

How To Turn Any Fabric Into A Laminate With Iron-On Vinyl

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Tuesday, 23 October 2012 3:00



Today's popular laminated cottons start out as basic woven 100% cottons, which are then coated with a Phthalate-free laminate. They're ideal for any project where you want some waterproofing or the ability to wipe the finished item clean with a damp cloth. Think baby bibs, changing pads, raincoats, outdoor tablecloths, reusable shopping bags, and more. Many of your favorite fabric designers are adding laminate choices to their collections, giving you dozens and dozens of very pretty options to choose from. But sometimes, there's a specific print you *can't* find as a laminate; such as when you're using a very specific set of fabrics and want everything to match exactly. There's an easy way to make your own laminated fabric with iron-on vinyl. The most widely used product of this type, and the one we're using for today's tutorial, is [Heat 'n' Bond by Therm O Web](#)

Iron-on vinyl comes in thin sheets with peel-away backing paper. You can usually find it in two finishes: gloss and matte. It's similar to the clear vinyl contact paper you use for laminating paper items or lining shelves. But because you adhere the Heat 'n' Bond product with your iron, it's actually easier to use than contact paper.

Choosing a fabric to laminate

[Heat 'n' Bond](#) is designed for use on all fabrics, and if you use basic pre-washed cottons, you're going to be fine. Where you might find some challenges are with very thin fabric, material that doesn't iron out flat, fabric that melts if you iron it, or fabric with a nap or deep texture. The laminate has to be able to make contact with the entire surface of your material or you'll get bubbling.

This is what makes a basic cotton print ideal. You can iron it very flat at a high heat and it has enough bulk to support the layer of laminate.



The only real draw back is width. On a pre-packaged roll or on a bolt, the widest available option we found is 24". This makes it best for projects that work within this size, however, you can butt together two pieces or even overlap them slightly. In either case, the resulting "seam" almost (but never completely) disappears.

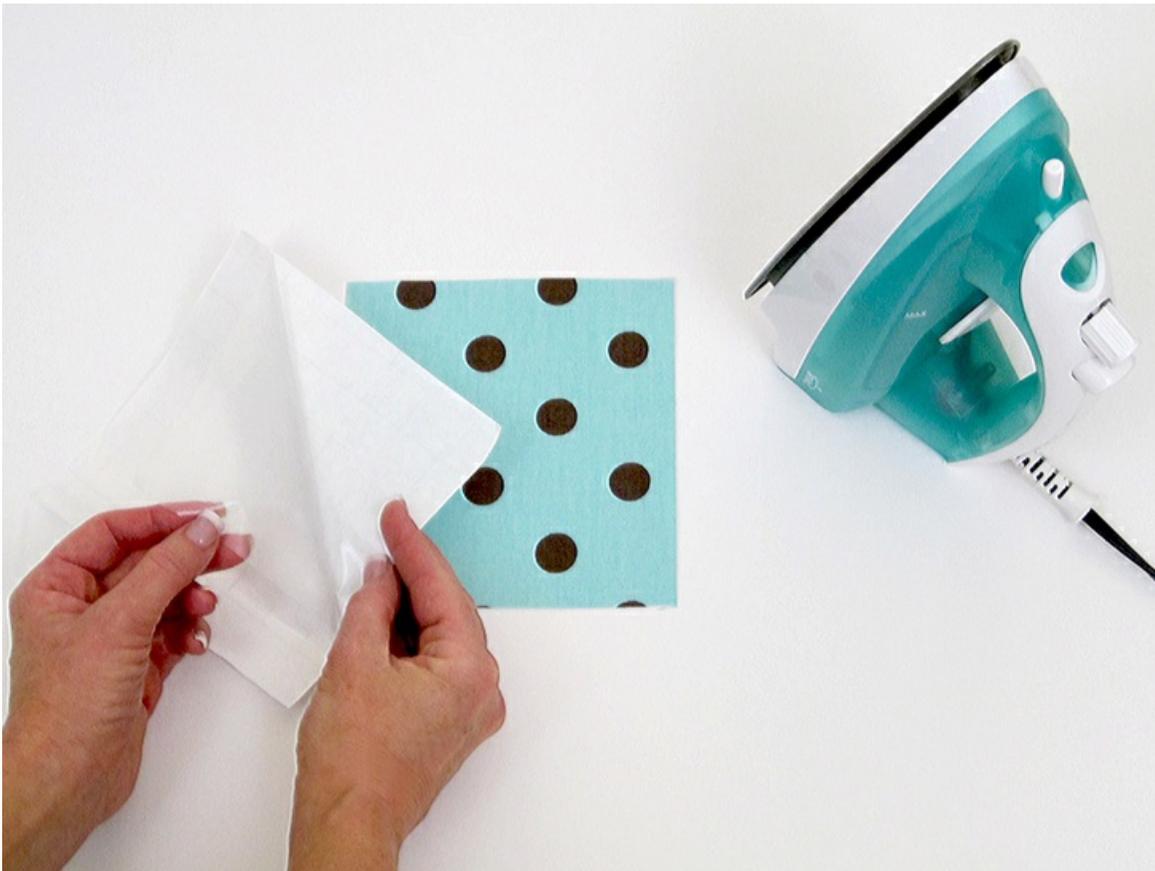
We researched what safety studies had been done and found that Therm O Web (the makers of of Heat 'n' Bond) had tested their product for full compatibility with government safety regulations. Their testing showed the Heat 'n' Bond Iron-On Vinyl contained no BPA or lead content. However, it does utilize a plasticizer, DIDP, and even though this Phthalate is not banned by the government, as a precaution, the company does suggest iron-on vinyl not be used on items that are specifically meant to be chewed on or sucked on by children.

