

Use of Hemp Fiber in Textiles

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Opinion

The number of companies manufacturing and selling textiles based on hemp fibers are gradually increasing worldwide. Hemp fabric or hemp textiles are made from cannabis sativa fiber or industrial hemp. Being a natural, renewable and biodegradable material, hemp enjoys obvious advantages over synthetic textile materials like acrylic, polyester, nylon and spandex used for making fabrics.

Hemp creates one of the most eco-friendly fabrics in the world. Hemp requires no pesticides or herbicides, controls erosion of the topsoil, and produces oxygen. It is a renewable resource that can be cultivated in as little as 100 days and is the world's most versatile fiber. In comparison, cotton is more water-intensive and takes longer to reach harvest age and produces less fibers per acre. Hems' tensile strength is eight times that of cotton fiber which accounts for its historical use in sails and rope for the British and American Navies. It is an exceptionally durable fabric - longer lasting than cotton - and does not lose shape easily.

Fabrics made from hemp are hypo-allergenic and non-irritating to the skin. Hemp has the look and feel of classic linen. Hemp materials also soften with age and with each washing. Like linen and cotton, hemp is a cool choice for summer. It breathes well and

is recommended for warm, humid climates as the fabric resists mildew and absorbs moisture. It is also UV resistant.

However, there are some associated disadvantages as well. For instance, hemp wrinkles easily and can be somewhat scratchy (depending upon the blend), so it is often blended with other fabrics like linen, cotton and silk to give it a softer feel. Hemp is also not colorfast. Given that mainstream brands like Adidas, Quiksilver, Patagonia and others have added products made of hemp to their repertoire has helped popularize hemp as a garment fiber. Today, there are many brands like Woolrich, Cannabeings Designs, Hemp Authority and others that specialize in hemp clothing and accessories that are available through mainstream commercial channels like Amazon and others.

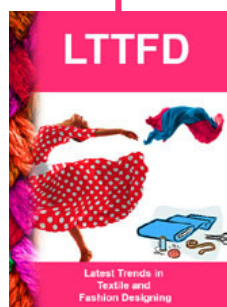
Some examples of commercial products available are hemp blended yarn with cotton/organic cotton by Hemp Active, an Austrian company. A few companies in Europe are selling hemp/polyester 60/40 blends and hemp/wool/polyester 40/40/20 blends. Hemp Textiles, Canada, supplies blend of hemp/wool 50/50. A blend of the natural strength of hemp, the soft elasticity of cotton or the smooth texture of silk creates a whole new spectrum of textiles for fashion design.



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