
Basting Tape

Selection Tips & Recommendations

Double-sided basting tapes (seamstick) make work with heavy fabrics easier and more accurate for amateurs and professionals alike! Basting prevents feeding problems while sewing and assures that cloth panels will come out evenly. Basting tape is invisible, stays in place in the seam, and is much easier than pinning fabric in place. Here are a few important things to consider when selecting and using basting tape:

- Select a tape based on the job requirements.

SEAMSTICK TAPE is not very sticky but bonds well on smooth, Dacron sailcloth. It generally causes no problems with gum on the needle or skipped stitches.

ACRYLIC BASTING TAPE has more holding power and works well with coarse canvas products. Acrylic-based adhesives are not as sticky on initial contact but adhere better with time. Rubber-based adhesives adhere very well on initial contact but have a tendency to yellow over time. Can be used with sailcloth but may lead to more gum on the needle. A cotton swab and rubbing alcohol can be used to keep the needle clean.

3M SUPER SEAMSTICK was developed with the intention of eliminating sewing in laminates. It is very aggressive although it has a tendency to slide apart in hot sunlight. Sewing is still recommended, especially in seams with stress that runs from side to side. Can be used for seams in any fabric (sailcloth, spinnaker cloth or canvas) for very strong bonds.

C3 SPINNAKER TAPE, a new Peco Tape clone developed in Europe, is specifically designed to hold spinnaker cloth but can be used anywhere a very tight bond is desired.

MYLAR/KEVLAR BASTING TAPE is specifically designed for use with fabric laminates. The cloth matrix holds stitching better and reinforces sewn seams.

- A well-adjusted machine should not be affected by the gum residue left from basting tapes. Running the needle through a bar of Ivory soap can help prevent build-up and a cotton swab with rubbing alcohol can be used to keep the needle clean. Many professionals avoid cleaning the needle by using a thread lubricant, like Sewers Aid on a cloth pad clipped over the upper thread in the machine or a device like the Magnetic Oiler to keep a consistent coating of lubricant on the top thread.

- Exercise caution when basting two panels of fabric together. Make sure that both the top and bottom layers are stressed evenly as some fabrics have a tendency to stretch. Even though panels may start out at equal lengths, they can stretch as much as 6 inches after basting. Even still, the seam will not look bad because the lengthening was done gradually and evenly along the length of the fabric. Dacron sailcloth is not as stretchy but it is still important to stress the two layers of cloth evenly as they are rubbed together to avoid puckers that radiate out from the seam in one or the other panel.
- Use basting tape even for simple projects. All adhesive basting tapes help to reduce puckering from sewing and also make seams more waterproof.

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