

A Short Glossary of Terms used in the Craft of Clothworking

Autoclaving Heating under pressure in a temperature above 100°C and often in steam.

Bleaching The procedure, other than by only scouring (q.v.), of improving the whiteness of textile materials. Sometimes accomplished with and sometimes without the removal of natural colouring or other extraneous substances.

Calendering The process of passing fabric through a machine consisting of heavy rollers which rotate under pressure to smooth and flatten fabric, to close the intersection between the yarns, or to confer surface glaze.

Carbonising The chemical process for eliminating vegetable matter admixed with animal fibres by degrading the cellulosic material, usually involving treatment with acid.

Carding The process of disentangling fibres by working them between two closely spaced relatively moving surfaces covered with pointed wire, pins, spikes, or saw-teeth.

Colour Fastness The term used to describe the resistance of fabric to the loss of colour. There are several agencies which can cause loss of colour, the most important being washing and light. There are five grades of wash colour fastness and eight grades of light colour fastness.

Combing The process of straightening and parallelising fibres and removing short fibres and impurities by using combs assisted by brushes and rollers.

Conditioning A method of adding relatively small quantities of moisture to textile materials, either by allowing the textile material to remain in a standard atmosphere or by adding small quantities of water.

Crabbing A process used in the worsted trade to set the fabric in a smooth flat state so that it will not cockle, pucker, or wrinkle during subsequent wet processing.

Crease Resistance The term used to indicate the ability of a textile material to resist and recover from creases produced during use.

Crimp This term relates either to fibres or yarns. Crimp in fibres relates to the number of waves per unit length of fibre. Crimping can either be natural, as in wool, or produced by processing as in manmade fibres. In yarns, crimp relates to the distortion of a yarn due to its interlacing in a fabric.

Cropping The process of cutting the pile on a fabric to uniform height or cutting loose fibres from the surface of a cloth after weaving.

Damping A method of conditioning in which wool cloth is wetted between two layers of fabric which have been soaked in water.

Dewing A process for conditioning fabric by spraying with a very fine spray of water.

Doubling The process of combing by twisting together two single yarns to form a double yarn.

Drawing (or Drafting) The operation by which slivers (q.v.) are blended, levelled and then, by drafting, reduced to the stage of a fine sliver (known as ROVING) which is suitable for making into yarn.

Dyeing The modification of the original colour of a material by the use of a dissolved or dispersed substance, either natural or synthetic.

Fabric Any cloth woven or knitted from fibres.

Felting The matting together of fibres during processing or use.

Fibres Fibres are fine substances with a high ratio of length to thickness. They can be either NATURAL or MAN-MADE. Natural fibres are of animal origin (wool, mohair, etc.) or vegetable origin (cotton, linen, etc.) or mineral origin (asbestos). Synthetic fibres are produced from naturally occurring material, mainly wood pulp or cotton lint, and the most commonly used example of this form of fibre is RAYON. Manmade fibres are produced directly by the polymerisation of synthetic chemicals at present obtained as by-products of the petro-chemical industry: typical examples are NYLON and POLYESTER.

Flame Retardant Any process which can improve the resistance of a fabric to burning.

Flannel An all-wool fabric of plain or twill weave with a soft HANDLE.

Frame Spinning The manufacture of yarn by attenuating a sliver by means of rollers and then inserting twist by means of a flyer, a ring and traveller, or a cap.

Fulling A machine process used to felt wool fabrics by continual compression between oscillating arms and a fixed container.

Garnetting A machine process similar to carding used for converting waste fibres or yarns into a web of fibres.

Gilling The attenuation of a sliver between two pairs of rollers in which the movement of the fibres is in part controlled by pins on moving bars.

Habick An instrument used during the Middle Ages to hold fabric under tension during its final preparation and dressing. It is roughly equivalent to the modern stenter rail. (See Tentering).

Heat Setting The process of conferring stability upon fibres, yarns, or fabrics by means of steam or dry heat.

Jacquard Mechanism A mechanism, named after Joseph Marie Jacquard (1752-1834), which gives individual control of several hundred warp threads or knitting needles, enabling large figures designs to be produced.

Knitted Fabric A fabric produced by the intermeshing of loops of yarn. Either warp knitted, in which the yarns are fed along the length of the fabric, or weft knitted, in which the yarns are fed across the fabric.

Loom A machine for producing cloth by the interlacing of two sets of threads substantially at right angles to each other. (See Weaving).

Lustring A process by which fabric is modified so that it displays different intensities of reflected light from different parts of the surface.

Milling The process of consolidating woven or knitted fabrics. Usually carried out on wet wool fabrics.

Mothproofing A process for improving the resistance of wool and animal fibre to attack by moth larvae.

