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EC65-436 Guide to Textile Shopping

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GUIDE TO _____

TEXTILE Shopping

EXTENSION SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING

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E. W. JANIKE, DIRECTOR

GUIDE TO TEXTILE SHOPPING

Gerda Petersen

Clothing Specialist

Laws requiring the labeling of textiles have been passed to protect both the consumer and the producer.

As you shop for textiles read the labels. You will find the generic (family) name of the fibers listed. Some are natural fibers such as wool, others are man-made fibers such as nylon. These are your clues to fabric selection and care.

This pamphlet will acquaint you with the generic names of fibers, some of their characteristics, and suggestions for their care. Some trade names will be given. No endorsement of named products is intended.

Carry this pamphlet in your purse for "on the spot" reference.

FOR YOUR PROTECTION

Textile Fiber Products Identification Act

Protects against misbranding and false advertising.

Applies to all apparel and household textiles products including ready-mades and fabrics.

Requires a label identifying:

*Every fiber by generic name unless there is less than 5% by weight.

*Percentage amounts of each fiber according to weight. Example:

50% Polyester
36% Cotton
4% Other fibers

*Name or registered number of manufacturer.

*Name of country if imported.

BEFORE YOU BUY:

Read the Label

Learn: fiber content
finishes used

AFTER YOU BUY:

Follow the Label

Observe: care instructions

FOR FUTURE REFERENCE:

Save the Label

Identify: Hang tag for information
when laundering or
cleaning the garment

GENERIC NAMES OF FIBERS

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Acetate	11
Acrylic	14
Azlon	23
Cotton	6
Glass	21
Linen	7
Metallic	21
Modacrylic	15
Nylon	13
Nytril	19
Olefin	18
Polyester	13
Rayon	10
Rubber	22
Saran	19
Silk	8
Spandex	17
Triacetate	12
Vinal	20
Vinyon	20
Wool	9

COTTON

A natural fiber (plant)

TRADE NAME: None

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Comfortable to wear. Absorbent.
Doesn't irritate skin.
Durable. Economical. Easily handled.
Affected by mildew. Moth resistant.
Special finishes are used to make fabrics wrinkle resistant, soil and water repellent and to control shrinkage.

CARE

If fabric has a resin finish, remove oil or grease stains by either sponging with a solvent or by rubbing detergent into the dampened spot before washing. Most cottons may be machine washed, dried and ironed without special care. This may be limited by dyes or finishes applied or by construction of fabric. Safe ironing temperature 425°.

LINEN

A natural fiber (Flax plant)

TRADE NAME: None

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Very absorbent. Feels cool. Feels crisp and firm. Strong but brittle. Wears well. Doesn't take dye readily. Wrinkles. Doesn't hold a crease well. Attacked by mildew. Moth resistant. Expensive in relation to cotton. May be given finishes to prevent shrinking and wrinkling.

CARE

Avoid unnecessary creasing and folding. Starch sparingly. Fumes from cedar-lined chests may yellow linens. Avoid chlorine bleach on resin treated linens. Cleans and launders well with no special care needed, unless label indicates caution. Safe ironing temperature 450°F.

SILK

A natural fiber (animal)

TRADE NAME: None

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Strong fine fiber. Luxurious. Harmed by perspiration and sunlight. Weakened by strong heat. Water spots. "Raw" silk has not had gum which bound fibers to cocoon removed. "Doupion" (sometimes Doupioni) produced by two silk worms spinning one cocoon resulting in a knotted textured yarn. Many silks are now given treatments to prevent wrinkling and water spotting.

CARE

Dry cleaning is generally recommended. Press on wrong side without moisture. If you do wash by hand, use lukewarm water, mild soap or detergent, handle gently. Rinse thoroughly in lukewarm water. Safe ironing temperature 300 F.

WOOL

A natural fiber (animal)

TRADE NAME: None

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Most elastic, resilient and pliable of the natural fibers. Wrinkle resistant. Warm. Absorbs moisture. Doesn't flame or burn easily. Attacked by moths. Doesn't soil easily. Drapes and tailors well. Retains its shape. "Virgin" wool means new wool that hasn't been used. "Reprocessed" has been reclaimed from yarns and fabric that haven't been used. "Reused" has been reclaimed from products that have been used and worn.

