

Pressing

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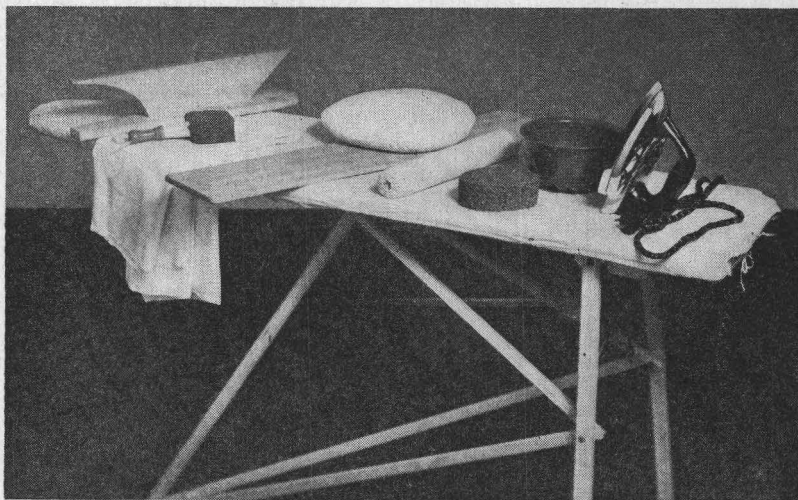
Extension Specialist in Clothing and Textiles

Materials made from elastic fibers do not wrinkle as easily as others; consequently they do not need pressing so often.

Wool is our most elastic fiber, with silk, cotton, linen and rayon in the order of their decreasing elasticity.

Heat and moisture have a marked effect on most fabrics. Certain fabrics cannot stand dampening and become limp or stiff when moistened. Others, like some metallic fibers, can stand only a moderate degree of heat. One should always test on a waste scrap of fabric the effect of heat and moisture.

Unless one is given a written guarantee that woolen material has been pre-shrunk, all woolen materials should be shrunk before cutting.



Pressing equipment.

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Equipment

A well-padded ironing board, an efficient iron, a sponge and bowl of water, pressing cloths, and a clothes brush, are needed for pressing. A tailor's pressing cushion, a sleeve board or magazine roll, and a hardwood board are helpful additions. For directions for making a pressing cushion, sleeve board, or a magazine roll, see Extension Bulletin 468.

A flat hardwood pressing board about eight inches wide, thirty inches long and one-third of an inch thick is recommended for pressing double thicknesses of woollens such as coat lapels, pleats, and seams. The board must be smoothly sanded.

The ironing board should be covered first with a soft resilient pad; over this place a firm, smoothly woven cover, tightly stretched and well fastened.

An iron with controlled heat is most convenient. Be sure the iron is clean. If it is not, wash the ironing surface with a brush or a cloth wet in warm water. Use a little soap if necessary, but be sure it is all rinsed off. Never scrape the surface, as this will scratch the iron. Avoid getting water into the coils of an electric iron.

Pressing cloths vary. For wool, use heavy cotton, such as heavy muslin or light canvas. The cloth should be washed before using, to remove all filling. In addition, the pressing of wool requires a special cover of *napped wool*, made to tie over the ironing board. As a pressing cloth for silk or rayon, use a light weight fabric such as cheese-cloth, or use tissue paper.

Pressing in general

The pressing of fine fabrics should always be done with a moderately hot iron.

Pressing is not ironing. If this difference is clearly understood, it is easier to avoid a shine on garments. In pressing, the heat and moisture together produce steam. The weight of the iron and the steam remove wrinkles and raise the nap. When the garment is actually ironed, the nap is flattened, and a shiny surface may result.

Wool and silk should be pressed on the wrong side with a pressing cloth over them.

In pressing seams, pleats, or any other part that needs to be dampened, place a damp cloth over the pressing cloth, and press. If the damp cloth is placed next to the fabric, it is likely to cause water spots.

When sewing, press each seam, even short ones, before joining to another seam.

