

MOHAIR VELVET

WHAT IS MOHAIR?

Mohair is a term used to describe the fleece from Angora goats. These goats are usually sheared twice a year in order to maximize production. Mohair is a fine, silky fiber, which unlike wool has a high luster. Otherwise, mohair shares many of the properties common to protein fibers such as susceptibility to alkaline damage and resistance to moderate acids.

CONSTRUCTION

The mohair fabric below is an example of a velvet construction. This fabric demonstrates the typical luster and hand of many mohair fabrics. Note the density of the pile fibers. They are loosely woven together and they have no twist. This construction can lend itself to wear problems at a later date.



PILE DISTORTION CAN BE A PROBLEM

As stated earlier, mohair acts and reacts like wool. This is especially true when it

comes to spotting. The mohair shown here tends to fuzz when overworked. This can distort the nap, giving an unsightly appearance.

Another problem is crushing and/or nap distortion from pressure. Because the pile yarns are not densely constructed or twisted, crushing and nap distortion is a common occurrence. We have had several reports where dark streaks were noted on mohair fabrics after the cushions were protected. The cushions were left on edge to dry and a dark streak appeared everywhere the fabric edges touched. Further examination revealed it was nothing more than nap distortion caused from the weight of the cushions crushing the pile fibers.

PROFESSIONAL CLEANING

Mohair will generally clean well if not heavily soiled. Both wet cleaning and dry cleaning methods can be employed if preliminary testing is done. The fabric shown here probably should not be wet cleaned because there is a risk of nap distortion. The pattern could easily be damaged and correction could be difficult, if not impossible. If heavily soiled, the professional cleaner may have no alternative but to wet clean the fabric. In such a situation it is advisable to get some form of written release from the client stating the possible problems and concerns.

Solvent-based cleaners would generally be safe to use for oil type soils and spots. As with all fabrics, it is recommended to

inspect the fabric for latex backings that could be adversely affected by solvents.

CLIENT CARE

As with wool, mohair tends to collect and hold airborne soils. Therefore, it is extremely important to vacuum these fabrics on a regular basis to prevent soil buildup. It is much easier and better for the fabric if it is maintained on a regular basis, rather than letting it get over-soiled and then trying to restore it to a "like new" condition.

Lightly brushing the nap with a velvet brush will remove soils missed by the vacuum and will also help to remove any weakened fibers. Caution should be used not to overwork the fabric with the brush.

Spills are another problem entirely. Blotting could cause nap distortion, especially if too much pressure is used. It would be advisable to use the wicking method on water-based spills, or light blotting if necessary. Too much pressure in a

confined area will only lead to nap distortion.

Rotating cushions is another way to prolong the useful life of these fabrics. Wear and soiling will be minimized when proper maintenance methods are utilized.

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

Mohair velvets have a beautiful look and hand. With proper maintenance and Fiber-Seal Fabric Protection, these fabrics will look presentable for years.

Application of protection products are very beneficial and will make spills less likely to be permanent. They also decrease the absorbency of the fabric and the possibility of nap distortion from liquid spills.

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