CARE

Dry cleaning is effective. Wool shrinks and felts in presence of heat, moisture and agitation. Wash in cool water, avoid rubbing, wringing or twisting. Rinse thoroughly. Avoid chlorine bleach. Use moist heat and press cloth. Safe ironing temperature 300°F.

RAYON

Man-made fiber (cellulosic)

TRADE NAMES: Bemberg, Avron, Zantrel,
Fortisan, Avril

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Versatile and widely used. Economical. Absorbent. Comfortable. Dyes easily. Blends with other fibers. Affected by mildew. Shrinkage has been problem. Has been improved in newer rayon. High wet modulus indicates the fabric has high wet strength as well as having controlled shrinkage. "Polynosic," a registered trademark, indicates high wet strength. Rayons can be mercerized and resin treated for wrinkle resistance much like cotton. Solution dyed rayons are colorfast to sunlight, washing and perspiration.

CARE

Dry cleaning recommended unless label indicates otherwise. Press on wrong side. Safe ironing temperature 375°F.

ACETATE

A man-made fiber (cellulosic)

TRADE NAMES: Celanese Chromspun,
Estron, Acele

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Lustrous, supple and resilient. Drapes well. Fair resistance to wrinkling. Average resistance to sunlight. Can be embossed. Economical. Harmed by high heat. Dries quickly. Moth and mildew resistant. Solution dyed acetates are highly resistant to fading. Poor strength.

CARE

Dry cleaning recommended unless label states otherwise. Acetone or finger nail polish remover ruins acetate. Low ironing temperature is important. Press on wrong side and use press cloth. Safe ironing temperature 325°.

TRIACETATE

A man-made fiber (cellulosic)

TRADE NAME: Arnel

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Has the qualities of acetate but is more resistant to high temperature. Most valuable characteristics developed by heat treatments in normal finishing. Results are high resistance to shrinking, stretching, wrinkling. Good pleat retention. Wash and wear qualities.

CARE

Can be laundered and higher heat used than is safe for acetate. Safe ironing temperature 400°F.

NYLON

A man-made Fiber (synthetic)

TRADE NAMES: Antron, Cantreце, Caprolan

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Very strong. Versatile. Elastic yet light in weight. Is cold and clammy to the touch. Doesn't absorb moisture. Quick drying. Retains shape well. Resists wear from rubbing, crushing or bending. Moth and mildew resistant. Doesn't shrink. Melts under high heat. Static electricity may be a problem. Loses strength after long exposure to sunlight. Textured yarns provide bulk and stretch.

CARE

Pretreat oily stains before laundering. Launder white garments separately as nylon picks up color easily. Less wrinkling occurs when dried in a drier at medium temperature and removed before it is over dried. Safe ironing temperature 300°F.

ACRYLIC

A man-made fiber

TRADE NAMES: Orlon, Acrilan, Zefran,
Creslan

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Wool-like quality and light bulky feel. Strong and warm but soft. Dries quickly. Wrinkle resistant. Can be heat set to hold pleats. Color retention good when solution dyed (Acrilan). Resists moths and mildew. Resistant to sunlight. Good resistance to chemicals. Static electricity may be a problem.

CARE

Label should state whether to wash or dry clean. If washing is required don't wring or twist. Spread on a flat surface to dry. Safe ironing temperature 325°F.

MODACRYLIC

A man-made fiber

TRADE NAMES: Dynel, Verel, Aeress

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Modified Acrylic. Softens at lower temperature. Is more flame resistant and heavier. Feels warm, soft and luxurious. Good resilience. May be heat set for shape retention, durable pleat, and special textured surfaces. Frequently used where no ironing is required.

CARE

Important to follow the label. May be laundered in lukewarm water or dry cleaned. Safe ironing temperature 225°F.

POLYESTER

A man-made fiber

TRADE NAMES: Dacron, Fortrel, Kodel,
Vycron

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Outstanding characteristic is ability to impart easy care to fabric. Blended with cotton, wool, rayon. Crisp and resilient. Retains its shape. Durable. Resistant to sunlight. Static electricity may be a problem. May cause fabric to pick up lint. Doesn't shrink. Can be used in permanent press fabrics. Launderers easily. Isn't attacked by moths or mildew. Some types pill.

