

# CARING FOR YOUR TOWELS AND BATH ROBES

**Q.**

## **How to wash new towels**

**A.**

1. Always launder towels before using them for the first time.
2. During this first wash, add one half to 1 cup of white vinegar to the wash water. This will help set the dyes and result in increased colorfastness.
3. Use less detergent than is normally recommended -- about half is generally sufficient.
4. Do not use bleach.
5. Never use fabric softeners in the first wash as they will decrease the towel's ability to absorb water. Fabric softener also enables pulled threads.

**Q.**

## **How to wash Towels**

**A.**

To keep your towel in optimum condition it is important that you always follow the washing instructions as set out on the care label sewn into the towel.

- Use the recommended water temperature and wash cycle.
- Do not dry clean.
- Always wash deep or bright colours separately.

Almost all commercial washing powders on the market contain optical brightening agents (OBA's) which are designed to keep 'whites' looking white. However, they may also fade some dyed colours, especially lighter dyed shades.

This can be minimized by following by following manufacturer's washing instructions. However, to ensure that no fading occurs and that your towels remain bright and vibrant, try to use a detergent that does not contain OBA's and wash towels separately.

Do not use detergents or chemicals which contain chlorine or other bleaching agents. Do not under or overload your washing machine and use the manufacturer's recommended amount of detergent. The chemicals in detergents are concentrated and can cause discolouration if too much is used. We do not recommend the use of bleach, as it can aid chemical degradation of the cotton fibre. Unfortunately many detergents contain bleach in one of it's many forms.

It is acceptable to use fabric softeners, however softeners are fibre lubricants and overuse can cause the towel to become 'super saturated'. This will reduce the ability of the towel to absorb water and give the towel a greasy handle. Over use of fabric softener increases the likelihood of pulled pile threads appearing.

The following recommendations will help in achieving the service life you would expect from your quality product:-

- Excessive temperatures in both washing and drying can result in high shrinkage levels and increased chemical action. We recommend laundering temperatures be kept as low as practically possible. Over drying can result in degradation and resulting in a harsh handle.
- Both overloading and under loading machines will reduce wash efficiency and increase mechanical wear on towelling, resulting in worn edges.
- Softeners can also cause a discolouration of white products during initial launderings. One or two launderings without softener will return the product to it's original white.

**Q.**

**Am I putting bleach in my wash?**

**A.**

It is quite possible that you are adding bleach in your wash without knowing it. Bleach comes in a number of forms, and have similar properties. Many commercially available laundry detergents contain bleaches without being labeled specifically.

Some pre wash water treatments also contain bleach. You may be doubling up the dose of bleach without ever adding "bleach" to your wash.

Names to look for..

- Sodium Percarbonate
- hydrogen peroxide
- Sodium carbonate
- hydrogen peroxide
- sodium carbonate peroxyhydrate
- Sodium hypochlorite

The properties of Sodium hypochlorite bleach that make it effective for removing stains also result in cumulative damage to organic fibers such as cotton, and the useful lifespan of these materials will be shortened with regular bleaching.

The sodium hydroxide that is also found in many bleaches causes fiber degradation as well. Residual amounts of bleach not rinsed out will continue slowly degrading organic fibers in the presence of humidity.

Sheets and towels that rip easily demonstrate the costs of laundering with bleach. Hot water increases the activity of the bleach, owing to the thermal decomposition of hypochlorite which ultimately generates environmentally-undesirable chlorate.

It is best to consult with your chemical supplier and Laundry system designer for best outcomes.

#### CLEANERS & CLEANING AGENTS

Some cleaning items used in the bathroom can damage your towels resulting in reduced strength and may affect the colour. If your towel does come into contact with these products, you may minimize the effects by gently washing the affected area immediately with COLD water before laundering in the recommended way.

Vinegar can stop the action that bleaches can have on cotton.

#### RETAINING 'FLUFFINESS'

Tumble drying is the preferred method of drying for towels as this will assist in 'fluffing' the pile. Flatwork ironers are not recommended as they tend to flatten the pile.

#### PULLED THREADS

Most towels are woven not knitted, so pulled threads should be snipped off with a pair of sharp scissors. The towel will not run or unravel, and this will not be detrimental to the life of the product.

#### COLOUR VARIATION

As towels are dyed in batches, some slight variation in colour may occur between different batches of towels. Under normal circumstances this colour variation will not be noticeable.

Temperatures greater than 60degrees centigrade during washing can reduce colour fastness for some dyed product, and is not recommended. In addition, chemicals used in pools such a chlorine can affect the colour fastness, so towels should be rinsed as soon as possible after use.

Remember – any towel which has not been cared for with attention to the recommended washing instructions, or which has been laundered over a long period of time with detergents containing optical brightening agents, may have altered in colour and appearance. Bear this in mind when matching colours with new towels.