

LINENS

**SHEETS
PILLOWCASES
BLANKETS
BEDSPREADS
TOWELS
PILLOWS**

Publication 73
Cooperative Extension Service
Reprint June 1968
(Formerly Circular 897)

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. W. E. Skelton, Dean, Extension Division, Cooperative Extension Service, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061.

LINENS

Prepared by

Katherine Habel, *Extension House Furnishings Specialist*

Materials Needed:

Different grades, weights, and fabrics of bedspreads, blankets, sheets, pillowcases, and towels. Labels from sheets and pillowcases.

BEDSPREADS

Bedspreads are chosen to compliment the style and coloring of bedroom furnishings. There are many kinds of bedspreads:

1. Tufted spreads, chenille, candlewick, punchwork.
2. Woven cotton spreads with color and pattern woven into the fabric.
3. Tailored or dressmaker spreads made of firmly woven fabric (satin, taffeta, denim, organdy, plisse, percale, etc.) with dressmaker type detail, such as quilted top or trimming ruffles, flounces, applique, or embroidered designs.

Points to Consider:

The fabric should be closely woven to withstand wear. It should be resistant to fading from sunlight, dry cleaning, or washing. It should be pre-shrunk and this condition should be so stated on the label.

The workmanship should be neat with well finished edges (plain, hemmed, corded, fringed, ruffled), and ample seam allowance.

A neutral color spread can be used with any color scheme. It should be heavy enough not to show colors underneath and should need no ironing when laundered.

The bedspread should be large enough to cover bedding, mattress, and springs. For a hollywood bed, it must come well over the sides and foot. Follow these standard sizes:

- 90" x 108" x 114" for a double bed
- 72" x 108" x 114" for a single bed

BLANKETS

The weight of a blanket is not always a true indicator of warmth. Lightweight blankets may be just as warm or warmer than heavy, tightly woven, felted ones. The lighter weight the blanket, the more comfortable it is as a bed covering. To be warm, a blanket must be fluffy and have the ability to hold warm air as it escapes from the body.

Fibers Used in Blankets:

Wool	Acrilan	Acetate
Nylon	Dynel	Cotton
Orlon	Rayon	

At least 25% wool is necessary to make a noticeable difference in the warmth of a cotton and wool blanket and to produce a fluffy, warmth-retaining nap. The addition of only 5 or 10% wool in a blanket does little except increase cost.

The finest of all synthetic blankets are 100% Acrylic such as Orlon, Acrilan, Creslan, or Zefran. (90% of all blankets sold today are Acrilan.)

Advantages of Synthetic Fiber Blankets:

- A high degree of resiliency.
- A tendency to trap and hold the air that provides insulation.
- No danger of moth damage.
- All virgin fiber Acrylic blankets have the same desirable characteristics, whether or not they bear a fiber maker's identification.

When Buying, Check These Points:

1. A color you can use in all your bedrooms.
2. Blanket size—
Buy blankets which are long enough to tuck snugly at the foot of the bed and reach half way under the pillow.
For a double bed, choose a blanket 90" long for good tuck-in.

There are 2 standard blanket widths: 72" for single beds and 80" for double beds.

3. Blanket bindings should be neat and strong. *Nylon bindings* are the most durable.

Blanket-stitching ends results in a durable finish but is not always as attractive as bound ends.

4. Check to see that the blanket is cut straight with the ends parallel to the crosswise threads.
5. Hold the blanket to the light. Study the nap. It should be even, deep, fine, and springy. The nap should not shed when it is brushed with the hand. If the nap rubs up in little balls, the blanket is made of short fibers and will lose its warmth and not wear well. Remember—LONG FIBERS PULL OUT AND SLIP LESS READILY THAN SHORT FIBERS.
6. Look for names in which you have confidence.
7. Read labels to find fiber content.
8. Different fibers and weaves have different properties.

Care:

Read the tag and label for special washing instructions. In general:

Wash in lukewarm water in mild suds
Avoid bleaches
Do not dry in the sun
Heat may cause yellowing of white blankets

Turn sheets back over the top blanket edge for several inches to protect the binding from becoming soiled. Air blankets several times a year, especially if they are on seldom used beds.

Store blankets in a cool place with nothing placed directly on top of them.

An electric blanket is an electrical appliance as well as a blanket. Use the same judgment in buying and the same care in handling as you would with other electrical appliances.

