

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Historical Materials from University of
Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

Extension

1954

EC478 Care of Modern Fabrics

Helen Rocke

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>

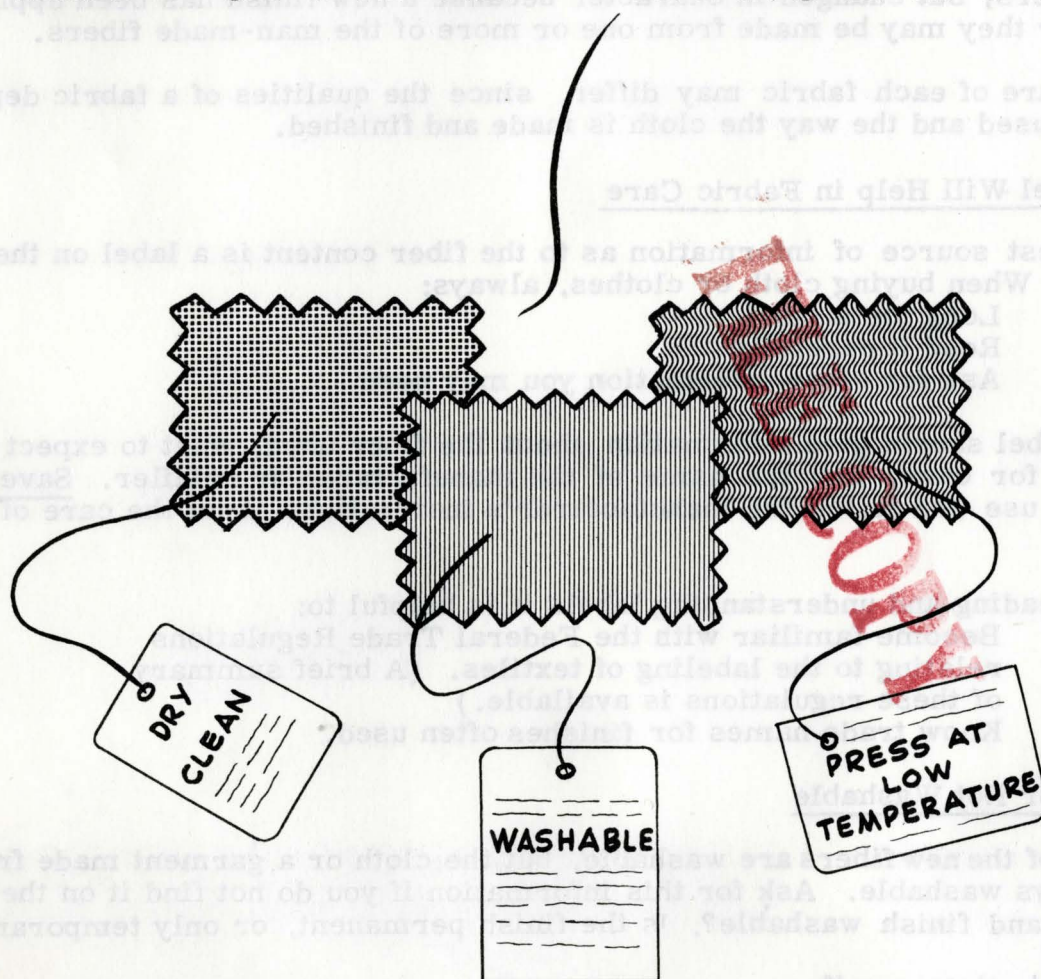
Rocke, Helen, "EC478 Care of Modern Fabrics" (1954). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 2213.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/2213>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

S
85
E7
#478

care of modern fabrics



EXTENSION SERVICE*

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

COOPERATING

W. V. LAMBERT, DIRECTOR

CARE OF MODERN FABRICS

Helen Rocke

The wide variety of modern fabrics brings both new freedom and new problems in the care of clothing and home furnishings. Some garments and curtains made of the newer man-made fibers may be washed and dried quickly with little or no ironing required. Wrinkle-resistant qualities bring freedom from much pressing, and moth-resistant qualities simplify storage if the fabric is not a blend with wool. On the other hand, some of the new finishes on cotton fabrics may mean special care in laundering that garment.

These fabrics which we wear, and use in the home today may be made from the natural fibers, but changed in character because a new finish has been applied to the fabric. Or they may be made from one or more of the man-made fibers.

The care of each fabric may differ, since the qualities of a fabric depend upon the fibers used and the way the cloth is made and finished.

How a Label Will Help in Fabric Care

The best source of information as to the fiber content is a label on the garment or fabric. When buying cloth or clothes, always:

- Look for a label
- Read it carefully
- Ask for other information you may need

The label should give information about the fiber used, what to expect of it, instructions for care, and the name of the manufacturer or retailer. Save the label for future use and follow the manufacturer's instructions about the care of the article.

For reading and understanding labels it is helpful to:

- Become familiar with the Federal Trade Regulations relating to the labeling of textiles. (A brief summary of these regulations is available.)
- Know trade names for finishes often used.

Washable or Not Washable

Most of the new fibers are washable, but the cloth or a garment made from them is not always washable. Ask for this information if you do not find it on the label. Is the fabric and finish washable? Is the finish permanent, or only temporary? Is the color fast?

Then check to see if:

- The style or design is such that needed pressing can be done easily.
- All thread, interfacing, lining, trimmings or finishes are washable and color-fast as the fabric.
- Shoulder pads are removable or washable.
- Seams are finished to prevent fraying.

