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EC55-1110 Blanket Washing made Easy

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BLANKET WASHING MADE EASY

No longer need we dread the job of washing our good woolen blankets. It is simple to wash blankets by soaking. The "soak method" was developed as a result of research and experiments that showed that, contrary to popular belief, hot water caused little or no more shrinkage than "luke warm water". Agitating and tumbling in the washer proved to be the main cause of shrinkage and felting of wool.

Wool gives up soil easily when soaked; thus, agitating and rubbing are not necessary. Either a conventional washer with a wringer or an automatic washer that allows for manual control of the agitation cycle and spin water extractor can be used for blanket washing. When using an automatic washer, the agitation part of the cycle either in the wash or rinse steps must be omitted to avoid unnecessary and destructive agitation of the blanket.

Actually, this same soak method is recommended for sweaters and other wool washables, as well as for blankets.

PRELIMINARY STEPS

Measure the blanket and record the original length and width measurements so that the blanket can be stretched to its original size later.

Inspect blanket carefully for stains. Remove soiled spots. Be sure to use the same soap or synthetic detergent (syndet) for treatment of soiled areas as you will use for the washing process. Dip a vegetable brush in solution to apply.

WASHING IN THE MACHINE

For Automatic Washer

Set temperature control dial to "warm" and allow washer to fill. Add mild soap or syndet, using same amount as for a load of white clothes. Operate the machine for 1 or 2 minutes to be sure soap or syndet is completely dissolved. Stop agitator action before adding blanket.

Immerse blanket in sudsy solution and allow it to soak 15 to 20 minutes (unagitated). Turn blanket once or twice by hand, but do NOT operate machine. Turn control dial to "spin" to remove soiled water.

For Conventional Washer

Fill washer with warm water (about 100°F.). Add mild soap or syndet, using same amount as for a load of white clothes. Operate the machine 1 or 2 minutes to completely dissolve soap or syndet. Stop agitator before adding blanket.

Immerse blanket in sudsy solution and allow it to soak 15 or 20 minutes (unagitated). Turn blanket once or twice by hand but do NOT operate machine.

Release wringer tension, fold blanket lengthwise, and put through wringer to remove soiled water.

MOTH - PROOFING

The simplest way to mothproof blankets is to use EQ-53 in the washer right along with the soap or syndet. One tablespoon for each pound of dry wools will protect them for a year or more.

RINSING THE BLANKET

Automatic Washer

To rinse, fill washer with warm rinse water. STOP machine immediately. Let blanket soak again for 4 or 5 minutes. Turn dial to "spin" and remove rinse water. Rinse a second time the same way.

Conventional Washer

Refill machine with warm water, and put blanket back into water. Allow to soak again for 4 or 5 minutes. Fold blanket and put through wringer again. Rinse a second time the same way.

SHAPING OR BLOCKING

After spinning or wringing, the blanket should be stretched or blocked to its original size. This stretching is easier if done by two persons, making sure not to distort the shape of the blanket by tugging only at corners. Restore blanket to measurements taken before washing.

DRYING THE BLANKET

Automatic Drying

With 5 or 6 bath towels in the dryer, preheat dryer on high heat (if dryer has temperature selection) for at least 5 minutes. (The towels serve to buffer the tumbling action, keep the folds of the wet blanket from rubbing together and reduce felting.) Mix hot towels and blanket in dryer and dry 10 to 15 minutes at high heat. Remove while it contains some moisture. Never allow to become completely dry in dryer. Restretching may be necessary to return blanket to original size.

Line Drying

Cover the line with a folded sheet to reduce line marks. Place blanket lengthwise across two lines to distribute the weight over a greater area. Turn the blanket end for end several times during the drying to prevent line marks. As blanket dries, gently straighten and pull into shape, being careful not to distort it.

THE FINISHING

To raise the nap of the blanket and to make it look like new, brush vigorously on both sides with a nylon or a pet brush. The napping of the blanket will increase the number and size of the air pockets, increasing the blanket's insulating value. A matted blanket with no air pockets is not warm.

Finish blanket by pressing ribbon binding with a warm iron and pressing cloth, or steam iron set at low temperature. Next allow blanket to complete drying in the air by placing over a line or on a flat surface.

This leaflet prepared by Mrs. Clara N. Leopold, Home Management Specialist, University of Nebraska, College of Agriculture, Lincoln.

The "soak" method of washing blankets was developed through research of Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station.