Mule Spinning An intermittent method of producing yarn in which a fixed length of yarn is first stretched, then twisted, and finally wound on to a PACKAGE. This process is then repeated on another length of yarn.

Mungo A web of fibres made by pulling apart hard woven or milled cloth in rag form. It is usually of very variable and short fibre length.

Napping The process of raising fibres from the base structure of a fabric or felt.

Permanent Setting A process for conferring stability on fibres, yarns, or fabrics, generally by means of moist or dry heating. In wool fabrics, the term 'permanent' is applied when the setting treatment resists boiling water. For fabrics of manmade fibre, such a term is a relative one and rarely used.

Pile (or Nap) The surface given to a woven fabric by raising (q.v.).

Pre-sensitising A process by which textile material is made more sensitive to the acceptance of dyes. It is usually applied to yarns in order to obtain a pattern when the fabric is dyed as a whole.

Printing The marking of a fabric with decorative designs in colour, by the use of rotating lithograph blocks, by dye expressed through perforated screens, or by transfer from printed paper.

Raising A process in which fabric is passed between rotating rollers covered with teasels, fine wire, or carborundum, so that the surface fibres are pulled out or broken to produce a layer of protruding fibres. (See Pile).

Reciprocating Aprons Feeding aprons which oscillate at right angles to the direction of feed, principally used for the formation of woollen slubbings prior to spinning the slubbings into yarn.

Scouring The treatment of textile materials with aqueous or other solutions to remove natural products such as waxes, or impurities such as oil and dirt, introduced during processing.

Selvedge The edge of a woven fabric so formed as to prevent ravelling.

Shearing The cutting of the fleece from a sheep; but also sometimes used in the historical sense to describe the craft of The Shearmen's Company, i.e. cropping (q.v.).

Shoddy A fibrous web made by disintegrating knitted or loosely woven fabrics. Of longer fibre length than mungo (q.v.).

Showerproofing A finishing process whereby textile fabrics are given a very limited amount of water repellency, generally by coating the fibres with a hydrophobic substance. The fabric remains permeable both to air and to water vapour.

Shrinkage The amount by which a cloth becomes smaller when wetted. In the case of wool, shrinkage is caused by the water making the fibres draw the threads closer together, rather than because the individual threads become smaller.

Shrink Resistant The term used to describe textile materials which exhibit dimensional stability to a specified standard during use. This is either an inherent property of the material or is conferred by physical and/or chemical processes.

Shuttle The carrier of a yarn package which is inserted between opened warp yarns to deposit the weft thread during weaving.

Sizing The addition of a film, usually, of starch, on to the yarns in a warp prior to weaving.

Sliver An assemblage of fibres, usually, roughly parallel and without any twist.

Slubbing (See Woollen).

Spindle A shaft with bearings at only one end, usually driven at high speed to rotate yarn packages.

Tease To open and disentangle fibres prior to carding (q.v.).

Teasel A plant with a large prickly head (*Dipsacus fullonum*) used for raising (q.v.).

Tentering (or Stentering) A process in which selvages of a cloth are held by an endless chain to a predetermined width while the cloth is dried or heat set.

Texturising A process for producing permanent crimps, coils, or loops along the length of fibres in a yarn. Fabrics made from such yarns have increased bulk, moisture absorbency and thermal insulation properties. Some textured yarns also confer 'stretch' properties on fabrics made from them.

Top The starting materials for the attenuation of a sliver (q.v.) to be made subsequently into worsted yarn. Usually produced by carding, gilling and combing wool or fibres of similar length.

Tweed A fabric made from woollen spun yarn in a variety of colour and weave effects.

Twill A fabric woven by alternatively passing weft threads over one and under two or more warp threads to produce diagonal lines or ribs.

Velour A heavy pile fabric with the pile laid in one direction.

Warping The assembly of many ends of yarn from packages to make a continuous sheet of yarn suitable for feeding to a loom or warp-knitting.

Weaving The interlacing of two sets of yarns at right angles to each other. The set running along the length of the fabric is the WARP and the set inserted one at a time across the fabric is the WEFT.

Winding The process of transferring yarn from one PACKAGE to another.

Woof An old term for weft. (See Weaving).

Woollen A yarn or fabric made from wool which has been carded, the web split into strips and then twisted into yarn. The outer layer of each yarn has a typical fuzzy appearance. The split web is known as a slubbing.

Worsted A yarn in which all the fibres are reasonably parallel and which is made wholly from combed wool. (See Top).

Yarn An assembly of fibres of considerable length and relatively small cross section. It can be either of continuous filaments, for example fibres which extend the whole length of the yarn, or of many shorter fibres. Yarns made from short fibres are known as staple fibre yarns and are always held together by twist. Continuous filament yarns may or may not be twisted and can also be texturised (q.v.). Yarn is wound on to PACKAGES prior to weaving or knitting.