Getting ready to laminate your fabric

You should iron the [Heat 'n Bond](#) onto your fabric *before* you cut it out. Begin with a piece of fabric big enough to cut out your pattern piece(s). As with most projects, the material should be pre-washed so it doesn't shrink. However, if you're using an outdoor fabric with sizing and/or you know you're never going to wash the project you are starting, you are off-the-hook.

Ironing on the vinyl

1. Lay your fabric right side up and flat on your work surface. With your iron set to a medium-wool setting, iron the fabric completely flat. It's important there are *no* wrinkles.
2. Cut out a piece of Heat 'n' Bond large enough to cover the fabric piece(s) you'll be cutting out. The backing paper has a grid on it, which is a helpful cutting guide.
3. Peel the backing away from the vinyl. I was pleased to see that peeling apart the two layers was easy. Many of these kind of products can be soooooo hard to get started, I often lose patience with this very first step. But with the Heat 'n' Bond, just pick at the corner with your fingernail, and the two layers separate right away.



4. Don't toss the paper. You use it in the ironing process.
5. Place the vinyl sticky-side-down on the right side of your ironed fabric.



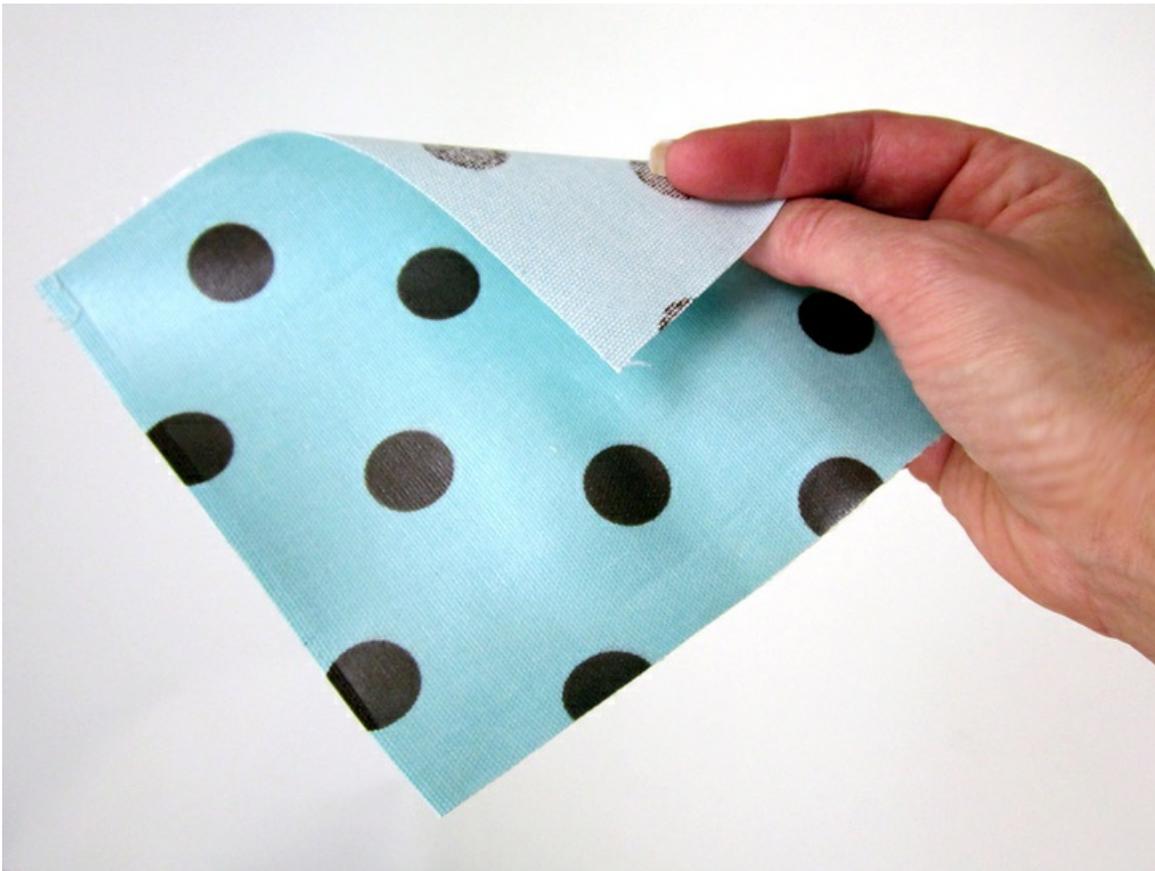
6. The laminate is only a little bit sticky; you can still easily move it around until it's in exactly in the right position.
7. Place the backing paper you just removed over the vinyl. Iron the entire piece with medium pressure. The heat of the iron is activating the fabric glue in the Heat 'n' Bond. You don't want to melt the vinyl itself, so keep the iron moving.



