Modern Wear Needs Modern Care

Anna D. Walker
MODERN WEAR NEEDS MODERN CARE

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BROOKINGS, SOUTH DAKOTA
Modern Wear Needs
Modern Care

By Anna D. Walker
Extension Clothing Specialist

The modern homemaker has a bewildering number of new fibers, blends, mixtures, and new finishes for cotton and wool to choose from in clothing her family. How to care for each article of clothing so that it will stay attractive and wearable presents a real problem since so many fabrics and finishes are unfamiliar.

In this circular we will discuss (1) care of fabrics made from the well known fibers which need to be handled differently because of new finishes, (2) care of fabrics made from the several man-made fibers, i.e.: rayon, acetate, nylon, orlon, acrilan, dynel, dacron and vicara blends.

Fabrics Are All Different

Because no two fabrics are exactly alike even though they may be woven from the same fiber the care which must be given each fabric is a problem in itself.

Factors which influence the kind of care which the garment requires include not only the kind of fiber used, but the way the cloth is made and finished. Besides these factors, the way in which the garment is made may change the "care picture."

Study The Label and Save It

The label or hang tag which is attached to a ready-to-wear garment should give information which will be helpful in caring for the garment. It will generally tell the fiber content, something about the performance or what can be expected from the garment, along with instructions for its care.

Keep this label and follow the directions it gives. For example, if the manufacturer states on the label that the garment should be hand washed, it is safe to say that it would be a mistake to put it in the machine.
Washable, or Not Washable?

In spite of the fact that most of the new fibers are washable, often the finished garment will not be washable because of fabric construction or the way in which the garment is made.

Construction of the Fabric. A firm fabric weave, one which does not ravel badly will generally launder well. Fabrics with a smooth, even weave are more often washable, in contrast to the crepy fabrics which tend to shrink or stretch in washing.

Some special finishes render an otherwise unwashable fabric, washable. Read the label!

Although most colors are relatively fast to dry cleaning, some are not fast to washing. Before washing a garment, color-fastness to water can be checked by clipping a piece from a seam and shaking it in a glass of hot suds. If the water is colored, the garment may be a poor washing risk.

Garment Construction. Before washing a garment one should be sure that it is all washable. It would be wise to have it dry cleaned if the fashion and style of the garment makes it seem a poor washing risk. For example, some of the high-styled winter cottons which are on the market may be hard to press after washing, because of the style of the garment. Shoulder pads, padding, decorative buttons or leather, velvet, sequin or fur trim could prevent it from being washable. Also special pleats, or decorative effects may require the hand of a professional finisher to preserve their fashion and style.

When in doubt, the instructions for care on the label should be consulted or a dry cleaning establishment may be able to give advice. Some dyes and finishes respond better to washing than to dry cleaning.

Are Pleats Permanent?

Durable is a better word. Pleats may be heat-set in some of the fabrics made from the man-made fibers so that the garment may be laundered without removing the crease. However, the durability of the pleats will depend on (1) how well the cloth is made, (2) how the garment is cut, and (3) how well the pleats have been put in.

Careful handling in washing, and drip drying will help retain the pleats. In most cases the pleats will have to be re-set after a few launderings if the garment is to have a well pressed look.

