large range of colours, making it a great choice for projects that need a little more stability, such as bags, home furnishings, or more structured garments.

Sewing with 4C22 Rustic:

- *Needle type:* I would recommend a thicker Universal needle, either 80/12 or even 90/14, depending on the bulkiness and number of layers you are sewing through.
- *Thread:* High quality, all-purpose 100% polyester thread, such as GÃ¼termann.
- *Straight stitch settings:* I would suggest increasing your typical straight stitch length for construction seams for this weight of linen opting for a length of around 3 mm.
- *Suitable edge finishes:* This linen would benefit from simply being overlocked. At bulkier junctions, I would recommend overlocking the seam allowances separately and pressing the seams open. A flat-felled seam also works beautifully in this weight.



- *Topstitching:* I would recommend a stitch length of 3.2-3.5mm for this linen so that the stitching doesnâ??t get lost within the fabric.



- *Hemming:* Due to the weight of this linen, I would be inclined to simply overlock and turn up the edge to ensure no extra bulk is added unnecessarily.



Fabric 5: IL090 Canvas



Width: 145 cm or 57 inches

Composition: 100% linen

Colour featured: Natural

Weight: 270 gsm or 8 oz/ydÂ² (very heavy)

General description: If you are looking for a fabric that epitomises linen in its truly natural form, then this is the one. Itâ??s as natural as it comes, with no dye or bleach, and a beautiful â??flaxyâ?• colour. I also love the particularly slubby surface of this linen which only adds to its charm.

Despite being a very heavyweight linen, I was really surprised at how soft it is. In my opinion, even though it is heavier it actually feels softer than the *4C22 Rustic.*

Despite the IL090 Canvas only being available in limited colour ways, the bleached option would be another great choice if you were looking to dye the fabric.

I think this would be a fantastic choice for bags, aprons, and homewares like cushions or table linen, or any project where youâ??re looking for something a little more durable.

Sewing with IL090 Canvas:

- *Needle type:* I would recommend a thicker Universal needle of 90/14 or even 100/16 depending on the bulkiness and number of layers you are sewing through.
- *Thread:* High-quality, all-purpose 100% polyester thread, such as GÃ¼termann.
- *Straight stitch settings:* I would suggest a length of around 3-3.2 mm for construction seams in this weight of linen.
- *Suitable edge finishes:* This linen works well with a simple overlocked edge. At bulkier junctions, I would definitely recommend overlocking the

seam allowances separately and pressing the seams open. A flat-felled seam also works really nicely in this weight.



- *Topstitching:* I would recommend a stitch length of 3.5+ mm for this linen, particularly due to the fabrics natural slubbiness so it doesnâ??t get lost in the fabric and stands out nicely.



- *Hemming:* Again, due to the weight of this linen, I would be inclined to simply overlock and turn up the edge to reduce bulk.



Linen really is one of my favourite fabrics to work with and wear. Itâ??s versatile, comfortable, durable, and relatively easy to work with, making it a great choice whether youâ??re new to sewing or have been sewing for years. And if youâ??re looking for beautiful, quality linen, youâ??re in the right place to find some here at *Fabrics-store.com.* Hopefully, this guide has provided you with a useful starting point for choosing and sewing with their fabrics.

As I mentioned, what I share here are only recommendations, and simply the settings and techniques I found myself using while working with each fabric. At the end of the day, I hope I have encouraged you to experiment and find out what works best for you.

Happy sewing!

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