If garments are to be dry cleaned, it may be helpful to the cleaner to give him information about the kind of fabric, and about any unusual spots or stains on the garment.

Regardless of the kind of fiber or fabric from which a garment is made, it is always better, if possible, to wash or clean garments before they get oversoiled, because ground-in dirt is difficult to remove.

Washing

If instructions for washing are given on labels of ready-made garments or yard goods, follow them closely. Sometimes hand washing is suggested because the article cannot stand washer action. It may be because the fabric, the trimming, or the construction is too fragile for this method. Seams should be well made and finished for machine washing. It may be necessary to overcast or run a row of machine stitching down seam edges that might pull out or fray.

If you have a new washing machine, check to see if there are directions for washing modern fabrics.

Not all fabric or articles made from man-made fibers are washable in the same way. Blends and combinations with other fibers and special finishes used on the fabric may make a difference in the methods to be used. The suggestions which follow apply to the man-made fibers and cottons with a crease-resistant finish. Either machine or hand washing may be used.

For machine washing, a light load, plenty of sudsy water and a short washing period are recommended to avoid wrinkling.

Wash white nylon separately from colored things, because the slightest trace of color will be picked up by white nylon. There is some preference for using soap rather than synthetic detergents for this fabric because of greater freedom from discoloration during washing.

Wash blends by the method suited to the most delicate fiber in the blend.

Temperature of the water should be only as hot as hands can comfortably stand. Too hot water may heat-seal wrinkles in the fabric or may have a tendency to remove decorative features such as pleats which have been heat-sealed in the garment.

If water is hard, use a water softener in both the suds and the first rinse.

Do not use bleaches of the chlorine type on embossed or crease-resistant cottons. If resin has been used in the finish, it may react with the chlorine and cause the fabric to turn yellow.

Mild bleaches, as the sodium perborate bleaches or peroxide, may be used for white fabrics if necessary.

Grease spots, oily stains, or badly soiled neckbands and collars should be given special care before washing. Remove grease and oil spots with dry cleaning solvent. Work a concentrated solution of synthetic detergent or a soapless shampoo into soiled neckbands and cuffs with a soft brush or sponge, then launder.

Rinse thoroughly in water as warm as the wash water.

Drying - Twisting and wringing may form permanent wrinkles or creases in any of the new fabrics. For heavy garments press or pat out some of the moisture with turkish towels, then hang garments on rust-proof hangers to drip dry. Finger pressing the seams, edges of collar and cuffs will help to dry them smoothly. Permanently pleated skirts are hung to drip dry.

Dynel - Avoid high temperatures because they will cause Dynel to stiffen and shrink. Wash quickly and gently in lukewarm suds. Do not dry in automatic dryer, because the temperature will cause fusing of the fibers. If the garment is Dynel fleece, brush it with medium stiff brush (when almost dry) to fluff up the nap.

Knitted fabrics - Machine washing and drying may cause excessive shrinkage of any knitted fabric. Dry knitted fabrics of Dynel, wool, and rayon flat to retain shape.

Starching - Do not use starch on crease-resistant cottons nor on most rayons. Crispness may be added to rayon by the use of gelatin. Soak 2 tablespoons of gelatin in a cup of cold water. Dissolve in a pint of boiling water and dilute with 8 to 15 parts water.

Ironing - Many of these fabrics need little or no ironing--a light touch-up may help on collars, cuffs, hems. Use low ironing temperature, set at "rayon" or below. Test on wrong side if fabric is a blend. Do not use a steam iron on Dynel. Press lightly on all newer man-made fibers and acetates. Heavy iron pressure causes glazing, and too high temperature will cause fusing. If in doubt, use a dry press cloth until you are sure it is not needed. Ironing on the wrong side is most satisfactory for rayons and acetates.

Stain Removal

The newer man-made fibers and some of the special finishes make fabrics which absorb little moisture. Stains carried into the fabric from water solutions such as food stains, spatters from muddy water, and other accidents do not penetrate deeply into the fibers; so many such stains may be removed from the surface by sponging with cold water.

Many materials labeled strain-resistant are resistant only to water-born stains, not to oily or greasy stains. Oil stains will need special treatment, such as a dry cleaning solvent used before washing the material.

General suggestions for stain removal are:

Treat spots or stains quickly.

Find out what the stain is, if possible.

Know the kind of cloth and how it reacts to cleaning fluids.

Try sponging with cold water first, unless stain is oily or greasy; then use a dry cleaning solvent, like carbon tetrachloride.

Test for color change on hidden part of garment.

To sponge a stain, place the stained fabric face down on a pad of clean absorbent cloth. Moisten a soft cloth with the remover and sponge the stain with light brushing motion. Work from the outside of the stain to center. Many light applications are better than one heavy one. Work quickly. Dry as rapidly as possible, to help prevent rings.

Storage

Wool garments or articles need to be given protection against moths if they do not have a moth-resistant finish. Blended fabrics with some wool content must also be protected. Washable garments of wool may be protected by using EQ-53 in the rinse water.

For others, a moth preventive as paradichlorobenzene may be used when the clean garment is stored in a sealed box or bag.

Dry cleaners are equipped for moth-proofing garments for an extra charge; this is done by a spray under pressure, which is more effective than the method of spraying that would be used at home.

Acetate Fabrics

These fabrics may need to be protected from gas fading during storage. To decrease this color fading in washable garments, they may be rinsed in a solution of washing soda (1 tsp. of soda to 1 quart of lukewarm water).

Storing in a plastic garment bag will help to reduce, but not prevent, gas fading. Contact with wool, paper or felt tends to increase it.