

How to Press *New Fabrics*

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Synthetic Fibers Need Special Care and Proper Temperature

The development of synthetic fibers has been a boon to the woman who dislikes pressing and ironing. Many of the new fabrics require little or no pressing, even after laundering. Frequently, however, a lovely garment has literally melted away because of incorrect pressing.

Heat, Moisture, and Pressure

Pressing combines the effects of heat, moisture and pressure on a fabric. The amount of each required depends on the fiber content and the construction of the fabric. The most satisfactory method of determining the amounts of each of these elements needed for an individual fabric is to experiment on a small piece, or on the edge of a wide seam.

Accurate control of heat is the most important factor to be considered when pressing the synthetics, acetate, acrilan, dacron, dynel, nylon, orlon and vicara. A temperature that is too high will cause these fabrics to become glazed, stick to the iron or melt. The temperature control on most irons gives indications for rayon, wool, cotton and linen.

The table below may be used to determine the position of the control for fibers not shown on the dial. The temperature range of most irons is 180° to 550°F.

The "rayon" setting on all but the newest irons is comparable to the acetate temperature given in the table below. Until 1952, acetate was classified as rayon, but now the term "rayon" on a label refers to viscose and Bemberg only, and these fibers may be ironed at a cotton setting.

Use Steam Iron Cautiously

A steam iron should be used cautiously on the synthetic fibers. Inasmuch as dynel has a very low melting point (250°F.), a steam iron should not be used on this fiber.

Blended fabrics made of one or more of the synthetic fibers and a natural fiber complicate the heat control problem. Many of the wool blends require very little pressing, but the greater the wool content, the more the pressing required. A steam iron is ideal for these blends, but a dry iron and a damp pressing cloth may be used.

The best general rule to follow when pressing the blends is to keep the iron setting suitable for the fiber that requires the lowest temperature. However, when using a damp pressing cloth and a dry iron, the moisture in the cloth will quickly reduce the temperature of the iron and a setting midway between the synthetic and wool temperatures will work more satisfactorily. Wool fabrics and wool blends should not be pressed until they are completely dry.

Press "Blends" Damp

Blends of the newer synthetics with rayon should be quite damp and pressed until dry at the synthetic temperatures. Although rayon fibers alone can be pressed more quickly at a higher temperature, they will press out smoothly at a low temperature.

Combinations of cotton with the synthetics are apt to cause the greatest difficulty, especially when the percentage of cotton is high and the fabric is smooth. Cotton, unlike rayon, will not press out smoothly at a low temperature.

Soft, flannel-like fabrics that do not require a sharp press can be "touched up" at a low temperature. However, hard finished fabrics such as cotton-orlon chambray create an insoluble problem. If these fabrics are not wrung during the laundry process, there will be fewer wrinkles.

Many fabrics made from synthetics can be pressed without moisture. A blend with a low natural fiber content will not require as much moisture as one with a high percentage. A fabric of less than



TOMMIE BOLIEU FRANCIS, a home-economics sophomore from Parker, has shown special interest in the properties of the new fibers. Experimentation with iron temperature is the first step in determining how the new synthetic fabrics should be pressed.

55 percent of any of the synthetics should not be expected to be completely free from the need for pressing.

Press Fabrics at These Temperatures

Dynel	200°F.
Acetate	250°F.
Nylon, Dacron, Orlon, Acrilan and Vicara	275°-325°F.
Silk	350°F.
Light weight cotton and rayon	400°-450°F.
Wool Pressing	450°-500°F.
Heavy Cotton, rayon and linen	500°-550°F.