

## MICROFIBERS

### FIBER MANUFACTURING

“Microfiber” is really not a fiber unto itself. Rather, it is the generic term for the technology that has been developed to produce an ultra-fine fiber, and then weave it into very high-quality fabric constructions. DuPont introduced the first microfiber, made from polyester, in 1989. Polyester is still the dominant fiber type in this classification, though nylon, rayon and acrylic microfibers are also produced.

Microfibers are found in a wide variety of end uses. Upholstery fabrics, such as the one shown on this page, sometimes use microfibers, either alone or in blends. “Branded” microfibers are also very popular in apparel items such as lingerie, rainwear and jogging suits.

### FIBER CHARACTERISTICS

Fiber sizes are generally expressed according to a system called “denier.” A denier is the weight in grams of a 9000-meter (about 5 miles) length of fiber or yarn. The higher the denier number, the thicker the fiber. The denier of human hair ranges from 2 to 4, while fine silk is approximately 1.25 denier. Manufactured fibers with deniers less than one are classified as microfibers.

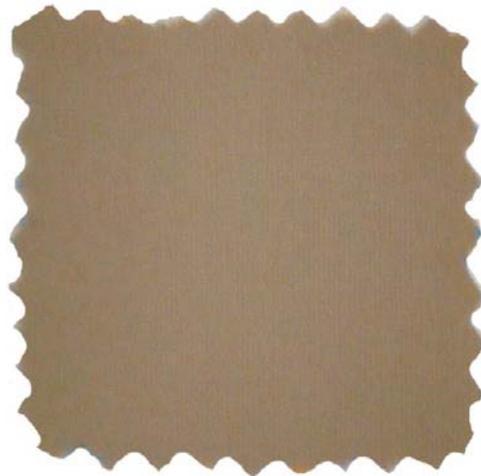
These fibers, especially the ultra-fine 0.3 to 0.5 denier types are more expensive to process, therefore they command a premium. Fiber brands such as DuPont’s patented “Micromattique” (polyester) are common for apparel and other products, but not for interior fabrics.

### FABRIC CHARACTERISTICS

A soft hand and exceptional drape are two of the most often mentioned characteristics of microfiber fabrics. These fabrics also lend themselves to all kinds of special effects, such as suede and embossed looks.

Microfibers are most often used in filament yarns. Because fabrics created from filament yarns have smooth surfaces, pilling is not a problem.

Because of the very tight weave and the luster of the fibers, the polyester fabrics shown here looks very much like an elegant silk. (Remember, polyester is often used to create “faux silk” fabrics.)



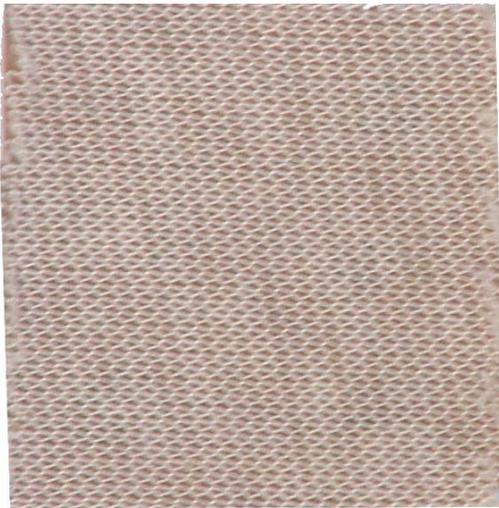
### CARING FOR MICROFIBERS

Microfibers can generally be cared for in a manner similar to that of conventional fibers from the same fiber type. For example, the fabric shown here (like most polyesters is most likely wet-cleanable (with proper

testing!). Because it is also a solid-colored taffeta, it will probably ring if spot cleaned improperly.

## **NOTICE THE SCRIM**

Another interesting characteristic of the fabric shown here is its knit scrim (seen below). A backing of this type is usually added to give better dimensional stability. The scrim is glued to the back of the fabric, so strong solvents should be used with caution.



There have been a few incidents of the glue (used to hold the scrim) wicking through onto the face fiber when protecting with a solvent-based protector. In one case, the

scrim was affixed with small dots of glue. The glue wicked through and left light gray dots on the face fabric.

While these situations are very rare, it is always a good idea to check the underside of a fabric whenever possible (usually by opening a zipper or looking at the flip side of a skirt). When a scrim is detected it is a good idea to test the fabric (in an inconspicuous area) to see if any of the glue wicks through.

## **ON THE BRIGHT SIDE**

With proper care, microfiber fabrics can last for years. Vacuuming, rotating and flipping cushions and damp dusting are all tools that can effectively add life to these fabrics.

The Fiber-Seal Fabric Care System can benefit these fabrics by reducing absorbency, helping to resist permanent staining, and ultimately increasing the useful life of the fabric.

**AS WITH ALL FABRICS AND FINISHES,  
ALWAYS TEST CHEMICALS AND/OR  
PROCEDURES FIRST IN AN  
INCONSPICUOUS AREA OF THE  
FABRIC.**