There is much yet to be proved about man-made fiber blankets, as little research on their care and serviceability has been done.

It is well known, however, that care and method of cleaning greatly affect the serviceability of wool blankets.

SHEETS

Shopping for sheets need not be dull. Eye-catching colors and interesting designs capture attention, but *durability, easy care, and comfort* are basic. No-iron finishes are available and should be indicated on the label.

Consider:

How much money you want to spend—
What you like—
Who will use the sheet—
Where it will be used—
How it will be laundered—

Start With a Measuring Tape Before You Shop

Size is determined by the thickness of the mattress as well as the length and width of the bed. A sheet which is too small will not stay tucked in, and one which is too wide will wear out from friction under the mattress.

Measure and know the exact length and width of the mattress; as a rule standard innerspring mattresses are 6" to 7" deep, and foam rubber mattresses are from 4½" to 6" deep.

WHAT SIZE SHEET?

BED	FITTED SHEETS For Standard Mattress Sizes Listed Below	FLAT SHEETS All Sizes Are Before Hemming
Crib	27" x 52"	42" x 72"
Youth	33" x 66"	63" x 108"
Standard Twin	39" x 76"	72" x 108" or 72" x 113"
Twin— (Foam Rubber Mattress)	39" x 76"	72" x 108" or 72" x 113"
Long Twin	39" x 80"	72" x 108" or 72" x 113"
Standard Three-Quarter	48" x 76"	81" x 108" or 81" x 113"
Standard Double	54" x 76"	81" x 108", 81" x 113" 90" x 108", 90" x 113"
Double— (Foam Rubber Mattress)	54" x 76"	81" x 108", 81" x 113" 90" x 108", 90" x 113"
Long Double	54" x 80"	81" x 108", 81" x 113" 90" x 108", 90" x 113"
Queen Size	60" x 80"	90" x 113", 90" x 120"
King Size	72" x 84"	108" x 122"
Hollywood Size	78" x 76"	108" x 122"
Long Hollywood Size	78" x 80"	108" x 122"

WHAT FACTORS DETERMINE LENGTH?

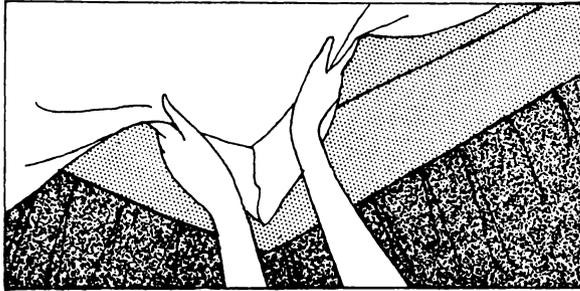
Torn size	108"
Top and bottom hems taken	-5"
Length of sheet after hemming	103"
Sheets shrink about 6% in length	-5"
Actual length after laundering	98"

What about Fitted Sheets?

Fitted sheets are available in both top and bottom sheet styles. Those designed as top sheets have corners fitted at only one end.

In order to buy the right size fitted sheet, it is important to know the exact size of the mattress. Fitted sheets are available for standard dimension mattresses, both innerspring and foam rubber.

Any pulling or tugging may cause your fitted sheet to rip. Put them on with care and ease. It's important not to strain the seams.

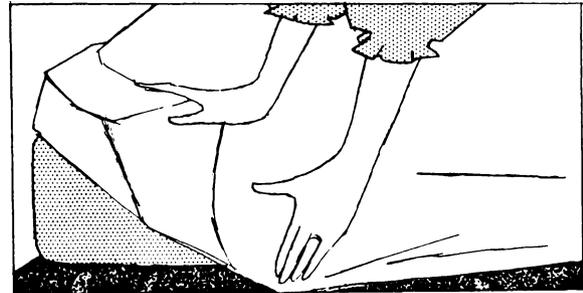


Slip on one corner at a time. Use both hands. Stretch as you slip it over mattress.

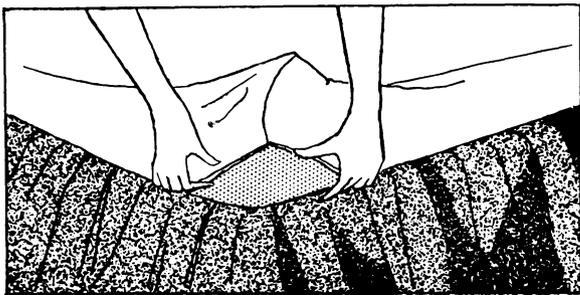
Heavy muslin: (140 threads per square inch; breaking strength, 70 pounds; weight, 4.6 ounces per square yard.)

