

# FABRICS

## Cotton

Cotton, cool, soft, comfortable, the principal clothing fibre of the world. Its production is one of the major factors in world prosperity and economic stability. Cotton "breathes". What will we do without cotton? Since cotton wrinkles, polyester was added to give it wash and wear properties for a busy world. In recent times, the consumer determined that polyester, although easier to care for, took away the cool from cotton and also added a "pilling" effect to cotton/polyester blends. Consumers now often request "100% Cotton". Permanent finishes also added to the all cotton fabric gave a wash and wear property to cotton. The cotton fibre is from the cotton plant's seedpod. The fibre is hollow in the centre and, under a microscope looks like a twisted ribbon. "Absorbent" cotton will retain 24-27 times its own weight in water and is stronger when wet than dry. This fibre absorbs and releases perspiration quickly, thus allowing the fabric to "breathe". Cotton can stand high temperatures and takes dyes easily. Chlorine bleach can be used to restore white garments to a clear white but this bleach may yellow chemically finished cottons or remove colour in dyed cottons. Boiling and sterilising temperatures can also be used on cotton without disintegration. Cotton can also be ironed at relatively high temperatures, stands up to abrasion and wears well.

Mercerised cotton is treated to permanently straighten the cotton fibres which then becomes a smooth, rod-like fibre that in appearance with a higher luster. Cotton is often blended with other fibres such as polyester, linen, wool, to "blend" the best properties of each fibre.

## Muslin

Muslin is a sheer to coarse plain-woven cotton fabric. Muslin comes in "natural" colour or is dyed.

## Organdy

Organdy is very thin, transparent cotton with a crisp finish.

## Outing flannel

Outing flannel is a soft, twill or plain weave fabric napped on both sides. Used for baby clothes, diapers, and sleepwear.

## Oxford

Oxford is skirting fabric with a lustrous, soft finish. It is characterised with narrow stripes and can be woven in plain or basket weave. Also a term used for wool fabric that has black and white fibres.

## Percalé

Percalé is a light weight, closely woven, sturdy fabric that can be found printed in dark colours.

## Pima Cotton

Pima cotton, from Egyptian cotton, is an excellent quality cotton fabric.

## Polished cotton

Polished cotton is either satin weave cotton or a plain weave that is finished chemically to appear shiny.

## Poplin

Poplin is a plain weave fabric with a cross-wise rib.

## Sailcloth

Sailcloth is a very strong, heavy canvas or duck made in plain weave.

## Sateen

Sateen is a satin weave cotton fabric.

## Seersucker

Seersucker is a lightweight cotton fabric crinkled into lengthwise stripes.

## Swiss

Swiss is a sheer, very fine cotton that can be plain or decorated with dots or other designs.

## Terry Cloth

Terry cloth is a looped pile fabric that is either woven or knitted. Very absorbent and used for towels, etc. French terry cloth is looped on one side and sheared pile on the other.

## Velveteen

Velveteen is an all cotton pile fabric with short pile resembling velvet.

## Whipcord

Whipcord is a strong fabric with diagonal round cords that can also be produced in wool.