

KNIT FABRICS FOR ROMPERS

A quick guide

BEST FABRICS CHOICES FOR ROMPERS!

When I first started using knit fabric I loved the fact that working with a stretchy fabric was a little more forgiving than a woven fabric. It's also handy for everyone who doesn't own an overlocker or serger as knit fabrics don't fray, so that is a definite plus! But and this is a big BUT, choose the wrong knit fabric for your project and it may well me more trouble than it is worth.

In this booklet we are going to explore the different fabrics and how they should be used. I do hope this will help you make a grand start on sewing with knit fabrics.

LET'S LOOK AT STRETCH!

Let's start with all knits for rompers and how to use them. Below our very own classic romper. This type of garment has to endure a lot of movement and should be very comfortable.

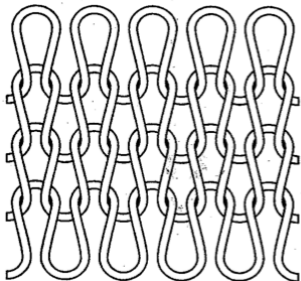
Ideally you will look for a fabric which stretches width ways and length ways (four way stretch). For any romper with cuffs a width way stretch knit is totally fine too. In fact most knit fabrics will have the width way stretch only.





So how much stretch does my fabric need? For a romper I would suggest 25% width way stretch. This means you should be able to stretch a 10 cm / 4 inch piece to 12.5cm / 5”.

When a fabric is knitted it naturally gains stretch through the process of knitting. So even if it is a two way stretch only, you will end up with a small amount of stretch length ways anyway.



Basic Knit Fabric:

This diagram shows you how a standard Jersey is knitted. The knit has horizontal loops on the back, and vertical ribs on the front. It looks just like hand knitting only much finer.

LET'S LOOK AT THE FIBRE CONTENT!

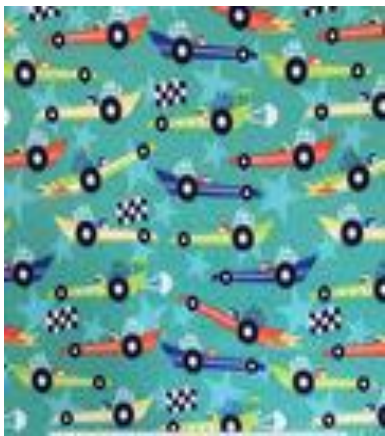
The fiber content is important for what we call 'recovery' of a fabric. Always choose a natural fiber for your child. It is comfortable and will wash well. There won't be static build up either which can cause discomfort for the child.



Natural fibers are generally not very stretchy. Although wool has natural stretch you are hardly going to use it here. So you are left with natural fibers like bamboo or cotton. 100% cotton is going to stretch and will loose much of its shape with a few washes. Just think of your t-shirts and you know what I mean.

So they need help from their synthetic cousins! These man-made fibers will make the fabric return to its original shape after wear and wash. The most commonly used fibers are Elastane, Spandex and Lycra. They add durability and stretch to the fabric. Look for 3-5 % for the body of a romper.

A lot of people shop at JoAnne's fabric store. While they do have some great fabrics be wary of their 100% cotton knit. Here is an example.



The underside of the knit is lightly brushed and the top side has a cute print. The fibers are thicker, so the fabric feels like a medium weight knit. Sometimes they have also added fillers which will wash out straight away and leave a limp, shrunk and shapeless garment.

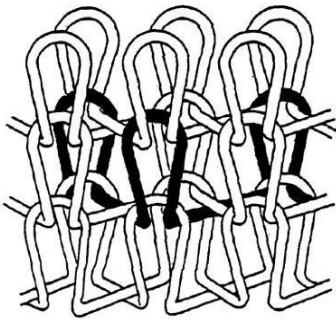
Not what you want after you put in so much effort! So test the fabric in the shop, give it a good stretch and see if it returns to its original shape. If not, move on, no matter how cute the print.



Here is the thing though. 100% cotton can be awesome if the yarn used has some decent twist! As a beginner it is hard to differentiate between the good, the bad and the ugly, so stretch the fabric and if it doesn't return to its original shape, stay clear!

THE MOST AWESOME KNIT FOR YOUR ROMPER!

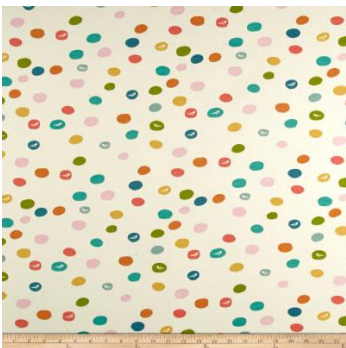
No let's have a look at another type of knit which makes the most beautiful knit garments. This is my favorite! Nothing lasts forever but this fabric is closer than others. With Interlock you will find many fabric manufacturers haven't added a synthetic stretch fiber. It has in itself good recovery so don't be disheartened and discount it because it doesn't have any Lyra!



Interlock:

Interlock is the 'Jack of all trades' in fabrics. It is great for everything that requires a stable knit from cardigans to romper. It is double sided and usually heavier in weight. Get this fabric and you will love it!

Interlock gets its name from the fact that one yarn literally moves from one side of the fabric to the other. It is a more expensive form of knitting but it does make all the difference. No edge will ever roll up on Interlock!



This Interlock is by Birch fabrics. They specialize in high quality organic fabrics. This one is lightweight and will make a super comfy romper!

WHERE TO GET YOUR FABRIC

My suggestions are based on where I have bought my fabric in the past. I am sure there are many more places to buy and I would love you to tell me your favorites, so I can add them.



WHAT DOES FABRIC WEIGHT MEAN?

For baby rompers you are looking for lightweight or medium weight fabric.

So you can easily identify if a fabric is suitable look at the weight description. It's always best if you can actually go into the shop and feel the fabric but if you can't here are the numbers.

Very lightweight = 0 – 3.4 oz/yd²

Lightweight = 3.5 – 5.9 oz/yd²

Medium Weight = 6 – 7.9 oz/yd²

Medium/Heavyweight = 8 – 9.9 oz/yd²

Heavyweight = 10 – 11.9 oz/yd²

Very Heavyweight = 12 – 25 oz/yd²