



Fancy FLEECE *Finishes*

By Deonn Stott

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“Polar Fleece” was developed in 1979 by Aaron Feuerstein as a man-made replacement to wool, hence the name. It is a lightweight fabric, holds less than 1% of it’s weight in water, is durable and washable. Fleece does not fray, making it great for no-sew projects and crafts. Fleece yardage usually measures 58-59” wide, so you get more fabric for your dollar. Fleece comes in a variety of prints, styles, weights and stretch-ability. A higher grade of fleece is touted as “anti-pill” grade, as opposed to lower grades of fleece that are thinner and have a tendency to pill when washed repeatedly. It’s recommended to wash in cold, and tumble-dry low so as not to “melt” the fibers. Fleece is easy to sew. When sewing, use a size 9/14 ball-point needle, and stitch using a longer stitch length and/or a slight zig-zag stitch as fleece does have a bit of a stretch on the cross grain. Prepare edges by trimming off selvages. Rotary cutters make the best cuts, as fleece shows every scissor mark.

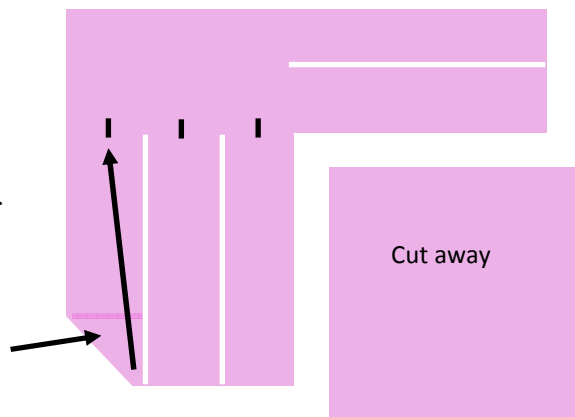
See the following page for some terrific “NO-SEW” or “LOW-SEW” ways to finish the edges of fleece.

FRINGE: Cut strips about 3" deep, 1" wide. Cut away a 3-inch square on corners.

Half-knot ~ Make a loop at the top of each piece of fringe and pull the end through. Repeat for each strand.

"Not" a Knot ~ Use a seam ripper to cut a small hole centered on the fringe above the cut lines. Fold the end of the fringe into a triangle, then use the seam ripper to push the point of the strand through the hole. This makes a nice, flat knot that will not unravel. Try with a double layer of fleece for nice accent.

Stretchy Strands—pull to stretch and curl the fringe. Usually, fleece will not stretch much on a lengthwise cut (parallel with selvage edges), but may stretch substantially on the cross grain. Try cutting in half-inch increments for an even curlier look.



BOWS: Make a 2-inch slice, 4 inches apart. Use a seam ripper to cut a small hole centered on the bow above the slice lines. Gather the center of the bow, then use yarn, Perle cotton or self-made fleece yarn* and tie a knot to secure. Or, skip the seam ripper and take it to the sewing machine to tack the gathered center with a few zig-zag stitches.

CHUNKY CROCHET:

Raw-Edge Self-Crochet ~ Cut slices 2-inches deep, 1 inch apart. Cut away a 2-inch square on the corners. Clip a 1/2" snip about 1/4" up from the bottom edge. Using a large crochet hook, pull an adjacent loop through the hole. Repeat and continue all the way around the quilt. On the last loop, cut strand in half and tie a knot around the first loop, or stitch to finish.

Loopy Self-Crochet ~ This technique also works great with double layers. Cut away a 4-inch square on the corners. Fold edges over 2" wide and zigzag to finish the hem. Cut slices 2-inches deep, 1 inch apart. Use a large crochet hook or your fingers and begin by pulling an adjacent loop through the first loop. Repeat and continue all the way around the quilt, cutting the last loop in half and tying a knot or stitching around the first loop.

Crocheted or Stitched Edge: *Make fleece "yarn" by cutting 3/8-inch to 1-inch cross-grain (from selvage to selvage) strips, then stretch the strip as far as possible. It will curl up on itself and may relax a bit, but may be used to crochet an edging. Tie a knot to join the ends and wind it up like a ball of yarn. You may wish to use a rotary "Skip Blade" to cut perfectly symmetrical 1/4" holes, about 3/8" to 1/2" from the outer edges of the blanket. Crochet using fleece yarn in a contrasting color. Another option to try: Use a large-eye needle with your fleece yarn and blanket-stitch the edge of the fleece.

JUNE TAILOR RULERS: June's *Shape Cut Ruler* is a great tool to cut straight, even slices for fringe. Comes in a 12-inch square with 1/2-inch increments. The *Fancy Fleece* ruler will help you cut scallops, curvy edges, zig-sag edges, curvy skinny fringe and more. Made for use with rotary cutting equipment, or as a template to trace and cut with scissors. See a video demonstrating her *Fancy Fleece* ruler: youtu.be/P9mHzlDpvIo.