“Microfiber” is really not a fiber in the truest sense of the word. Rather, it is the generic term for the technology that has been developed to produce an ultra-fine fiber, which is then woven into very high-quality fabric constructions. DuPont introduced the first microfiber, made from polyester, in 1989.

**Fiber Characteristics**

Man made fibers are formed by forcing a liquid through tiny holes in a device called a spinneret. With microfibers, the holes are finer than with more conventional fibers. Potentially, any man-made fiber could be made into a microfiber.

Fiber sizes are generally expressed according to a system called “denier.” A denier is the weight in grams of a 9000-meter (about 5 miles) length of fiber or yarn. The higher the denier number the thicker the fiber. The denier of human hair ranges from 2 to 4, while fine silk is approximately 1.25 denier. Manufactured fibers with deniers less than one are classified as microfibers.

Microfibers are most commonly produced using polyester and nylon. Some rayon and acrylic microfibers are also being manufactured for consumer use. Microfibers can be used alone or blended with conventional denier man-made fibers as well as with natural fibers such as cotton, wool and silk. These fibers, especially the ultra-fine 0.3 to 0.5 denier types, are more expensive to process, and command a premium price. Fiber brands such as Invista’s patented Micromattique™ (polyester) are enjoying a surge in popularity for both residential and commercial interior fabrics.

**Fabric Characteristics**

Consider a very thick rope. When bent, it will be stiff and form a rounded arc. If finer threads or yarns are wound together until they form the same diameter as the thick rope and are bent, they will form a sharper bend or curve. Each of the individual strands can then move independently to create more flexibility or pliability. This effect occurs with microfibers. Each of the many very fine fibers moves independently to create a soft drape, yet the fine fibers can be packed together tightly to give body to the fabric.

A soft hand and exceptional drape are two of the most often mentioned characteristics of microfiber fabrics. These fabrics also lend themselves to special effects, such as suede and embossed looks.

Microfibers are most often used in filament form. Because fabrics created from filament yarns have smooth surfaces, pilling is not a problem.
Because of the very tight weave and the luster of the fibers, polyester microfiber fabrics can look very much like an elegant silk. (Remember, polyester is often used to create “faux silk” fabrics.)

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Caring for Microfibers
Microfibers can generally be cared for in a manner similar to that of conventional fibers of the same type. (A fabric made of nylon microfibers would likely be cleanable in the same way as a fabric made with conventional nylon fibers.)

If, however, a fabric is made of rayon microfibers, it would need to be cared for as a rayon fabric. This is what makes caring for these fabrics so difficult. Unless the fiber content is known—beyond the generic term “microfiber”—there is too little information to know what the fabric is or how to care for it.

Obviously, pre-testing is especially important when caring for microfiber fabrics.

Trust the Experts
With proper care, microfiber fabrics can last for years. Vacuuming, rotating and flipping cushions and damp dusting are all tools that can effectively add life to these fabrics.

The Fiber-Seal Fabric Care System can benefit these fabrics by reducing absorbency, helping to resist permanent staining, and ultimately increasing the useful life of the fabric.

Designer’s Corner
Visit us online today at www.FiberSeal.com to find the local Service Center nearest you. Also, there are dozens of articles written on everything from Bamboo Fabrics to Flame Retardants. Drop by and see all of the FiberFacts and Textile Tip publications in Designer’s Corner.

You can also connect with us on our social media networks!

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Need Help With Fabric Cleaning
Or Fabric Protection?

Your local Fiber-Seal Service Center is ready to help and just a few clicks away... find out which one is closest to you by visiting www.FiberSeal.com/Locations.

Or, you can always give us a call at 214.333.9400 or email us at info@FiberSeal.com.