

## MAN-MADE FIBERS

Without the man-made fibers that chemists have created this century, we could not clothe the world to the extent of we do today. For the first time, fibers are actually made of materials that have no relation to natural fibers. Petroleum, natural gas, water, air and even such things as corncobs, are the raw materials of man-made fibers. It took years of research and untold amounts of money to develop and market these fibers.

Man-made fibers are produced in the laboratory; they are manufactured fibers. Raw materials are first made into a solution. Long filaments are formed by forcing the solution through a spinnet. These filaments can be left long, or chopped into shorter lengths and spun like the natural fibers. The chemical solution from which a manufactured fiber is made may include additives to dull the fiber, to dye it, or to add other properties.

The great explosion of these man-made fibers has occurred in the last fifty years:

Fiber	Year
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Nylon	1939
Modacrylic	1949
Acrylic	1950
Polyester	1953
Spandex	1959

When producing the yarn, different types of fibers can be blended together, of the yarn can be from a single fiber source. The yarn can be twisted very tightly in the spinning process to give a pebbly or crepe-like surface to fabric later. It can be crimped to add a spring-back characteristic, or textured in other ways.

## TRADE NAMES

The first man-made fiber was named nylon. It became such a household word that nylon is now the generic or family name of the fiber. We even refer to women's hosiery as nylons, since it has nearly replaced all the other fibers in this product. There have been numerous variations and improvements to this fiber.

Companies use their own trade names for man-made fibers. A trade name identifies the product as belonging to a specific company. Great consumer confusion existed when companies began manufacturing similar fibers under their own trade names. An advertisement for a garment might list only the trade name. People thought different trade names such as Orlon and Acrilan were totally different fibers, instead of members of the acrylic family.