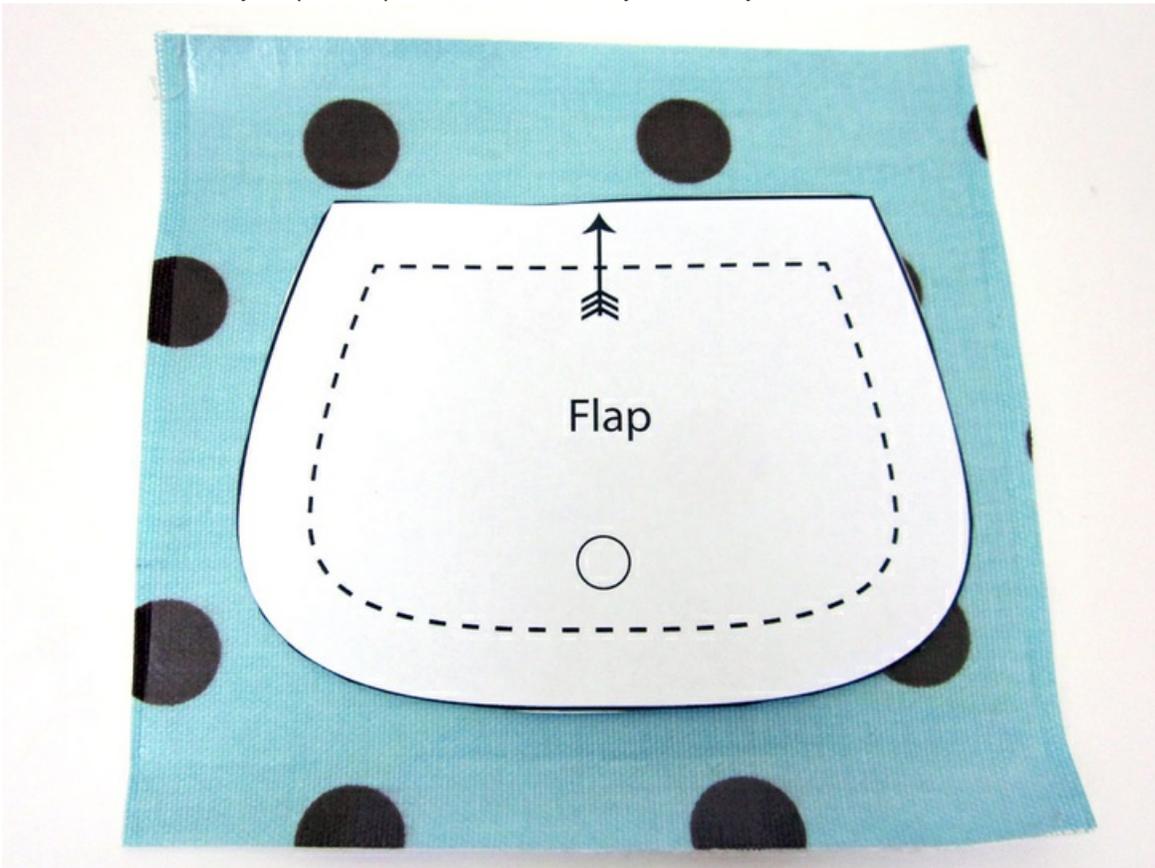
8. Take away the backing paper and flip your fabric over. Iron from the wrong side.



9. Ta-da: your very own laminated fabric.



10. You can now cut out your pattern piece and sew with it just like any other laminated fabric.



11. Modern laminates are not at all difficult to work with; they are quite soft and pliable. Again, take a minute to check out our tutorial: [Successful Sewing With Laminated Cottons \(And Other Sticky Stuff\)](#) for more more tips on sewing, finishing, and caring for laminates.



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