

How to determine the fibre content of your fabric

By: merrybe

<http://www.burdastyle.com/techniques/how-to-determine-the-fibre->



I buy almost all of my fabric from a nice guy named Hubert, who buys remnants from factories. Great quality fabrics at bulk prices, but only few come with tags or factory labels. So, Hubert has taught me how to distinguish the fibre contents of a fabric by scorching it. This won't help you at the shop, but with vintage fabrics and unknown mixes you bought because you liked the print. Just touch fabrics whenever you can, you'll feel the differences eventually!! All you need is a bit of your fabric, a lighter and a bit of experience with scorching things: you need to know how scorched plastic, paper and hair smells...depends on your childhood, I guess ;-)) !!! If you are not used to handle burning things, practice outside. in every case keep an ashtray and some water close. But usually, this is no more dangerous than lighting a candle. Read all steps first!!! Take one corner of the fabric and bring the lighter flame close to the fabric. 1) Synthetics: the fabric melts quickly into a blackish mass and smells chemically, the melted stuff is hard when cold 2) vegetable fibres: burns like paper, fabric is scorched into black ash that can be rubbed between the fingers when cold; burns with a flame when the lighter is brought directly to the fabric = cotton, viscose, linen 2.1) viscose has usually a much more fluid, silk like texture than cotton, in mixed fibres, it gives sheen to the fabric; in knits, you can tell viscose from fine cotton by washing it: viscose usually, like some silks, feels hard and stiff while wet 2.2) linen has a soapy feel to it, it has more substance than cotton, drapes differently, crinkles more 3) wool: scorches/ burns with a sizzle, quickly, smells like burnt hair, melts into ash 4) cotton-synthetics: burns with a flame, stinks chemically, leaves ash and hard little knobs of melted plastic and so on... This won't give you exact percentages, but it is an additional way of determining fibre content besides your sense of touch and experience.

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