Percale or utility percale: (180 threads per square inch; breaking strength, 60 pounds; weight, 3.6 ounces per square yard.) These sheets are soft and durable.

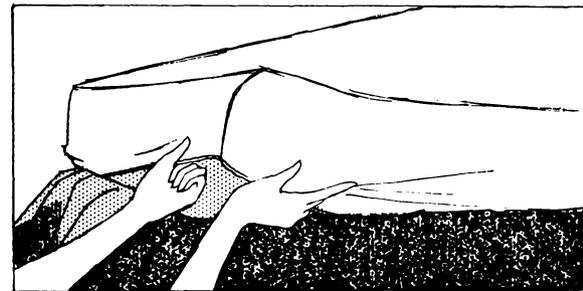
Percale or original percale: (200 very fine threads per square inch; breaking strength, 60 pounds; weight, 3.6 ounces per square yard.)



With 3 corners fitted snugly, smooth out any wrinkles from sheet.



To cover the 4th corner, grasp the sheet firmly at corner binding, using 2 hands. Slip it down.



To take sheet off, use both hands. Pull away tuck-under from all sides. Take hold of each corner, lifting up and out.

Percale vs. Muslin

Percale sheets are woven of fine quality, long staple cotton, are light in weight, and give easily with bending and flexing in use.

Heavy-weight muslin sheets are made of thick, short stapled coarser yarn, are of greater tensile strength, and may feel strong and sturdy.

Four types of cotton sheets are available:

Medium weight muslin: (128 threads per square inch; breaking strength, 55 pounds; weight, 4 ounces per square yard.)

Examine sheets before you buy for the following points:

Look for a close, firm, and even weave.

A good sheet has strong, tape-like selvages with no loose, untidy threads.

Hems should be straight and neatly sewn with small, even stitches.

Facts in print: Read the labels for these sheet label terms:

Thread count—number of threads per square inch of fabric. Good quality sheets have approximately

the same number of lengthwise threads as crosswise threads.

Torn size—refers to the sheet size before hemming.

Breaking strength—amount of strain required to tear a square inch of sheeting.

Weight—affects wear, comfort, and ease and cost of laundering.

Shrink-resistance—double check when you buy pillowcases or fitted sheets. *Sanforized* should be indicated.

How many sheets do you need?

A good rule is to have 6 for each bed; 2 in use, 2 in the laundry, and 2 in the linen closet. For longer wear, rotate them by putting freshly laundered sheets at the bottom of the pile in the linen closet.

The new fashions in bed linens raise many questions on care. You may want to stick to white percale or muslin sheets, flat or fitted, that can be washed easily and used in every bedroom.

PILLOWCASES

Pillowcases are made of the same materials as sheets and are subject to the same tests for quality. Measure the width of the pillow, double this figure and add 2 inches for an accurate fit. As a general rule, you will need 3 or 4 pillowcases per pillow, especially if you wish to use a fresh case inbetween your complete bed change.

PILLOWCASE SIZES	
Pillow Size	Pillowcase Size
20" x 26"	42" x 36"
21" x 27"	44" x 36"
22" x 30"	46" x 38½"

DUST RUFFLES

A dust ruffle serves as a decorative finish when the bed is made. It also conceals the bedspring when the bed is opened.

SELECTION AND CARE OF TOWELS

Beautiful, colorful, terry towels are on the market ready for you to choose the kind, size, and color to suit your various needs.

A towel has 2 requirements: (1) it must absorb moisture readily, and (2) it must wear well in use and in laundering.

Consider These Points in Buying Turkish Towels:

Wear—look for a firm, close, underweave for strength and durability.

Absorbency—find close, thick, loops for quick drying.

Comfort—choose towels of soft, medium, or rough texture as preferred by the user.

Size—select comfortable sizes for guests, hand, and bath.

Weight—choose economical weight for home washing or laundry-by-the-pound rates.

Check the Weave—look at the hems for close stitches, with edges back-stitched at the corners. Hold the towel to the light. The weave is good if light shows through in tiny pin points. Open, weak spots will show up if the weave is loose.

