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## EC475 Fabrics New and Old : Part II How to Buy and Care for them

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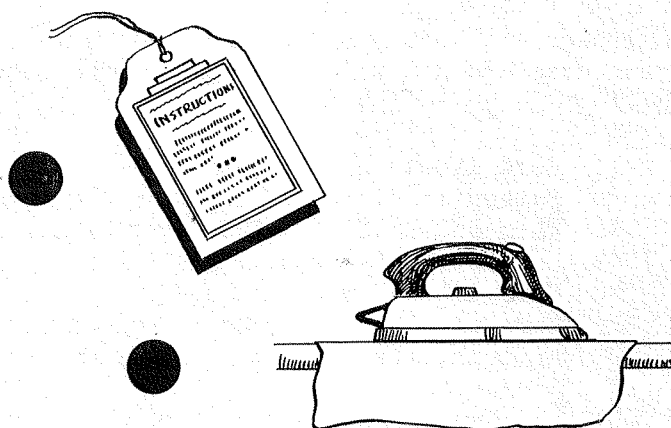
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# Fabrics OLD & NEW

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## Part II. HOW TO BUY AND CARE FOR THEM~



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## FABRICS OLD AND NEW

Helen Rocke

### Part II. How To Buy And Care For Them

When we buy yard goods or a dress we are interested in the satisfaction or service we're going to have from it. We want to know the kind of fiber in it, and if any special finishes were used. We can usually tell if we like the color and the texture, but we can't tell if the color will fade, or if the material will stand the wear we expect of it. These qualities are hidden in the making and finishing of the cloth. Price can't be depended upon as a true guide to quality because often two fabrics will look, feel, and cost the same, but one will outwear the other.

#### How Labels Can Help

Manufacturers know certain facts about their products. Scientific testing services to find others are available to them. Thus helpful information could be given to us through labels placed on the fabric or garment. Some manufacturers have begun to do this, but we need more truly informative labeling. The National Consumer Retailer Council defines an informative label as one which answers six questions:

1. What is the product made of?
2. How is it made?
3. How will it perform?
4. How should it be used?
5. How should it be cared for?
6. What is the name and address of the manufacturer or distributor?

There are not many labels which give all this information, and the terms used are not uniform. All of us need to encourage more informative labeling. Ways to do this are:

1. Read labels carefully.
2. Patronize firms which label their merchandise informatively.
3. When you find a label that is helpful, think out loud about it -- comment to the sales person or buyer.
4. Save labels you find helpful. You may need the instructions on care of the garment for some time. When you need to replace the article, the label may serve as a buying guide.

#### Federal Regulations That Help Us Identify Fibers

Because the kind of fiber used in making a piece of cloth is important, rulings have been made in regard to identifying fiber content.

The Federal Trade Commission has ruled that fabrics and other products made of wool, rayon, linen, or silk must be identified as to their content.

The Wool Labeling Act - This is a national law which became effective in July 1941. It requires that all products that contain wool, except floor coverings and upholstery materials, must carry a tag or label stating exactly the percentage of wool and other fibers present.

It also requires that the kind of wool must be stated by use of the terms:

Wool--the word "wool" used on this label or tag means wool fiber which has never been reclaimed from any woven or felted wool product.

Reprocessed wool--means wool which has been spun, woven, or felted, and then without ever having been used is reduced to fiber and again made into some wool product.

Reused wool--made from old wool which has actually been worn or used, then reduced to fiber and again made into some wool product.

Regulations For The Rayon Industry - The word rayon must be marked on all fabrics or articles containing rayon. When rayon is combined with other fibers the names of all must be put on the label, giving the name of the one used in largest amount first, and so on down.

If any fiber is present in quantity of 5 per cent or less, the exact percentage must be stated so as not to give the impression that there is a larger amount present.

The term rayon must be given at least the same prominence as the trade mark of the manufacturer, if a trade mark is used.

If terms such as "taffeta" or "chiffon", formerly considered to be silk terms, are used on rayon they must appear on the label as "rayon taffeta", etc.

Regulations For Linen - The rule for the linen industry requires that linen or flax, either alone or in combination with other fibers, must have the fiber content fully disclosed in non-deceptive terms. A two per cent tolerance in mixed goods is allowed.

Regulations For Silk - This ruling requires that the terms pure silk, all silk, pure dye silk, and any similar terms, which indicate that a fabric is made only of silk, may not be applied to any fabric which contains any fiber or substance other than silk, except dyeing and finishing materials.

