

## **Starching Tips**

Quilter's Newsletter Magazine  
December 2005/No. 378 Issue

Many quilters find that fabric is more cooperative when it's starched, especially when rotary cutting or piecing patches cut on the bias. Here are three methods. Choose the one right for you and your project.

### **SPRAY STARCH IN AN AEROSOL CAN**

Buying heavy spray starch in a can is very convenient. Cover your ironing board with a large towel. Spray starch on the back of dry fabric until it is literally wet. Let the starch soak in a bit, and then iron. Vary the amount of stiffness to your preference or technique. Starch your fabric lightly for appliqué patches, firmly for rotary and template cutting, and very stiff for paper piecing.

### **YOUR OWN SPRAY STARCH**

Buy a bottle of undiluted liquid starch and a small spray bottle. Mix 40 percent starch and 60 percent water in the spray bottle for an inexpensive alternative to aerosol cans. Protect your ironing board with a large towel and place dry fabric on it, right side down. Spray generously, but not soaking wet. The towel picks up the overspray. Let the fabrics rest for about five minutes to let the starch soak in; then press. Remember, starch is organic. Try to mix the amount you'll need for one application. Leftover diluted starch should be refrigerated.

### **THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY**

Dipping the fabric in liquid starch is an efficient and economical method for applying heavy starch to yardage and larger pieces of fabric. While washed fabric is still damp, dip it in a half-and-half solution of liquid starch and water. Hang the fabric to drip dry and iron it while it's still slightly damp.

## Sue's Favorite Starching Tip

I like the old fashioned look to most of my quilts, so I do not normally preshrink my fabric. I do like to starch my fabric as I like the stability it gives my fabric while piecing.

I soak my fabric in a solution of 50% Sta-Flo Liquid Starch and 50% water. Sta-Flo liquid starch comes in a blue 2 quart bottle.

I do this in my washing machine running cool water into a container first so I know approximately how much water I have in the washing machine. I then add the same amount of Sta-Flo Liquid Starch.

If I am starching both light and dark fabrics I soak my light fabrics first, making sure every part of the fabric is wet. I then wring the fabric out by hand and put in a holding pan.

I then soak my darks, when totally wet I let the machine spin out the solution. **Do not rinse the fabric.** I put the darks in the dryer on air fluff until almost dry. I press my fabrics to finish drying them.

Now, I return the lights to the washing machine, spin off the starch solution, dry and iron as listed above.

### **Note:**

I used to use an aerosol spray starch, but found it was easy to stretch my fabric out of shape using this technique. I like to starch my fabrics using the technique listed above. I don't experience the fraying of fabric I do when I don't starch. Every time I press my pieces I reactivate the starch solution and I feel my piecing is more accurate.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Happy Quilting!

Sue Vollbrecht  
Quilting Memories  
4638 Tonyawatha Trail  
Monona WI 53716  
608-221-0246  
svollb@charter.net