Examine the underweave which can be easily seen in the plain portion of the towel, in the hem, or in the border.

Feel the towel to compare the weight—a good towel has a sturdy quality as compared with a lighter, looser weave. Loops are of even length and close together.

Check the selvage—satisfactory selvages are either closely woven, overedged, or hemmed.

Size of turkish towels, wash cloths, and bath mats:

Guest	11" x 18"
Hand	15" x 25" to 18" x 36"
Bath	20" x 40" to 27" x 50"
Extra Large	35" x 66" to 36" x 72"
Wash Cloth	12" x 12" 13" x 13"
Bath Mat	22" x 36"

Family Supply:

A good supply of towels will allow the following for each family member:

- 2 in use
- 2 in the wash
- 2 in reserve

You will also need 2 wash cloths per person, as well as 2 bath mats per family.

Color:

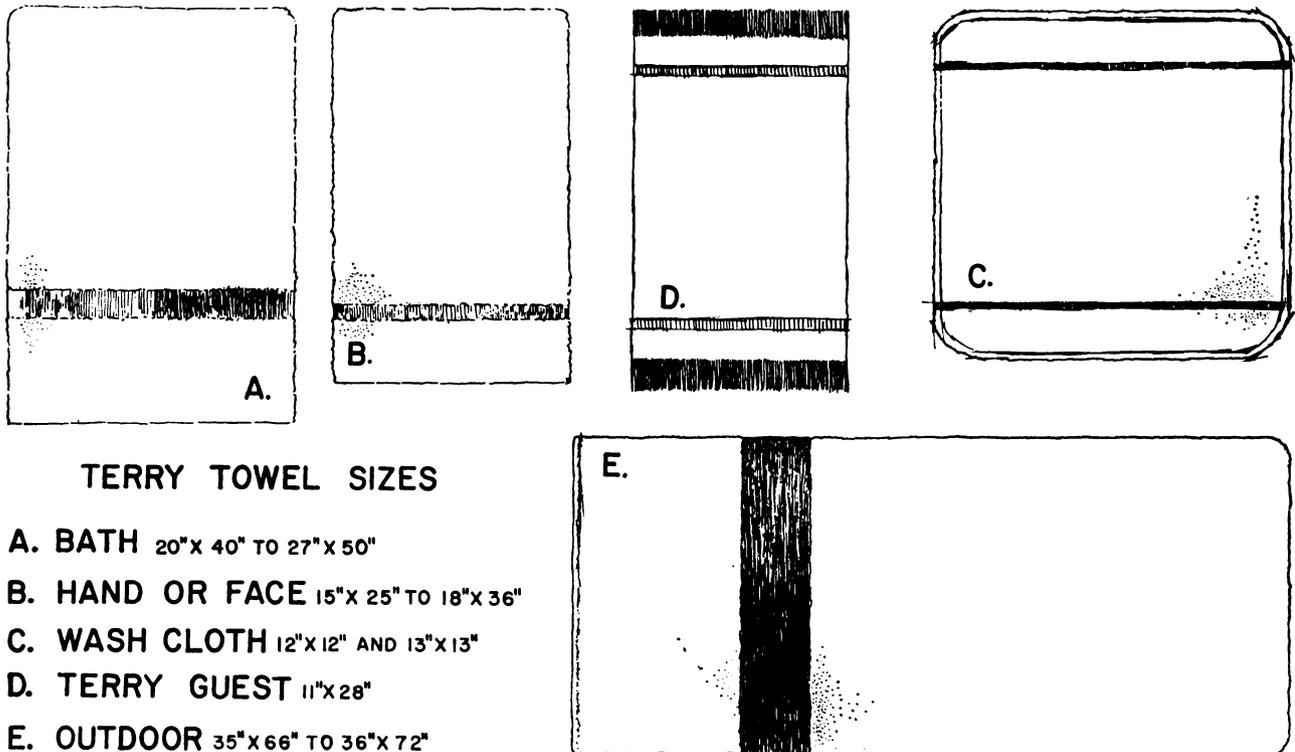
Key the color in towels and bath mats to your planned bathroom color scheme. When buying,

Care of Towels:

Towels should be washed before they get too soiled. Ground-in dirt and grime are difficult to remove. The addition of a fabric softener every 2nd or 3rd wash helps to keep them soft.

