

Cotton

CHARACTERISTICS:

- Comfortable
- Soft
- Absorbent
- Machine-washable, dry-cleanable
- Good strength
- Drapes well
- Easy to handle and sew

USES:

- Apparel - shirts, dresses, swimwear, suits, jackets, skirts, pants, sweaters.
- Home Fashions - curtains, bedspreads, throws, sheets, towels, tablecloths, napkins.

NATURAL OR SYNTHETIC:

Cotton cloth comes from cotton crops.

Linen

CHARACTERISTICS:

- Comfortable
- Good strength, twice as strong as cotton
- Hand-washable or dry-cleanable
- Tailors well
- Absorbent
- Lightweight to heavyweight
- No static or pilling problems
- Fair abrasion resistant

USES:

- Apparel - dresses, suits, skirts, jackets, pants, shirts, children's wear.
- Home Fashions - curtains, draperies, upholstery, bedspreads, table linens, sheets, dish towels.

NATURAL OR SYNTHETIC:

Linen cloth comes from the stalk of the flax plant.

Wool

CHARACTERISTICS:

- Comfortable
- Luxurious
- Lightweight
- Good insulator
- Washable
- Wrinkle-resistant
- Absorbent

USES:

- Apparel - sweaters, dresses, coats, suits, jackets, pants, skirts, children's wear, shirts, hosiery, scarves.
- Home Fashions - carpets, draperies, upholstery, blankets.

NATURAL OR SYNTHETIC:

Wool cloth is made from the fleece of sheep.

Silk

CHARACTERISTICS:

- Luxurious
- Drapes and tailors well
- Thinnest of all natural fibers
- Hand-washable or dry-cleanable
- Little problem with static, no pilling problem
- Only fair abrasion resistance
- Poor resistance to prolonged exposure to sunlight

USES:

- Apparel - dresses, blouses, skirts, jackets, pants, pants, scarves, ties.
- Home Fashion - curtains, draperies, upholstery.

NATURAL OR SYNTHETIC:

Silk is an animal fiber created by the silk worm.

Nylon

CHARACTERISTICS:

- Lightweight
- Exceptional strength
- Abrasion resistant
- Easy to wash
- Resists shrinkage and wrinkling
- Fast drying, low moisture absorbency
- Resistant to damage from oil and many chemicals
- Static and pilling can be a problem
- Poor resistance to continuous sunlight

USES:

- Apparel - swimwear, blouses, sportswear, pants, jackets, skirts, raincoats, ski and snow apparel, windbreakers, children's wear.
- Home Fashions - carpets, rugs, curtains, upholstery, bedspreads
- Other - Luggage, back packs, life vests, umbrellas, sleeping bags, tents.

NATURAL OR SYNTHETIC:

Nylon is formed by gently pouring 2 chemicals together. A film of nylon forms where the two chemicals meet, and is then extracted and spun into threads.

Polyester

CHARACTERISTICS:

- Strong
- Resistant to stretching and shrinkage
- Washable or dry-cleanable
- Quick drying
- Abrasion resistant
- Resistant to most chemicals
- Because of its low absorbency, stain removal can be a problem
- Static and pilling problems

USES:

- Apparel - essentially every form of clothing, dresses, jackets, sportswear, suits, shirts, pants, rainwear, children's wear
- Home Fashions - curtains, draperies, floor coverings, pillow filling, upholstery, bedding.

NATURAL OR SYNTHETIC:

Polyester fibers are formed from a chemical reaction between an acid and alcohol.

Rayon

CHARACTERISTICS:

- Soft and comfortable
- Drapes well
- Highly absorbent
- No static, no pilling problems
- Fabric can shrink a lot if washing dry-clean-only rayon
- Washable or dry cleanable. *Read the label!*

USES:

- Apparel - Blouses, dresses, jackets, linings, slacks, sportswear, suits, ties.
- Home Fashions - bedspreads, blankets, curtains, sheets, table cloths, upholstery.

NATURAL OR SYNTHETIC:

Rayon is a manufactured fiber that comes from the cellulose from wood pulp that is put through a series of chemical processes.

Acrylic

CHARACTERISTICS:

- Wide range of colors; dyes and prints well
- Excellent drapeability and softness
- Shrink, moth, and mildew resistant
- Low moisture absorbency, relatively fast drying
- No pilling problem, little static problem
- Most acetate garments require dry-cleaning

USES:

- Apparel - sweaters, socks, fleece, circular knit apparel, sportswear, children's wear
- Home Fashions - Blankets, throws, upholstery, awnings, outdoor furniture, rugs/floor coverings

NATURAL OR SYNTHETIC:

Dissolving a polymer in a solvent produces acrylic fiber.