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TEXTURE IN CLOTHING

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Texture is the surface quality of an object. It exists everywhere in nature. Your hair, your skin, and the clothes you wear all have texture.

How would you describe the "hand" or feel of a fabric? Your impression of corduroy differs from satin because there is a difference in hand between the fabrics. This difference is determined by texture.

Texture is visual as well as tactile. You know corduroy will feel different from satin because it looks different. You can imagine and/or recall that the ribbed surface of corduroy you see will be rough to the touch and that the sleek, shiny surface of satin will be smooth to the touch.

Texture is an important tool to use in creating a becoming appearance. It affects the lines and colors you see. Whether you are buying a ready-to-wear outfit or coordinating fabric and pattern for home sewing, consider the following points in choosing texture:

1. Individual figure
2. Style of garment
3. Occasion to be worn

Individual Figure

All of us have some variation of the ideal figure. The person with a perfect figure is in the minority. Select garment fabrics with textures that will create the illusion of an average, well-proportioned figure.

Fabric texture	Effect on figure
Thick, bulky	Increases apparent size
Smooth, sleek, shiny	Reveals contours of body; reflects light into face emphasizing lines of face
Pile, heavy nap	Increases apparent size
Dull, nubby surface	Absorbs light, reduces apparent size
Stiff, crisp, wiry; sheer or clinging	Increases apparent size
Smooth, even surface	Good for most figures
Lightweight woolens (tweed or solid color), crepes, linens, medium weight silks	Decreases apparent size

Style of Garment

The texture of fabric determines if it is best suited for straight, full, or flared lines in a garment. To use a fabric to best advantage, consider whether the texture and weight are appropriate for the style of the garment.

Fabric	Suitable garment style
Crisp, stiff such as taffeta, satin	Bouffant
Lightweight, floating, sheer, soft such as chiffon, voile	Soft fullness or gathers, heavy folds, tucks
Flexible, soft such as crepe, jersey	Draped necklines and bodices, soft lines
Thick, bulky, fleecy such as mohair, coatings	Straight, simple lines
Firm, even weave such as woolens, worsteds, linens	Closely fitted shapes, intricate seaming and details
Bold prints, plaids, stripes	Simple lines, few seams and details

Occasion To Be Worn

The textures of a garment and accessories must be suitable for the occasion in order to be appropriate. Generally, tweeds, straws, nubby woolens, and coarse-surfaced materials are casual in nature. A smooth or medium textured fabric, fine grained leather, and simple, well-designed jewelry are considered tailored items. Dressy fabrics and accessories are often sumptuous and may reflect light into the wearer's face. Jewelry for a dressy occasion often glitters, and if so, is suitable to be worn only after 6 o'clock.

To be well dressed for the occasion consider the texture and mood of all your apparel. Accessories do not need to match exactly. Often a more interesting effect is created if they do not. However, accessories should be compatible in nature and appropriate for the occasion whether it is casual, tailored, or dressy.

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