

TECHNICAL OPERATING Information

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Cleaning Specialty Winter Items

Each day garment care specialists are called upon to process items that require special handling. The beginning and end of the winter season in particular seems to bring these items out in full force. Inappropriate cleaning procedures can lead to shrinkage and fabric damage.

Cleaning and Handling

SOFT WOOL (Angora/Cashmere/Camel Hair, Mohair, Alpaca)

The term angora usually refers to yarns made of Angora rabbit hair. Angora fabrics are easily recognized by their softness and long nap. Shrinkage is a frequent problem with soft wool fabrics.

Drycleaning Cycle: 4-6 minutes in any solvent

Drying Temperature: Not to exceed 120° F/49°C

Wetcleaning:

Cycle Time/Type	Water Temperature	Mechanical Action
5 Minute Wash	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute Rinse	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute Rinse Add fabric conditioner	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
3 Minute Extract		High Speed
Tumble dry on low heat for 2-3 minutes then lay flat to dry		

Special Note:

Because of the short cleaning cycle, prespot all soft wool items before cleaning to avoid recleaning. Allow any prespotted wet area to dry completely before drycleaning. Drycleaning wool while areas are still damp can cause redeposition and shrinkage in the wet areas. Shrinkage is a frequent problem with soft wool fabrics and the likelihood of such increases when temperature and agitation increases in either drycleaning or wetcleaning. Clean in a net bag to reduce static and lint caused by the hair fibers getting on to other garments.

ACRYLIC KNITS



The distortion of the acrylic knit cannot be restored.

Acrylic knits have been popular for many years. They are often misidentified due to their close resemblance to wool. Proper identification is key to preventing permanent damage.

Dry Cleaning Cycle: 4-6 minutes in any solvent

Drying Temperature: Not to exceed 120° F/49°C

Wetcleaning:

Cycle Time/Type	Water Temperature	Mechanical Action
5 Minute Wash	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute Rinse	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute Rinse Add fabric conditioner	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
3 Minute Extract		High Speed
Tumble dry on low heat in a net bag to prevent stretching.		

Special Note:

Acrylic knits have a high tendency to stretch and distort when temperatures exceed 120°F/49°C. The drying temperature must be kept on a low setting. The steam used in finishing exceeds 120°F/49°C, therefore extreme caution must be used in finishing to avoid stretching on the press. Lay acrylics knit items flat on the press and apply bottom steam just until the steam penetrates the fabric. Stop steaming immediately. Over steaming greatly increases the chance of stretching. Shape the item and vacuum dry. Do not pull or stretch acrylic knits. Do not under any circumstances place acrylic knit items of form finishers, suzies, or in steam tunnels. Once acrylic knits have stretched, there is no restoration.

VELVET/VELVETEEN

True velvet is usually made from rayon, silk, acetate, or a blend of these fibers. You must carefully examine velvets made of these fibers before processing since they can become permanently matted and flattened by moisture and pressure. Velveteen is generally used to describe items made from cotton or cotton blends.

Drycleaning Cycle: 4-6 minutes in any solvent

Drying Temperature: 140°-150° F/60-65°C

Wetcleaning: (Only wetclean when the fiber content is cotton or polyester)

Cycle Time/Type	Water Temperature	Mechanical Action
4 Minute Wash	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute Rinse	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute Rinse Add fabric conditioner	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
3 Minute Extract		Medium Speed
Tumble dry on low heat.		

Special Precautions:

Do not wetclean velvets made from acetate, silk, or rayon. Do not use the steam gun or apply any water-based substance on velvets made from these fibers. The moisture and pressure will flatten the pile fibers leaving shiny areas. There is no restoration for this type of damage.

All velvets should be turned inside out before cleaning and drying. When turned inside the fibers will rub against each other to help fluff them back up. Test for colorfastness. Dyes used in velvets have a high tendency to bleed.

MAN-MADE FURS (Fake Fur/Faux Fur)

Man-made furs are very easy to clean.

Man made furs have a long hair like fibers and often resemble real fur but are actually very easy to clean. They can be made of acrylic, modacrylic or polyester. Curling of the hair fibers will occur from excessive heat.

Dry Cleaning Cycle: 4-6 minutes in any solvent

Drying Temperature: Not to exceed 120° F/49°C

Wetcleaning:

Cycle Time/Type	Water Temperature	Mechanical Action
4 Minute Wash	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute Add fabric conditioner	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
3 Minute Extract		High Speed
Tumble dry on low heat. Temperature is not to exceed 120° F/49°C		

Special Precautions:

Their care instructions often read clean by the "Pile Fabric Method" which is as follow:

Dryclean the item alone or in a small load and use a high solvent level if possible. A high solvent level gives a gentler cleaning by reducing the mechanical action in the wheel. Hang the item immediately after the load has finished to prevent wrinkling.