Silk with metallic weighting must be labeled, and the label include the percentage of weighting and the amount of finishing material over and above the tolerances allowed for pure dye or all silk fabrics.

Trade Practice Rules For Shrinkage - In 1938, trade practice rules for labeling the shrinkage of woven cotton goods were issued. They prohibit labeling in a way that might be misleading.

They do not require all goods to be labeled for shrinkage, and they do not apply unless the manufacturer makes some claim concerning shrinkage. If a claim is made it must be accurate and specific.

Use of such terms as full-shrunk, double-shrunk, and non-shrinkable is permitted only if no residual shrinkage remains. This is almost never the case. So words like preshrunk or shrunk may be used, providing the percentage of shrinkage remaining is indicated. For example a label might read: "preshrunk--will not shrink more than 2 per cent".

#### What To Look For When Choosing Fabrics

Know what the fabric is to be used for--if a dress, do you want softness, gathers, pleats?

Is it for a garment that will be given hard wear, subject to pull and strain, and will it need to be laundered often?

The Yarn - Look at the fabric carefully. Generally yarns even in size throughout the fabric mean good quality. As a rule tightly twisted yarns wear better than those that are soft and loosely twisted. Round threads usually indicate a better twist. Uneven yarns are sometimes used to add interest to texture, but less service is expected of such fabric.

The Weave - Always look for firmly woven fabrics. Even an open weave should be firm, not sleazy. A closely woven fabric usually keeps its shape better, wears longer, and has less tendency to pull at the seams than if loosely woven.

To judge firmness, hold the fabric up to a strong light. Try to shift the yarns by gently rubbing or pulling a piece of fabric between the fingers. If the yarns shift easily, and the fabric becomes puffy in places there will be danger of pulling at the seams.

Good balance in a fabric, or approximately the same number and size of warp, and filling yarns in an inch of cloth makes for good wear. The 80 square percale, (meaning 80 threads to the inch in each direction) much used for house dresses, is an example.

Twill weaves as in gabardine, flannel, denim, and covert cloth are excellent for service.

Some crepes with mossy or pebbly effects are not intended for washing. The beauty of these crepes is their very crepey texture and appearance. Since highly twisted yarns must be used in the weaving to get this effect, there is danger of shrinkage or stretch when the fabric is wet.

Satin weaves and variations are chosen for dress-up clothes or luxurious appearance.

Thickness And Texture - As a result of laboratory research it has been proven that thickness and the roughness or smoothness of a fabric have more effect upon its warmth or coolness than the fiber from which it is made. Two layers of a light weight cloth may be warmer than one layer of thicker cloth, because the air between layers serves as insulation.

For protection against wind, the way a fabric is made is more important than the fiber. Cotton gabardine has been found an excellent material for this purpose, because of its close, firm weave.

Color Fastness - General statements such as colorfast and "fast color" mean little unless the conditions are given--as color fast to sun and washings. The color fastness of a fabric depends upon the dyestuff used, and the method used in dyeing. A high degree of colorfastness adds to the cost of the fabric. Manufacturers consider the intended use of fabrics in relation to methods of dyeing and dyestuff used on them. A fabric that must stand long hours of exposure to sun or many launderings, should have good color fastness to sun and washing in the dye used. Materials used for linings and slip covers require dye that has resistance to crocking.

Some manufacturers require that their fabrics pass certain color tests before they are considered serviceable. Such fabrics are usually so labeled. We need to ask for more of such service.

Look for labels or ask about the color fastness of any fabric you buy. Color in the fabrics you buy should have good qualities of resistance to the



conditions under which you will use them. These conditions may include one or more of the following: sunlight, washing, dry cleaning, perspiration, crocking, and atmospheric gas fading.

Vat Dyes - Vat dyes are the fastest dyes known to modern science. They are widely used on cotton, viscose rayon, linen, and other vegetable fibers. They will not dissolve in water, will not run or bleed during laundering. They are resistant to the action of light, acids, and alkalies. When applied to fibers or fabrics, they are dissolved by chemical action, and the solution is absorbed by the fabric. Then by chemical action they are again changed to an insoluble form and become a permanent part of the fiber.

We cannot improve fastness of dyes by home methods, as soaking fabrics in salt or vinegar solution, but reasonable care will help to preserve the color of the fabric. Examples of such care are the use of approved methods of laundering, and avoiding needless exposure to sun. Many hours on the clothes line on a hot, summer day, or of hot sun beating in a window, will weaken fabric as well as color.

