

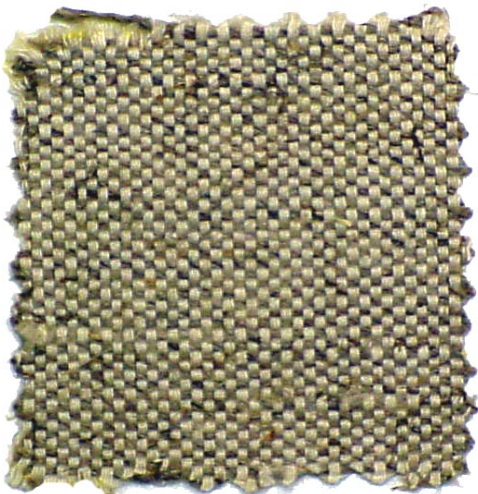
LINEN

IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF DURABILITY

Linen is a very durable fiber, but the durability of the fiber is not always at issue. There are natural linens, printed linens and dyed linens all having their own unique positive and negative aspects. It can also be blended with a wide array of fibers in both woven and velvet like constructions making it difficult to recognize.

WHAT IS LINEN?

Linen is a cellulosic fiber made from the stem of the **Flax** plant. Linen is often seen in its natural color that ranges from light cream to dark tan. In this state, cellulosic browning is probable when water is introduced due to the high amount of lignin contained in the fiber.



The sample above is a blend of natural linen and cotton. The linen is the dark fiber running from right to the left or in this case, the weft thread.

Many times there are some unrefined, “straw like” fibers that are visible. These fibers have a tendency to get darker with age and can even become unsightly. In some cases they can make the fabric feel scratchy and uncomfortable to sit on.

DYED LINEN

Browning is generally not an issue when the fabric has been dyed. This is due to the fact that the amount of lignin has been decreased, by the extra processing that is done.

The “straw like” fibers are also dyed and are less visible than in natural linens but can be seen with close inspection. The sample below is also a blend of linen and cotton. The linen is running in the weft direction.



LINENS ARE NOT GENERALLY BACK-COATED

The tight weave that is usually used with linens makes them extremely durable and therefore, do **not** need to be back-coated.

It is always a good practice to check for back-coatings even if one is not expected. Colored back coating can bleed through when solvents are used.

Linens for the most part wear like iron, which is attributed to the fiber itself and the tight weave. A linen fabric will usually “ugly out” before it wears out.

SPOT CLEANING

This spot cleaning information only refers to the woven type linens that are seen here.

Natural linens will usually brown when water-based products come in contact with the fabric. To prevent or limit the browning, it is necessary to fast-dry the fabric. This can easily be accomplished with a hair dryer. Although dyed linens generally don't brown, again it is good practice to fast-dry the fabrics when using water-based chemicals.

Neutral cleaners are also preferable due to the fact that browning is more likely when alkaline chemicals are used.

Greasy type stains can be removed using dry cleaners such as Kleen-Tec.

Fabrics containing linen in a pile construction need to be worked on with the utmost care. Linen loses its resiliency when moisture is applied and can cause the nap to lay flat. It may **not** be correctable.

CLIENT CARE

The Fabric Sponge is the safest way for a client to remove **dry** soils such as cigarette

ashes, lipstick, shoe scuffs, and finger prints to name a few.

Kleen-Tec can be used to remove greasy type stains.

Water-based stains need to be blotted as soon as possible. If the stain has already dried it will need to be liquefied before it can be removed.

PHnominal is the chemical of choice that should be used in these situations. After removal, the area should be dried as soon as possible.

Cushions should be turned to prevent unsightly fading problems that often occur on dyed linens. Natural linens can also fade but it is usually not as noticeable except on wall fabrics where pictures have been moved.

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

Linen is one of the most durable fabrics available and with proper care it will last for years.

Browning that does occur can usually be corrected with a variety of chemicals. Peroxide is generally the most effective in these situations.

Protective treatments are very beneficial because they can decrease the absorbency of this hydrophilic fiber, thus decreasing the likelihood of browning.

AS WITH ALL FABRICS... ALWAYS TEST THE CHEMICAL AND/OR PROCEDURE IN AN INCONSPICUOUS PLACE BEFORE PROCEEDING.