

10 Tips for Sewing with Fake Fur

by Kenneth D. King



- The first thing to know when you prepare to sew any kind of fur: Don't be intimidated! Sewing fur can make a beginner look like an expert, because the nap, especially on long-haired furs, hides a lot.
- Always mark fur on the back. You can use permanent markers, or artists' pencils. The marks are covered inside the garment by lining.
- It's essential to mark the nap direction on the back of the fur. This ensures that the nap runs in the proper direction on all of your pieces.
- Fur is traditionally worn with the nap running down. However, for some fantasy furs, experiment with the nap running up—this makes for interesting effects, and it's just as wearable.
- Cut fur from the back, using a sharp blade. You can use single-edge razor blades, craft knives, or any other kind of blade that is extremely sharp. Don't cut fur with scissors—you lose too much nap that way.
- Don't skimp on fresh blades to cut fur. A clean cut is better than a ragged cut.
- There are two kinds of fake fur backings: Knitted and woven. Knitted furs can be sewn with a "hinge seam," meaning the fur is cut with no seam allowances and sewn edge-to-edge with a zigzag stitch. Woven furs require a seam allowance.
- Stay seamlines before cutting fur. The professional product is called cold tape, but you can use 1/4-inch-wide twill tape applied with white glue. Allow the glue to dry before cutting.
- Whenever possible, avoid hand sewing through fur. When securing hems and facings, sew a bias strip of lining fabric to the fur's cut edge, then sew through that bias strip to the back of the fur.
- Be adventurous with closures! Covered fur hooks are the classic way to close a fur coat, but try toggle closures or other bold fastenings to give your coat more personality, as well as make it easier to close.

Kenneth D. King is the star of *Smart Sewing: Fake Fur* (Taunton Press, 2015), a new instructional DVD featuring faux furs from Shannon Fabrics. TauntonStore.com