### Washing And Ironing Synthetic Fabrics

Look, ask for, and follow laundering directions. Laundering qualities of many rayons have been improved. Some can be handled much the same as cotton, others require special care - look for labels or ask for information about the laundering qualities of a fabric or a garment.

Washing - Sometimes labels say "Wash by hand" or "Hand washable". When you wash by hand a satisfactory method is to make a thick suds of mild soap and lukewarm water. Squeeze out as much water as you can, then roll in a bath towel and pat and squeeze lightly to press out excess moisture.

If you wash rayons by machine, be careful that the water is not too hot - 105° - 110° is about right. Wash the rayons from 3 to 4 minutes - rinse in clear, warm water.

Nylon - if labeled washable may be laundered much the same as rayon using warm suds. Because of its smoothness, nylon does not soil easily. Some nylon fabrics may not require ironing. Those which do may be ironed with a moderately hot iron, or the control set for rayon.

Drying - Rayons are ironed best when they are allowed to dry only until they are of ideal dampness for ironing. The amount of dampness varies for different fabrics. Clothes hangers may be used when drying dresses and blouses to help keep them in good shape. Smooth out the garment on the hanger, and fasten buttons or other closings. Then let dry to the degree of dampness that is right for that fabric. An ironing chart follows which suggests dampness and iron heat for different fabrics.

When ironing don't pull or stretch the fabric or use extra pressure. This is especially true in handling rayon crepes and jersey. Always iron with the grain of the material.

Find the right iron temperature and dampness for each kind of material. Acetate rayon will melt and pucker if ironed with a hot iron.

Iron on the wrong side. Touch up collars, cuffs, pockets, etc., on the right side, using a pressing cloth over the fabric.

If you do not have a heat controlled iron, and don't think you can judge the proper heat, start with a warm iron and allow the iron to heat until fabric irons easily and well.

When in doubt about the kind of fabric, start ironing with a warm iron, and work up the amount of heat which produces best results. Test the temperature of your iron on a seam.

How To Prevent Iron Shine In All Fabrics

Use a well padded ironing board with a clean, taut cover. The padding should be thick and soft, yet firm.

Do not use an iron that is too hot, or put too much pressure on the iron.

Use a press cloth when ironing collars, plackets, or other double thickness sections on the right side.

Be sure the fabrics have been thoroughly rinsed. Soap left in the fabric after washing can cause grease spots and stains.

Shine shows more on dark colors so be especially careful with them.

### Ironing Chart For Rayons

<u>The Fabric</u>	<u>Dampness for Ironing</u>	<u>Iron Temperature*</u>
WASHABLE RAYON CREPE Much used in slips, night gowns, dresses, blouses.	ALMOST DRY A single thickness -- should be just damp to the touch.	MODERATELY HOT
HEAVIER SPUN RAYON Gabardine, covert, flannel hop-sacking, as used for slacks, tailored sports clothes.	SLIGHTLY DAMP If heavier parts are still damp after ironing is finished, hang garment on hanger to dry out. Touch up when dry.	HOT
DRESS WEIGHT SPUN RAYON Plain or printed. Shantung, broadcloth, novelty fabrics, or linen textured.	DRY	HOT
SHEER, LAWN-LIKE SPUN RAYON Printed and plain as used for underwear, blouses, soft daytime and afternoon dresses.	ALMOST DRY A slight trace of dampness to give a crisp finish.	WARM TO HOT Some fabrics may contain acetate rayon.
RAYON SHARKSKIN Firm, crisp fabrics from medium to heavy weight. Used in blouses, dresses, play clothes.	NOTICEABLY DAMP Iron slowly, and dry out fabric as you iron.	WARM Wash carefully. These fabrics are usually acetate rayon.
RAYON JERSEY Soft, knitted fabrics both printed and plain as used for dresses, blouses, underwear.	SLIGHTLY DAMP Roll in towel. Knead out as much moisture as possible. Keep weight of garment evenly distributed during ironing	WARM Be very careful. Usually contains some acetate. Iron lightly to avoid tension on fabric.
RAYON SATINS For heavier rayon satins, follow directions for sharkskin. For lighter weight satins use directions for rayon crepe. Both may contain some acetate.		

\*In the ironing chart the various temperatures of the iron are indicated as follows:

Hot - which would be the "Wool" or "Cotton" setting on the dial of a heat controlled iron.

Medium or Moderately Hot - which would be the "Silk" setting.

Warm - which would be the "Rayon" setting.