More Information Needed

We do not have all of the answers to the question of how to care for all of the new fabrics on today’s market. The table included in this circular may be used to supplement information given on garment labels provided by the manufacturer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fabric</th>
<th>Stain Removal</th>
<th>Cleaning Agent</th>
<th>Water Temperature</th>
<th>Bleach</th>
<th>Washing Method</th>
<th>Rinse</th>
<th>Drying</th>
<th>Dampness for Ironing</th>
<th>Ironing Temperature</th>
<th>Ironing Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wool</td>
<td>Treated for washability</td>
<td>Non-explosive cleaning solvent such as carbon tetrachloride.</td>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>Avoid all bleaches. &amp; Hand squeeze through fabric.</td>
<td>Machine or hand. No soak.</td>
<td>Rinse thoroughly in lukewarm water.</td>
<td>Dry knitted fabrics flat. Dry completely.</td>
<td>Roll in damp cloth and let stand a while before ironing.</td>
<td>Iron set on wool moderately hot. Use steam or dry iron.</td>
<td>Iron on wrong side. Right side may be touched up using iron with press cloth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nylon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sponge with soap and water. Any standard non-explosive cleaning fluid.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Liquid or powder bleaches may be used.</td>
<td>Machine if seams and trim are durable. Hand squeeze through fabric. Gently rub soiled places. Wash all white nylons separately.</td>
<td>Rinse thoroughly in water of same temperature as wash water.</td>
<td>Rinse thoroughly in water of same temperature as wash water.</td>
<td>Dry.</td>
<td>Warm — when iron is too hot, white nylon will turn yellow.</td>
<td>Requires very little ironing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dacron</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sponge with soap and water. Any standard non-explosive cleaning fluid.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Liquid or powder bleaches may be used.</td>
<td>Machine wash for removal of stubborn soil when garment construction permits. Hang as wash as nylon.</td>
<td>Rinse thoroughly in water of same temperature as wash water.</td>
<td>Rinse thoroughly in water of same temperature as wash water.</td>
<td>Drip dry. Hang garment on rustproof hanger.</td>
<td>Low.</td>
<td>If ironing is needed, press lightly using a press cloth. Do not use a steam iron.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Cleaning Method**: Use the appropriate cleaning agent and water temperature specified for each fabric type.
- **Bleach**: Avoid harsh chemicals like bleach, especially chlorine, as they can damage the fabric and cause color fading.
- **Washing Method**: Use methods like machine or hand, no soak, rinse thoroughly, and use special detergent when needed.
- **Rinse**: Ensure the fabric is rinsed well to remove any remaining detergent or soap residue.
- **Drying**: Use gentle drying methods like drip dry, almost dry, or mild.
- **Dampness for Ironing**: Use dampness appropriate for the fabric to avoid over-ironing or damage.
- **Ironing Temperature**: Choose the right ironing temperature to prevent damage or discoloration.
- **Ironing Method**: Use steam or dry iron, depending on the fabric type and care instructions.
Additional Care Tips

1. Stains are harder to remove if allowed to set. Remove them as soon as possible. Sugar stains when pressed into a garment will make brown stains due to carmelization of the sugar.

2. Soiled spots on shirts and blouses, especially on collars and cuffs are hard to remove. Brush these soiled areas before washing with a liquid detergent just as it comes from the bottle.

3. Grease spots on crease resistant cottons and other washable fabrics which are stubborn to remove may be rubbed with a full strength liquid detergent before washing.

4. Wash thoroughly every time and thus avoid the gray or grimy look. Use bleaches only when absolutely necessary. Always rinse thoroughly.

5. Many wrinkles may be avoided by careful handling. Squeeze water and suds through the fabric, keeping the garment opened up and as flat as possible. Press the water out with the hands. Twisting and wringing may cause permanent wrinkles in many of the new fabrics. A turkish towel may be used to press out or brush off some of the excess moisture.

6. Drip dry is recommended for many fabrics. Hang the garment on a rust-proof hanger and actually let the water drip out.

7. Finger pressing helps the garment to dry smoothly. When garments are hung up to drip dry, finger press the seams, pleats, collars, cuffs, etc. Repeat as the garment dries.

8. Orlon or dynel fleece garments may be improved in appearance after washing if the nap is brushed with a medium-stiff brush when it is almost dry.

9. White nylon garments should always be washed separately from colored ones. If grayness does develop, in spite of this precaution, a sodium perborate bleach will help. A small amount of bluing added to the last rinse will mask a yellow tinge.

10. All sweaters, whether of wool or man-made fibers, should lay flat to dry. Those of man-made fibers will require no blocking.

11. Iron dark colored cottons on the wrong side to avoid shine.

12. Washability of a rayon fabric depends upon the way it is made. Generally, smooth flat weaves such as rayon broadcloth will wash well. Crepes with a mossy or pebbly effect should be dry cleaned, as they have a tendency to shrink or stretch.

13. When laundering sheers, squeeze in a turkish towel to remove moisture. Then remove the garment from the towel at once. Place the garment wrong side out over a clean well-padded ironing board and with a dry turkish towel crushed in the hand, smooth the garment with the towel following the grain of the material. This removes more moisture and reshapes the garment at the same time. A light pressing is all that is required to finish the garment.
Use Caution!

Since it is not possible to set up special rules that will apply in all cases to all fabrics and garments—use caution!

1. Read the label and follow manufacturers directions on the hang tag.
2. Use a press cloth and a low iron temperature, until you are sure they are not needed.
3. Check carefully for the best method of care—whether it be dry cleaning, hand washing or machine washing. Remember the whole garment must be washable, if it is to be washed.