Shake towels to fluff the loops before hanging them. Shake them again when removing them from the line to keep them soft and fluffy. Fold and store without ironing.

Examine towels occasionally for loose ends and pulled threads. Cut the threads evenly with the nap to prevent further pulling.



TERRY TOWEL SIZES

- A. BATH 20" X 40" TO 27" X 50"
- B. HAND OR FACE 15" X 25" TO 18" X 36"
- C. WASH CLOTH 12" X 12" AND 13" X 13"
- D. TERRY GUEST 11" X 28"
- E. OUTDOOR 35" X 66" TO 36" X 72"

inquire if the towels have been vat-dyed. Color bands add only slightly to the cost of towels, while pastels add more to the price. Darker colors are considerably higher, less absorbent, and take longer drying time. Floral and scroll patterns are the most expensive.

Bath ensembles to blend with shower and window curtains are increasingly popular. You can select your towels to match wash cloths and bath mats or select each type individually according to family needs.

PILLOWS

Materials Needed:

- Models and pictures showing good selection for pillows
- Labels found on pillows
- Pillows with different fillings

Pillows can outgrow their period of usefulness, yet we never seem to throw them away. Perhaps we don't know how to tell when a pillow has ceased to "live."

Try this simple test: rest the pillow on your arm. If it drops over the arm, its best period of usefulness is over. If it holds its shape, it is still capable of serving its purpose, of supporting your head while you sleep and of making a bed of good appearance.

When buying new pillows, check the following points:

KINDS OF FILLINGS:

Goose feathers are rated high because their natural construction makes them springy and resilient.

Duck feathers are good, although they are not as strong, elastic or fluffy as goose feathers.

Chicken feathers are lower in quality, and do not retain resiliency because the feathers mat down.

Down from young geese makes the softest, fluffiest, and lightest of filling for pillows. A combination of 75% down and 25% small white goose feathers is excellent.

Mixtures of feathers are sold in many percentages and kinds. A mixture of 80% goose feathers and 20% down is popular. Down keeps feathers from matting and lumping.

Kapok is a vegetable fiber that is light and fluffy when bought but quickly powders and forms into wads. Hair and Spanish moss are used in some pillows.

Rubber—foam or sponge—is easy to handle. It can be handwashed or steam sterilized by commercial laundries, is non-allergenic, dustless, will not mildew, and is vermin-proof.

Latex rubber is a natural rubber, may be soft or firm, is resilient, and can vary in quality and desirability. Pillows may be molded in one piece, may be made of several pieces cemented together, or may be shredded.

Acrilan, Dacron, and Orlon are synthetic fibers, and a mixture may be used in one pillow. These fibers are still too new to determine how serviceable they will be.

Look at the Label—(Some states do not require tags or labels stating filling material; thus it is important that you buy from a reliable dealer.)

- Does it state:
1. Kind of feathers used, with percentage of each type?
 2. Weight of ticking used?
 3. Weight of the pillow?

WHEN YOU BUY PILLOWS, REMEMBER IT PAYS TO BUY CAREFULLY WITH AN EYE FOR QUALITY, SERVICE, AND COMFORT. CONSIDER:

Size:

It is convenient to have all pillows the same size so that pillowcases will fit any pillow. The standard pillow size is 21" x 27".

Weight of pillow, 21" x 27", filled with:

- Down feathers should weigh 1½ pounds
- Goose feathers should weigh 2½ pounds
- Chicken feathers should weigh 3½ pounds
- Rubber—average size—should weigh 1½ pounds

Filling:

- Is it buoyant? (Will it support your head?)
- Is it resilient? (Does it rebound quickly?)
- Is it free from odor?
- Is it free from dust?

Cover Material:

- Is it sized with a filler which will disappear?
- Is it closely woven ticking to keep feathers from working through?
- Is it so slippery that the pillowcases tend to slip off?
- On a rubber pillow, it is important that the cover zip off. This will save time when washing.

Firmness:

- Soft and yielding.....down, Acrilan, Dacron, or Orlon
- Slight support.....foam rubber
- Firm support.....foam rubber, hair, or Spanish moss

Cost will vary according to quality of materials used and workmanship.

THERE IS A KIND OF PILLOW TO MEET NEARLY EVERY NEED. WHICH KIND DO YOU WANT?