



## ICONIC DETAILS

# FABRIC 101

## HOW TO CATEGORIZE A FABRIC

Fibers are used to create fabric. There are many different types of fibers, yet they can all be categorized into one of two groups: Natural or Man Made.

Natural fibers are those from plants or animals

Man made fibers are synthetic or cellulosic.

### NATURAL

#### **Plant**

Cotton - seed hairs of the cotton plant

Hemp - stem of the hemp plant

Linen - stem of the flax plant

Ramie - stem of the ramie plant

#### **Animal**

Angora - hair of the angora goat or angora rabbit

Silk - silkworm cocoons

Wool - hair of sheep or other animals

Mohair – hair of a goat

Cashmere – hair of a goat

### MAN MADE

**Synthetic:** *made of chemical compounds derived from petroleum or natural gas*

Acrylic - made from polymers of acrylic acid or acrylates

Nylon - long-chain polymeric amides

Polyester - resin formed of polyhydric alcohols and dibasic acids

Spandex – stretchy polyurethane

Vinyl - polymerized vinyl compounds

*\*Polymers: substance with a molecular structure consisting mostly or entirely of a large number of similar units bonded together*

**Cellulosic:** *derived from cellulose, a natural fiber*

Acetate - cellulose modified with acids

Lyocell - made by reconstruction cellulose

Rayon - cellulose regenerated

## FABRIC VOCABULARY

- **Yarn:** most methods of fabric construction require that fiber is first formed into yarn. “Yarn” is not always thick as we commonly think, it can also be thin like a thread.
- **Woven:** created from the intersection of two sets of yarn.
- **Knit:** created by looping a yarn through itself.
- **Drape:** used to describe how a fabric behaves when allowed to fall against itself or in folds.
- **Body:** used to describe how firm a fabric is.
- **Nap:** used to describe any soft, fuzzy surface such as those found on flannel or pile fabrics. Often used to indicate a fabric which has a directional nap, such as velvet, or the direction of the nap.
- **Blends:** not all fabrics are composed of just one fiber. Often, different fibers are blended together. Factors that can influence the creation of such a blend may include cost, durability, availability and how readily the fabric accepts dye.

## FIBER CHARACTERISTICS

- **Natural:** breathe and wrinkle, are usually cool in warm weather & warm in cold weather
- **Synthetics:** don't breathe or wrinkle, are usually not very comfortable in warm weather
- **Cellulosic:** breathe better than synthetics, but usually not as well as natural fibers
- **Cotton:** breathe, are absorbent, wrinkle and shrink easily
- **Linen:** breath, are extremely durable, wrinkle like crazy and great for warm weather
- **Nylon:** tough, lightweight and elastic
- **Polyester:** don't breathe, resistant to wrinkles and is generally durable
- **Rayon:** breathe, drapes well and slightly heavier than other lightweight fabrics, like cotton
- **Silk:** has a high tensile strength and resists abrasion
- **Lycra/Spandex:** highly elastic and good for movement
- **Wool:** retains warmth even when wet, a more heavy fiber and some people have an allergy to it

# REQUIRED CARE

While every fabric is unique, so is the care it requires. A few general rules:

- **All natural fibers can be washed:** maybe best in cold water or by hand
- **Few fabrics truly need to be dry-cleaned:** they can often be hand-washed or machine-washed on a delicate cycle
- **If you are ever curious about the care of a fabric read the care label inside the garment or test a swatch to see how it behaves**

## How to Decipher Laundry Care Symbols

Have you always wondered what those unlabeled icons on your washable goods mean? Wonder no longer! Here's an easy reference guide to help you figure out their instructions.

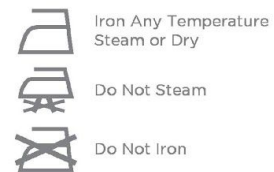
### WASHING



### DRY-CLEANING



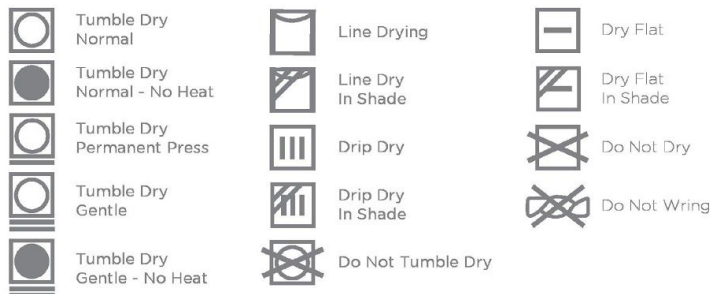
### IRONING



### BLEACHING



### DRYING



**TEMPERATURE INDICATORS**

If temperature is not specified by numbers, dots are used to indicate how hot settings should be.

- Cold / Low Heat
- Warm / Medium Heat
- Hot / High Heat

CRANE & CANOPY

Visual From: <http://visual.ly/washing-instruction-symbols-explained>

#### Sources:

Clark, J. (1999). Understanding Fabric. Retrieved February 16, 2015, from <http://www.chezirene.com/articles/precostuming/pc100-fabric.html>

Julia (2013). Choosing Fabric for Clothes. Retrieved February 16, 2015, from <http://www.craftsy.com/blog/2013/10/choosing-fabric-for-clothes/>