Do not attempt to steam finish these items. This includes puff irons, hand irons, and form finishers. Synthetic furs are extremely sensitive to heat and will be damaged by high temperatures. Curling of the hair fibers will occur from excessive heat. There is no restoration for this type of damage.

POLYURETHANE (PU)/POLY VINYL CHLORIDE (PVC)



The polyurethane coating became so brittle it cracked.

Polyurethane and PVC coatings appear in various different forms. They can resemble everything from plastic and rubber to leather and suede. Sometimes the coating is applied to an inner lining of the garment.

Dry Cleaning: Not recommended in any solvent

Drying Temperature: Ideally, polyurethane items should hang to dry.

Wetcleaning: Wetcleaning is the preferred method of cleaning PU and PVC.

Cycle Time/Type	Water Temperature	Mechanical Action
4 Minute Wash	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute Add fabric conditioner	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
3 Minute Extract		Low Speed
Hang to Dry		

Special Precautions:

Polyurethane and PVC coated items often become stiff and brittle after drycleaning in any solvent therefore drycleaning is not recommended. If drycleaned is to be done, the cycle time must be reduced. Do not attempt to steam finish polyurethane items. This includes puff irons, hand irons, and form finishers.

FLOCKED FABRIC

Flocked fabrics are made by attaching small pieces of fibers with an adhesive to the surface of another fabric. This can be in a pattern or over the entire fabric to give a velvet, pile-like look.

Dry Cleaning Cycle: 3-5 minutes in any solvent

Drying Temperature: Not to exceed 120° F/49°C

Wetcleaning:

Cycle Time/Type	Water Temperature	Mechanical Action
4 Minute Wash	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute Add fabric conditioner	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
3 Minute Extract		Low Speed
Tumble dry on low heat. Temperature is not to exceed 120° F/49°C		

Special Precautions:

Flocking is held to a background fabric by an adhesive. This adhesive can be softened or removed from contact with dry solvents in the cleaning and stain removal process. Once the adhesive is removed, the flock fibers fall off the fabric surface leaving bald areas. For this reason, testing is absolutely necessary before cleaning or spotting. Turn the fabric inside out before cleaning and drying to help fluff the flocking.

BEADS/SEQUINS



Steam finishing caused curling in several of the sequins.

The holiday season and the parties that come with it bring out a fair share of beaded and decorative trim garments. Drycleaning poses the biggest threat to these items.

Dry Cleaning Cycle: 3-5 minutes in any solvent

Drying Temperature: Not to exceed 120° F/49°C

Wetcleaning:

Cycle Time/Type	Water Temperature	Mechanical Action
4 Minute Wash	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute Add fabric conditioner	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
Extract		*
Tumble dry on low heat. 120° F/49°C		

Special Precautions:

Clean in a net bag. Testing of the beads and sequins prior to cleaning is vital for successful cleaning. This type of ornamentation lends itself to several drycleaning related problems such as a loss of color/ luster, deformity, or complete dissolving of the bead or sequin. The heat in steam finishing can also cause curling or deformities.

The manner in which the trim is attached to the garment should also be noted. If glue has been used, test to confirm if it can withstand drycleaning and wetcleaning. If stitching is applied, check to be certain none of the threads have been broken. Wetcleaning is often the preferred method of cleaning these items if the fiber content and fabric construction will allow.

*Extraction will vary depending on the fiber content and construction of the item. Polyester, rayon, cotton, and wool items can be extracted at high speeds. However, silk and acetate should be extracted at low speeds. Silk and acetate in satin constructions should not be extracted. These items should hang to dry to reduce severe wrinkling and fabric damaged caused by the high-speed extractions.

CHENILLE



Roll the fringe in the edge of the blanket and secure.

Chenille is a specialty yarn identified by its fuzzy appearance. The term “chenille” means caterpillar in French, as the yarns resemble the furry creatures.

Dry Cleaning Cycle: include 3-5 minutes

Drying Temperature: Not to exceed 120° F

Wetcleaning:

Cycle Time/Type	Water Temperature	Mechanical Action
5-10 Minute Wash	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-4 Minute	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
2-3 Minute Add fabric conditioner	80°F (27°C)	Very Gentle Agitation
3 Minute Extract		High Speed
Tumble dry on low heat. 120° F/49°C		

Special Precautions:

Due to the construction of chenille yarns, these items are extremely susceptible to snagging. Turn the item inside out and place in a net bag. When cleaning items with fringed trimming, secure the fringe by binding it with string or twist ties. Another option is to roll the fringe in the edges of the item and secure with safety pins or thread.