



Which stabilizer?

Start with your fabric. Your design file or machine manual wins if it says something different.

BACKING KEY

CUT-AWAY

TEAR-AWAY

WASH-AWAY

HEAT-AWAY

Fabric	Start with this backing	Topping?	Why	Watch out
Stable woven (quilting cotton, canvas, denim, linen)	TEAR-AWAY Tear-away	Usually no	Stable fabric does not need permanent support.	Dense design or file says cut-away: use cut-away.
T-shirt or light knit	CUT-AWAY Cut-away; no-show mesh on light colors	Only on textured knits like pique	Knits stretch, so support has to stay.	Tear-away alone lets a knit design distort.
Light-colored or thin knit where backing shows	CUT-AWAY No-show (poly) mesh cut-away	Only if textured	Sheer mesh cuts show-through.	Still trim it; it stays in the garment.
Sweatshirt, heavy knit, sweater knit	CUT-AWAY Medium or heavier cut-away	Yes on textured or brushed surfaces	Heavier knits and big designs need more hold.	Hoop without stretching the knit.
Towel / terry	TEAR-AWAY CUT-AWAY Tear-away or cut-away backing	Yes, water-soluble	Loops swallow stitches without topping.	Rinse or tear topping per the product.
Fleece, Sherpa, velour	TEAR-AWAY CUT-AWAY Backing matched to stretch	Yes	Nap and pile bury stitches.	Do not crush the nap with a tight hoop; float if your manual allows.
Velvet or napped fabric you cannot wet	Sticky or floated backing	HEAT-AWAY Heat-away topping	Removes with heat instead of water.	Check the fabric can take the iron setting on the product.
Sheer or lightweight (batiste, organza)	WASH-AWAY CUT-AWAY Wash-away or no-show mesh	Only if needed	Wash-away leaves nothing behind when traces must go.	Heavy backing will show through.
Freestanding lace or cutwork	WASH-AWAY Fabric-type (mesh) wash-away, often 2 layers	No	The stabilizer is the only support, then it rinses out.	Film-type wash-away can tear under dense lace.

REMOVAL KEY

CUT-AWAY

Trim around the design; rest stays.

TEAR-AWAY

Tear from stitches, supporting with a thumb.

WASH-AWAY

Rinse per the product label.

HEAT-AWAY

Follow the label; check fabric heat tolerance.



Before you stitch

Three checks and a blank test-stitch log.

BEFORE YOU STITCH

- 1 Your design file or machine manual beats this chart.
- 2 Denser designs need more support than the fabric alone suggests.
- 3 Stitch a test on a scrap of the same fabric first.

BLANK TEST-STITCH LOG

Date	Fabric	Design/stitch count	Backing type/weight/layers	Topping	Needle	Result	Change next time