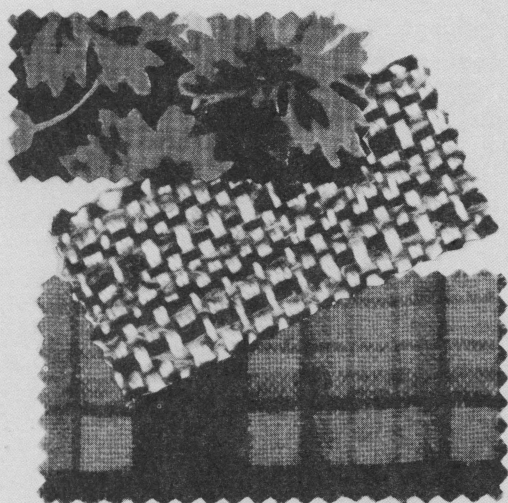


FINISHES-PERMANENT PRESS AND SOIL RELEASE

Becky Culp*



Much has been said about the permanent press and soil release finishes. They provide big savings in time and energy, so important in today's busy world. But what does all this mean when it comes right down to the selection, use and care of such finishes?

PERMANENT PRESS — WHAT IS IT?

Permanent press is a term used to describe fabrics which retain their shape for the life of the garment. The terms "permanent press" and "durable press" mean the same and may be used interchangeably. Permanently pressed fabrics have the ability to retain an attractive appearance during wear and the "memory" to return to the original smooth surface and shape after laundering. This finish, then, improves wrinkle resistance and reduces care requirements.

Permanent press differs from other "easy care" finishes in that they do not require ironing for the life of the garment under normal usage. Trade names include Coneprest, Dan Press, Koratron, Never-Press, Reeve-Set, Super Crease and Perma-Prest.

However, easy care finishes may need touch up ironing after laundry and wear. These wrinkle

resistant finishes include Belfast, Disciplined cotton, Everglaze, Minicare, Regulated cotton, Unidare and Wrinkle-shed trade names.

What to Look For

- Smoothness — no set-in wrinkles or packaging wrinkles.
- Even color — no streaks or blotches of color.
- Flat seams and details — puckered stitching lines will appear even more so after laundry.
- No odor — odor indicates excess resin or improper curing of finish.
- Fiber content of at least 50 percent polyester — gives adequate strength to the fabric.
- Good fit — new seam lines will never be as flat and creases will never be as permanent as the old, so alterations are a problem.
- No excessive stiffness.

Care

- Wash frequently before soil builds up and penetrates.
- Keep washer and dryer loads small. Crowding creates wrinkles.
- Heat sets wrinkles, so avoid heat as much as possible in the laundering process. Permanent press or cool down cycles are for this purpose. They also are designed with low agitation and spin speed.
- Launder and dry according to the most heat-sensitive fiber blend. Follow the directions of the care label.
- Turn garments inside out before laundering to help prevent discoloration and wear along crease lines.
- Tumble-dry and remove from the dryer as soon as dryer has stopped to prevent wrinkling. Line-dry only heavy fabrics with enough weight to hang out wrinkles by themselves.
- Blot stains immediately to prevent their working into the fabric.
- Pretreat stains by soaking in a small amount of liquid detergent, and then launder according to instructions.
- Spot oily stains with a safe cleaning fluid before laundering. Follow with a liquid detergent to avoid the possibility of a ring.

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- Do not use chlorine bleach unless recommended on the care label.
- Fabric softeners will reduce the tendency to build up static electricity.

Sewing with Permanent Press

- A simple pattern with few seams and details gives best results.
- Preshrink zippers, interfacings, trim and fabric before constructing.
- Use a cotton-covered polyester or polyester thread.
- Set the machine for 10 to 12 stitches per inch and use a size 11 or 14 needle.
- Use a regular throat plate with a small round hole rather than a zig-zag plate with an oval hole for straight stitching.
- Loosen the upper tension to prevent seam puckering.

Disadvantages of Permanent Press

Permanent press fabric may:

- Be warm because it is nonabsorbent.
- Wear out faster at seams and creases than similar products without the finish.
- Have permanent soil and staining problems.
- Be off-grain since the grain cannot be straightened.
- Be difficult to alter because crease lines show.

SOIL RELEASE — WHAT IS IT?

There are two types of soil release — soil repellency and soil release. A fabric treated with a soil repellent finish resists the absorption of soils or stains, such as water and oil. Such a finish is commonly known as Zepel, Scotchgard and Sylmer. Available in aerosol cans, they may easily be applied to fabrics subject to frequent soiling.

A soil release finish allows the fabric to release soil in cleaning more readily than does untreated fabric. Trade names include Cirrasol, Dan Clean, Fybrite, Soilex, X-It, Fantessa and Visa. A soil release finish does not guarantee stain release.

Care

Soil-repellent finish:

- Frequent cleaning helps to prevent any soil from embedding in the fabric.
- Needs thorough rinsing after cleaning since detergents left in the fabric will interfere with soil repellency.
- Oil stains may need spot cleaning with solvent.

Soil-release finish:

- Attracts water so soil is more easily washed away, but soil still needs pre-spotting with detergent.
- Oily stains need to be sponged with a safe cleaning fluid before laundering.
- Any stain not removed during laundering may be heat set if ironed.
- Sponge aged stained with a full-strength liquid detergent solution for an hour or more before laundering.

PERMANENT PRESS COMBINED WITH SOIL RELEASE

A combination of permanent press and soil release has given extra features to fabrics. Oily stains tended to be a problem with permanent press fabrics. Soil releasing finishes applied to the fabrics reduce the attraction between fibers and oils. The combined finishes release normal soils and stains in one wash while remaining permanently pressed.

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