CARE

Pretreat oily soil or stain before laundering. Dry in dryer at low temperature. Iron or press at low temperature. Safe ironing temperature 325°F.

SPANDEX

A man-made fiber

TRADE NAMES: Lycra, Vyrene, Glospan

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Excellent elasticity and stretch and very good recovery. Light weight, strong. Soaps, detergents, perspiration and sea water don't damage elasticity. Dries quickly. Spandex is being used as a core with other fibers (core-spinning process) in stretch fabrics.

CARE

Avoid constant overstretch. Alternate wear of girdles. Chlorine bleach yellows and damages fibers. Wash frequently to remove body oils. Rub heavily soiled areas. Machine wash and dry at low setting. Wash separately to prevent picking up color from other articles. Care depends on other fibers used with spandex. Safe ironing temperature 250° to 300°F.

OLEFIN

A man-made fiber (synthetic)

TRADE NAMES: Olane, Prolene, Herculon,
Gertex, Vectra

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Often referred to by chemical names: Polypropylene or polyethylene. Very light weight. Strong. Economical. Good resistance to sun, mildew, moths, chemicals and wear from rubbing. Polyethylene has a stiff waxy hand and melts at 266°F. Polypropylene has a fair hand and melts at 324°F.

CARE

Polypropylene has good washability, with wrinkle resistance. Use steam iron or press cloth. Safe ironing temperature 150°F for Polyethylene and 250°F-300°F for Polypropylene.

SARAN

A man-made fiber (synthetic)

TRADE NAMES: Rovana, Velon, Saran

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Resistant to chemicals, burning, water, staining, wear, moths and mildew. Has stiff plastic feel. Poor strength. In some constructions it provides sound, heat and sun-glare control.

CARE

May be wet or dry cleaned. Should be air dried. Wrinkles are difficult to remove. Can't be pressed. Temperature over 160°F causes shrinkage and sticking.

NYTRIL

A man-made fiber (synthetic)

TRADE NAMES: Darvan (no longer produced
U. S.

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Soft, bulky. Lively hand. Doesn't wrinkle easily. Holds pleats. Requires low heat. Softens at 350°F.

VINYON

A man-made fiber (synthetic)

TRADE NAME: Avisco

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Resistant to chemicals. Water repellent. Doesn't burn. Used as a bonding agent to seal layers of other fibers or fabrics together. Very heat sensitive. Becomes sticky at 150°F.

VINAL

A man-made fiber (synthetic)

TRADE NAMES: Vynylon or Airco Vinal

SEPCIFIC FACTS:

Strong. Resistant to rubbing and wear. Moderate moisture absorbency. Wrinkles. Can't be ironed because is damaged at 250°F.

GLASS

A man-made fiber (inorganic)

TRADE NAMES: Fiberglass, Vitron Modiglass, Ultrastrand

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Doesn't burn, shrink, stretch. Is not affected by mildew or rot. Doesn't absorb water and is quick drying. Sheds dust and soil. Strong. Fineness of yarn gives it flexibility. Will break if sharply creased and wears from rubbing on folds. Not used in wearing apparel.

CARE

Should not be dry cleaned. Handle carefully. Avoid rubbing or agitating when laundering. Drip dry. Do not iron.

METALLIC

A man-made fiber (inorganic)

TRADE NAMES: Mylar, Lurex, Lame, Melton

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Adds gleam and glitter to fabrics. Doesn't tarnish or shrink. Resistant to sunlight and wear from rubbing.

RUBBER

A man-made fiber (rubber tree)

TRADE NAMES: Latex, Lastex

SPECIFIC FACTS:

High degree of stretch and recovery .
Cotton or man-made fibers wound around
a core of latex results in yarn lastex.

CARE

Avoid exposure to heat, excessive sunlight, oil, grease. Avoid constant overstretch. Wash in water of a moderate temperature with mild soap or detergent.

AZLON

A man-made fiber (protein)

TRADE NAMES: Merinova (Italy) Ardil,
Vicara

SPECIFIC FACTS:

Has been made from proteins such as milk, corn, peanuts. Used primarily in blends to enhance appearance and hand of knitted and woven apparel. No longer produced in U.S.

Contact your County Extension Office for additional information on textiles, their care and methods of sewing.