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EC60-1145 Characteristics of Good Sheets

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CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD SHEETS

FIBER:

Well-twisted fibers make the yarn stronger and the fabric more durable. Cotton is generally used. Linen is expensive and wrinkles easily. Linen is absorbent, cool, and smooth to the touch, but a luxury.

CONSTRUCTION:

Weave - The weave should be close, firm, and free from imperfections.

Selvage - A "taped selvage," that is, one which has extra threads woven in along the edge, is stronger than a plain one. The extra threads may be heavier and woven with a basket weave.

Thread Count - The minimum number of threads per square inch. Sheets wear better when the number of threads to the inch in the warp is about the same as in the number of the inch in the filling.

Fabric - Muslin is usually most durable, with a thread count ranging from 128 through 140. A thread count of less than 128 is not generally recommended. Heavy weight muslin is the longest wearing of all type sheets. Generally preferred because of excellent wear and moderate price. Stands hard laundering and stays fresh looking on the bed. Has a nice substantial feeling.

Percale is made from finer yarns and with a closer weave; feels smooth and soft, and is light weight. "Utility" percales have a thread count not less than 180 to each square inch. Combed or "true" percale is smoother and a greater luxury than carded percale, with a thread count of not less than 200 threads to each square inch. These are luxury sheets and naturally more expensive than the other types.

MINIMUM SHEETS SPECIFICATIONS

	<u>Muslins</u>			<u>Percales</u>	
	(Poor)				
Thread count per square inch (unbleached)	112	128	140	180	200
Weight per square yard (ounces)	3.7	4.0	4.6	3.6	3.85
Tensile strength (pounds)					
Warp	45	55	70	60	70
Filling	45	55	70	60	70
Stitches per inch	14	14	14	14	16
Added sizing (maximum)	10%	6%	4%	4%	2%

*Sometimes labelled as "Pure Finish"

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Finish - Most sheets look nice at the counter because they have a little sizing in them--some more than a little, to conceal uneven or loose weaving. Some manufacturers make it a point to state on the label how much filler their sheets contain. Sizing more than 6% is not advisable; the sheet will be limp and weak after the first washing. Hold the sheet over a dark surface and rub it between your hands; if visible powder shows on the dark surface, excessive sizing has been used.

Hems - It has been the custom to use a three-inch hem at the top of a sheet and a one-inch hem at the bottom. To equalize wear, some sheets now have two-inch hems at each end. The hem should be turned evenly, sewed with strong thread, and have about 14 fine, even stitches to the inch. The ends of the hems should be closed, and all thread ends securely fastened. Hemstitching makes an attractive finish, but increases cost and decreases wearability of hem.

Size - The size as printed on the label of a sheet is the "torn" size; the finished size is 5 inches shorter. A short sheet is poor economy. A long tuck around the mattress is needed to insure comfort and prevent strain on the sheet; and a good-size flap at the top protects blankets from wear and soil.

Since few sheets are Sanforized, about 5 inches shrinkage may be expected in a sheet. For best service choose 108 inch torn size for the average sheet, and 113 inch torn size for luxury percales.

Width will depend on size bed on which the sheet will be used.

<u>Size of Bed</u>	<u>WIDTH OF SHEETS</u>	<u>Width of Sheet required</u>
Cot or Studio Couch	30 inches wide	54 inches
Youth Bed	33 " "	54 inches
Single or small twin	39 " "	63 or 72 inches
Wide Twin or 3/4 Bed	48 " "	72 inches
Double Bed	54 " "	81 or 90 inches
Full width sofa, folding		81 or 90 inches

Fitted Sheets:

Fitted sheets are available in both top and bottom sheet styles, in muslin and percale, in white and pastel colors. They do not fit special size mattresses or those which deviate in any way from "standard size" mattresses.

Fitted sheets will satisfactorily fit the more shallow foam rubber mattresses, although they cannot be expected to stretch as taughly as a more rigid mattress. However, even on foam mattresses they are less inclined to rumple during usage than a regular flat sheet.

BUYING BY USE:

Personal taste, preference, and family standards determine which is the best buy. Muslin has three advantages over percale. Its initial cost is less; it is sturdier and will stand up longer under use and laundering; it is a little heavier and makes a neater bed. Percale has these advantages: it is more luxurious-feeling and softer; it is lighter; in use it does not wrinkle as quickly as muslin.

Seconds are a good buy if the imperfection will not affect the wear of the sheet. Sometimes you won't be able to find any defect in a so-called "second" of a sheet. That's because manufacturers occasionally push out first-quality sheets as seconds when business is slow, as a kind of unofficial price cut.