
Edge Finishing Silk Crepeline

Silk crepeline can be edge finished in many ways: hemming, pinking edges, or using a thin line of acrylic medium to seal an edge. These techniques are effective, but may produce a result that is less than desirable for a particular treatment. Such an incident prompted the development of this technique for edge finishing silk crepeline. This method fuses a polyester thread pulled from a piece of Stabiltex onto the edges of a silk crepeline patch to seal the edges and create a thin, nearly invisible finish. This technique works best with straight edges, but with some experimentation and patience, it can also be used to create shaped patches and to join two pieces of crepeline together.

Supplies:

- Sheet of glass
- Dark or light colored cardboard
- Pyrograph tool with rheostat
- Stabiltex
- Silk crepeline
- Painter's tape
- Mylar
- Sharpie® pen
- Small weights
- Small container of water
- Scissors

The pyrograph tool needs to be set at approximately 530° F \pm 10 degrees. The goal is to melt the polyester thread and not burn the silk. The temperature should be adjusted accordingly.



Work Environment

1. You will do all your work on the glass sheet.
2. Depending on the color of the silk crepeline (light or dark), place the dark or light colored cardboard underneath the glass (dark cardboard for lighter colors and light cardboard for dark colors). The contrast will allow you to see what you are doing.

Finishing Straight Edges

1. Pull a thread from a piece of Stabiltex. Make sure it's longer than your silk crepeline patch.
2. Using the painter's tape, tape one end of the Stabiltex thread onto the glass work surface. Pull the thread taut and orient it vertically. Tape the other end to the glass. (See Figure 1.)
3. Place the silk crepeline fabric ON TOP of the polyester thread.

4. Align the grain line of the silk crepeline with the polyester thread and use small weights to hold the silk crepeline in place. (See Figure 2.)

5. Start from the top, using your middle and forefinger, hold the crepeline taut and gently run the tip of the pyrograph tool down the thread line. (See Figure 3.) Fuse only small sections at a time. You will want to pass the pyrograph tool over the area several times until the polyester thread melts (you will see the thread turn slightly opaque). This will also ensure that the silk doesn't burn.

6. Trim the edges and thread. The silk crepeline can be trimmed to less than a millimeter from the polyester thread line. (See Figure 4.)

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Variations: Double or triple strands of thread can be used to finish edges. You will get a slightly heavier line, but a more durable edge. For best results, bundle multiple strands together and tape to the glass. Place the silk crepeline on top and fuse the threads.

Using a Template for Different Shapes

Things to note before you start:

1. For curves (circles, ovals, lobed shapes), it is best to use a little water on the glass to create surface tension when positioning the polyester thread and to help hold the thread in place while you work.
2. For complex designs, divide and conquer. Divide the template into quarters or halves. Fuse the polyester thread to one section at a time.
3. Simple shapes give the best results (circles, squares, triangles, etc.).

Making Silk Crepeline Patches

1. Use a Sharpie® pen in the appropriate color to draw your design onto Mylar (see Figure 5.)
2. Place your template between the glass and cardboard.
3. Using painter's tape, tape one end of the polyester thread just on the outside edge of your design. Placing the thread along the outside edge will accommodate any shrinkage that will occur when fusing the thread.
4. Dip your finger into water and spread a small amount of water along the outline of the design. Using your moistened finger and the water on the glass, arrange the thread along the outer edge of the design. Tape the other end to the glass work surface. (See Figure 6.)
5. Place the silk crepeline on top of your polyester thread. Any remaining water on the glass surface will help hold the silk crepeline in place, but do not rely on just the water, also use small weights. (See Figure 7.)
6. Hold the silk crepeline and polyester thread with your fingers to stabilize as you work. Do not pull taut. The goal is to retain the shape of the design. Work in small sections and fuse the thread to the silk crepeline with several passes. The remaining water will evaporate as you fuse the polyester thread onto the silk crepeline. Take your time!
7. Cut out the design with a pair of scissors (See Figure 8.)

Figure 6



Figure 5



Figure 7



Figure 8



Joining Silk Crepeline Patches Together

A note before you start: For joining two silk crepeline patches, a Stabiltex thread will be applied to each patch, and then the two Stabiltex patches will be put together face to face and fused. Therefore, the Stabiltex thread will be on the back of one, and on the front of the other.

1. Begin by fusing a polyester thread along one edge of your silk crepeline patch as you would to finish a straight edge. Note which side the polyester thread has been fused onto the crepeline. This side will be the back side of your patch.
2. Fuse another polyester thread onto the edge of the second piece of silk crepeline. Also, note which side is the back of the fabric. Now you will have two crepeline patches, each with a finished edge. (See Figure 9.)
3. Flip the first crepeline patch over so that the polyester thread side (back) faces up.
4. Place the second silk crepeline patch on top of the first patch (back side to back side). Align the polyester threads next to each other so they butt up against each other. (See Figure 10.)
5. Weight down the silk crepeline patches with small weights.
6. Run the pyrograph tool over the doubled polyester threads until the two crepeline patches fuse together. (See Figure 11.)
7. Trim the overlapping edges as necessary. (See Figure 12.)

This method provides another option for finishing silk crepeline. The fused polyester thread produces a clean and tidy finished edge. With practice, it becomes a quick way to create patches and overlays. The instructions above are just the basics. Experimentation and development of new ways to use this technique are encouraged.

Figure 9



Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