Woollens

A woolen cloth on the ironing board is desirable for pressing

woolen materials. The right side of the garment is placed next to the wool covering on the ironing board. Use a pressing cloth. Heavy muslin or light-weight canvas, or any firmly woven cotton material that has been laundered to remove filling, may be used. Wring the pressing cloth as dry as possible with the hands. Use warm water. Place on wrong side of woolen material and *press*. Remember to press with the weight of the iron, rather than to slide it along with a smoothing motion as in ironing. Do not press wool entirely dry; this increases the danger of shine.

For seams, double thicknesses, or folds in woolens, the bare hardwood pressing board is especially good. Place the right side of the material next to the bare board, cover the wrong side with a pressing cloth, steam, and press. This method prevents shadow marks on the right side which sometimes result from folds or seam edges.

Pure silks

Test the heat of the iron on a scrap of goods or by running the iron over the ironing board pad and then placing the hand over the ironed surface. If the heat is not uncomfortable for the hand it is safe for silks.

Silk should be pressed on the wrong side, with a slightly damp cheesecloth or other thin cloth over it. Place a dry cloth between the damp cloth and the silk, to avoid spotting from any excess moisture.

Rayons

Three types of rayon are made by the methods of manufacture today. They are viscose, cuprammonium, and acetate. Of the three, acetates must be ironed with special care. A warm iron, 300 degrees or less, is best. All fabrics made from acetate rayons will melt at high temperatures. If the material is not labeled, test a sample. Use a pressing cloth as with pure silks.

The viscose and cuprammonium rayons are pressed in the same manner as pure silks.

If the rayon is a "wash silk," it may be *ironed* in the same manner as fine cottons are ironed.

Rough crepes from which there is danger of removing the crinkle should be tested before pressing. They may require steaming, as do velvets, in order to preserve the crepe finish.

Linens and cottons

Linen and cotton may be pressed on either side. Table linen has a better appearance if pressed on the wrong side until nearly dry, then turned to the right side and ironed entirely dry. Fibers of vegetable origin will stand a hotter iron than those of animal origin. Press damp, and with the thread of the material.

Mixtures

There are many different combinations of the five fibers on the market. Unless the material is labeled so you know the actual fiber content, and can treat it as such, the only safe way is to test a sample of the material before pressing. If the pressing is to be done on a ready-to-wear garment, use the buckle end of the belt, or extra width on an inconspicuous seam.

Pile fabrics

Velvets and fabrics with a pile surface should be steamed. To steam these fabrics, hang them in the bathroom over a bathtub of steaming water. Have the door and windows closed.

To steam a short seam, or a small space in a pile fabric, stand a hot iron on end, spread several folds of a damp cloth over the iron, and lightly move the wrong side of the velvet over the damp cloth. Keep the material straight with the thread of the goods; if held on the bias it will stretch out of shape. The steam coming through the cloth raises the pile.

Pleats

Since pleats are much in fashion, a few directions for pressing and for making them hang well are given.

Some materials hold a crease better than others, so it is best to choose materials for pleating that are not too soft or too wiry.

Lay the pleats straight with a thread of the goods; even a little bias in pleats will cause them to hang poorly. When the crease of a pleat comes on a seam line, clip the seam at the top of the hem and press open inside the hem, to make the pleat hang well.

Use fine silk thread for basting pleats, and only partly press before removing basting thread, to prevent marks from showing from basting line.

To prevent shadow marks on the right side, which often result from folds of the material, the flat hardwood pressing board is especially recommended for pressing pleats in woolen materials. Place the right side of the pleats next to the bare hardwood surface. Using a pressing cloth, steam and press on the wrong side of the material in the usual manner for woolens.

For silk materials, strips of wrapping paper slipped into each pleat during pressing will prevent such marks. As an alternative for basting, the pleats may be pinned to the ironing board to hold them until they are pressed enough to mark the crease. Remove the pins to finish pressing so there will be no pin marks left.