



**HANDLING NATURAL  
FIBRE FABRICS**

**EXTENSION GUIDE**

# HANDLING NATURAL FIBRE FABRICS

## **Introduction:**

The life of a fabric depend is on its resistance to rubbing (abrasions) because while it is used fabric becomes abased by rubbing against the body; chairs and other objects with which it may come into contract with. Fabrics are also abased during laundering ironing, continuous flexing at elbows and knees also contribute to fabric breakdown. The different textile fibers vary in their resistance to abrasions.

This guide introduces you to the various clothings from better life wear.

## **Textile Fibres**

Textile Fibres are broadly classified into natural and man made. The natural fibres are those which are naturally present. These include vegetable fibres derived from plants, and animals fibres derived from animal or synthetic fibres are made from and cotton usually dissolved into liquid using chemicals and threads are made from the solution.

## **VEGETABLE FIBRE FABRICS**

### **Cotton**

Cotton is the molt useful textile material in the country. Cotton can be seen in use in every part of the household from

living room; sitting room to the kitchen. Since cotton material is generally cheaper than most of the natural fibre fabrics; it can be seen in various clothing apparels e.g. curtains; bed sheets, cushion covers, pillow and pillow cases, towels, table cloth or table runners, napkins, dresses and garments etc.

### **Cotton Fibre Character**

Cotton fibres are naturally twisted. This makes them strong and elastic. Cotton is cool to wear therefore important for clothing in hot season because it takes up moisture easily and dries it up quickly.

Cotton shrinks when washed but quality cotton fabrics are usually pre-shrank during manufacture.

Cotton is highly inflammable and burns rapidly, great care must be taken when using open fire or handling cigar rate near cotton fabrics.

### **Handling Cotton Materials**

Most cotton materials are strong and can withstand some amount of friction at washing. Such as soaking in cold or hot water for through wetting. Heavy cotton weaves like "gwado" local weave; baft, shirting and poplin materials can be washed in hot water. They can even withstand boiling to sanitize as seen in hospital (Cotton dresses and beddings for patients).

There are however other cotton materials that are so tender in body size or fragile and delicate like flannel, velveteen and organdi they need special care. Georges and organdi are usually not laundered by soap and water but by use of petrol-chemicals like "Ace tone". Flannel and velveteen are pile cotton materials. To obtain good results and keeping the pile uncrushed and raised it requires different treatment. Warm water should be used and soap solution with good quality soap. No soaking. Do not squeeze or rub the material but knead. Rinsing hold be done in warm water, several times without squeezing or rubbing. Add vinegar to the last rinsing water to revive the colour of the fabric. When rinsed no bluing or starching and wringing should be practiced in laundering these material.

## **Linen**

Linen is a fibre grown inside a long straight stems of the flax plant. The outer covering of the stem is rotted away with water and bacteria so that the fibres inside can be removed into yarn for making fabrics. Linen materials have natural strength and inster thus a good wear at summer.

## **Linen Fibre Characters**

Linen materials have a characteristics slug in the weave which is due to the fibre's being of uneven thickness throughout the length.

Linen fabrics are strong and durable like cotton linen can stand rubbing and squeezing during laundry. Linen fabrics are in various weights for example aircraft line; canvas, tarpaulins, bed linen, table linen. The fine weights linen like cambric is used for blouses, smooth linen for dresses and other household clothes.

### Handling Linen Materials

Like cotton linen can be washed by rubbing and squeezing but finer linen like cambric should be handled with care using soap solutions and tender shaking in the washing and rinsing water.

Vegetable fibres generally are strong and can tolerate rubbing and friction during washing and other handling but finely woven materials like velveteen and cambric need tender handling.

### Animal Fibre Fabrics

#### *Wool*

Many animals produce wool but the mostly used wool are obtained from sheep. Wool is made into many weights for most garments from under wear to heavy outer wear. Woolen fibres are mostly mixed with other fibres such as terylene or cotton to make it strong and cheaper. Woolen fibres are spun

into yarn and used for weaving various grades of woolen fabrics. Wool is light in weight and soft to wear. It is non-inflammable; it does not catch fire but chars slowly thus safe for children's wear.

### **Wool Fibre Characters**

Woolen fibre strands have tiny overlapping scales that makes it curly and stretches. When woven the fibre press together tightly and inter lock trapping air between them. This air act as an insulator and helps to keep the body warmth intact. This action make woolen materials suitable wears in the cold weather.

### **Handling Woolen Materials**

Woolen materials are costly and liable to attack by moth, grubs and inclined to shrinkage in hot or cold water. It also felt up or get matted when carelessly washed. When these happens the character of woolen fibres becomes inter locked as such making the material thick and less warm.

Woolen materials should be handled with care. Wash woolen materials in warm water using soap solution. Do not rub or squeeze woolen materials especially the knitted garments. To wash woolen garment soak to wet them thoroughly just for two to three minutes since long soaking shrinks the woolen article. Use warm water only for both washing and rinsing.

Woolen articles cannot stand rubbing and friction since this pulls wool out of shape. Rubbing two surface of woolen material together makes the fibres mat up and spoil the wool. When washing support the garment with both hands during washing after washing and rinsing extract as much moisture as possible from the article by rolling the wet article in a towel and patting with hands. Do not keep wet for long time wash, rinse, and extract excess moisture and dry flat quickly on a flat surface in an airy place.

## **Silk**

Silk is an animal fibre which is made by a silk worm. The silk worm extrudes a sticky liquid which solidifies into silken long threads. This can be up to four kilometers long and the insect winds it round itself to form a cocoon. The cocoon is steamed up to kill the insect thereby protecting the long fibre from spoiling. The fibre is wound off in a continuous thread. These fibres are then spanned into textiles thread to weave silk fabric.

### **Silk Fibre Character**

Next to nylon, silk is the strongest thread. Materials made from silk are absorbent and warm. Silk has a lovely luster. They drape beautifully and have certain electricity which makes them very suitable for linger i.e , blouses and strength when wet it can be easily damaged by friction and pressure. Silk is comfortable to wear because of its high elasticity, it will into

wrinkle easily. Silk is a delicate fibre.

### **Handling Silk Materials**

Silk are pleasant to handle but as a delicate fibre, silk materials must be handled with care. To wash silk use a tepid soapy water using milk soap or detergent. Wash rubbing but heavily soiled parts can be treated by squeezing extra cleaning agents through them. Rinse in warm water until clear. Give a final rinse in cold water to which little of vinegar is been added.

After washing roll the article in a towel to absorb the excess moisture. Iron silk while still damp and even dampness to ensure better result. Use warm iron and apply even pressure.

Animal fibre fabrics are generally delicate and for better wear they need to be handled carefully both at wear or laundry.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The wear and tear of textiles products depends on their nature and resistance to abrasions. The knowledge of the characters of various textile fibres can assist greatly in better handling and promotion of better life wear of the garment we use.

In deciding to have garment one must make a choice in the market where there is a wide choice. Making a choice can be difficult during shopping because the bales of fabrics have



varied finishes. To guide you when making choice of fabric for yourself or household fabrics observe the following points or questions:

- Can it wear well at use intended?
- Can it wear well in season?
- How convenient can it be handled by the users?
- Which fibre was used for the making?

Adequate responses to these questions can assist in successful handling and management of your clothings.