

Natural Fibers

Silk

Advantages: Smooth, lustrous, strong, and dries quickly.

Disadvantages: Shows water spots, sunlight can destroy, and thin.

Interior Uses: Draperies, wall coverings, wall hangings, accessories, trims, and upholstery.

Care: Dry Clean or hand wash (check label) and iron at low temperature.

Flax (Linen)

Advantages: Strongest, absorbs moisture, comfortable in warm weather, and washes easily.
Disadvantages: Mildews, wrinkles, and burns easily.

Interior Uses: Table clothes, draperies (firm), carpet backing, couches, wall coverings, and pillows.

Care: Wash or dry clean (check label) and iron at high temperature.

Cotton

Advantages: Strong, durable, soft, absorbs moisture, breathes well, and washes easily.

Disadvantages: Mildews, does not spring back into shape, wrinkles easily, burns readily, and shrinks.

Interior Uses: Beds, towels, rugs, and curtains.

Care: Wash in washer and dryer and iron at high temperature.

Wool

Advantages: Warm, durable, absorbent, resilient, fire retardant, and wrinkle resistant.

Disadvantages: Requires special care, shrinks sometimes, absorbs odors, and requires protection against insects.

Interior Uses: Rug/carpet, upholstery, wall coverings, and blankets.

Care: Dry clean, hand wash and dry flat, and iron at low temperature.

Leather

Advantages: Extremely durable and expensive.

Disadvantages: Quality varies, susceptible to marks, holes, and tears. (Buy by the hide)

Interior Uses: Upholstery, desktops, and wall coverings.

Cares: Mild soap and water applied by hand. Use leather cleaner and oil.

Synthetic Fibers

Nylon

Advantages: Soft, drapeable, shiny, absorbs water, dries quickly, and resistant to shrinking.

Disadvantages: Can wrinkle, low abrasion resistance, heat sensitive, damaged by acetone, and slippery.

Interior Uses: Bedspreads, draperies, linings, slip covers, and some upholstery.

Cares: Wash, sometimes hung dry. (Check label)

Advantages: Strongest, resilient, lustrous, and dries quickly.

Disadvantages: May yellow or gray, heat sensitive, and low moisture absorbency.

Interior Uses: Best carpet, curtains, upholstery (great use), and wall coverings.

Cares: Laundered, hung dry, and iron at low temperature.

Olefin

Acetate

Advantages: Imitates leather, available in many colors and textures, low to medium cost, and good for kid's furniture.

Disadvantages: Doesn't breathe, splits, and difficult to repair.

Interior Uses: Upholstery, wall coverings, and table coverings.

Cares: Mild soap and water.

Advantages: Strong and resistant to abrasion.

Disadvantages: Shrinks, chemicals and oils cause stains, and doesn't hold up much.

Interior Uses: Upholstery, awnings, carpets, and out door furniture.

Cares: Mild soap and water.

Vinyl

Advantages: Soft and comfortable, high moisture absorbency, and drapeable.

Disadvantages: May wrinkle or shrink unless treated, mildew, and weak.

Interior Uses: Blend for: draperies and upholstery, tie backs, and trimmings.

Cares: Dry clean, sometimes washable (check label), and iron at low temperature.

Polyester

Advantages: Wrinkle resistance, resistant to abrasion, dries quickly, blends well with other fibers, and retains heat-set pleats and creases.

Disadvantages: Absorbs oily stains, and low absorbency of moisture.

Interior Uses: Carpet/rugs, bedspreads, table clothes, blankets, mattresses, draperies, sheets, and upholstery.

Cares: Easily laundered, needs little or no pressing, and iron at low temperature.

Acrylic

Advantages: Soft, warm, cheaper, wool-like, lightweight, wrinkle resistant, and resistant to moths and sunlight.

Disadvantages: Pills, static electricity, heat sensitive, and doesn't absorb water.

Interior Uses: Blankets, carpet/rugs, upholstery (mixed with something else), and draperies.

Cares: Dry clean or laundered and iron at low temperature.

Rayon