

Manufacturers in their desire to create fashion and look of a fabric often overlook the serviceability of the item. Too fabrics produced may look similar but one may be more serviceable than the other and require different ways of cleaning. As a garment analyst it was my job to test new fabrics coming to the market. I also analyzed problem garments sent to me by manufacturers, drycleaners and consumers. I have found that many of these problems could be avoided if the manufacturer used a different fiber or trimming when manufacturing the garment. When buying a garment you should check the label for the fiber content which will give you a heads up on potential problems and also guide you on how to process the item. Also check the label for the care instructions on how garment is to be cleaned.

- (1) Micro polyester and silk-When you buy a fancy gown or a wedding gown the manufacturer could have used silk or a micro polyester fiber. A micro polyester fiber can be made to look exactly like silk but has completely different characteristics. Micro polyester is produced with a very fine yarn similar to silk. Many fabric experts find it hard to tell the difference. Micro polyester can be hand washed and is not affected by perspiration and other stains that silk might be.**
- (2) Lining fabric-If the manufacturer used acetate you can expect a very weak lining fabric. Acetate lining does not withstand friction and mechanical action in normal wear. Polyester, nylon and rayon are more durable lining fabrics.**
- (3) Velvet-Velvet is a pile weave which has a third set of yarns perpendicular to the base fabric. If the pile yarn is acetate the velvet lacks serviceability. This means that water or any wet based staining will cause the pile yarns to permanently flatten. Rayon and silk pile is a little more serviceable but not totally. Cotton and polyester pile are the most serviceable velvet fabrics.**
- (4) Draperies-Silk is the least serviceable of all drapery fabrics. Silk draperies have been known to deteriorate from exposure to sunlight in less than a year. More serviceable drapery fabrics would be cotton, nylon, polyester and rayon.**
- (5) Knit fabrics-Acrylic knits can look like wool or cotton but are not as serviceable. Acrylic knits tend to stretch from the tension and heat of normal wear. Routine washing or drycleaning can also cause the acrylic knit to stretch. Once acrylic knit is stretched and distorted it can not be restored to shape. Wool knitted fabrics and cottons usually have the dimensional stability. This means it can be blocked into shape. Acrylic knitted fabrics however are not affected by acids and alkalis which may affect wool. The dyes on acrylics are very stable.**

(6) Matte jersey-Matte jersey is a knitted fabric that incorporates a very fine highly twisted yarn to give the fabric a dull, soft and slightly roughened texture similar to crepe. Rayon used for matte jersey can present problems in the course of normal wear. When rayon is used normal water based staining will cause rings that can not be removed. Rayon matte jersey will also distort easily in the course of normal wear and contact with water can also cause shrinkage of the yarns. More serviceable matte jersey might be polyester but the look of the fabric may not be the same.