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Shopping Hints for Buying T-Shirts
Michigan State University Extension Service

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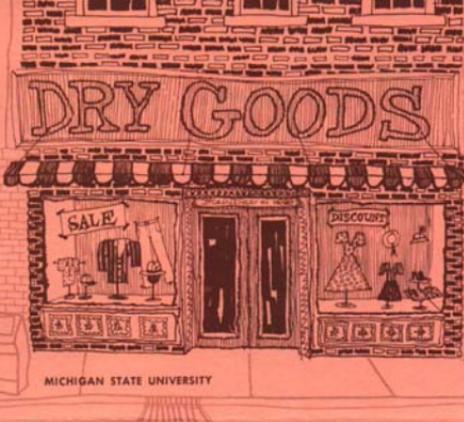
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SHOPPING HINTS for

BUYING T-SHIRTS

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



Cotton knit T-shirts are no longer confined to men's and boys' clothing but are popular for all family members. They are easy to care for (require no ironing), allow for body movement, and are comfortable to wear because they are absorbent.

Whether cotton knits are used in T-shirts, baby clothing, undergarments, or other apparel they sometimes come out of the laundry with a different shape than when they went in. *Why is this?*

WHAT CAUSES DISTORTION?

Usually the structure of the knit fabric is at fault when cotton knit garments lose their shape in laundering. The tiny knit loops in the fabric, normally plump and round, may be stretched and pulled long and thin as they are manufactured. Only after this fabric has been made into a garment, and the garment has been laundered, does a problem arise. Then the tiny loops relax, return to their normal round shape, and the garment becomes shorter and wider.

Some cotton knit fabrics are not stretched as they are finished. The tiny knit loops in these fabrics are round when the fabric is completed, and remain round. Garments made of these knit fabrics do not lose shape, because the knit loops are already relaxed.

WHEN YOU SHOP, LOOK FOR . . .

How do you tell one type of knit fabric from the other as you shop?

How can you choose a T-shirt, for example, that will keep its shape and not grow shorter and wider after laundering? It's not easy to do but give it a try.

Look for shirts with firm, even, close knitting. Avoid a fabric that has thin places. Often by examining the knit carefully, you can tell if the knit loops are round and relaxed, or are long and stretched.

The shape of the loop is easier to see on the wrong side of some fabrics.

Remember, the more round the loops, the better the chance that the knit will retain its shape through many washings.

CHECK THE FOLLOWING ALSO . . .

neck band

Check the T-shirt neck band to be sure it will stretch enough to go over the wearer's head but is *firmly knit enough* to return to original measurement. Examine the shoulder seams for reinforcement which means durability and will prevent tearing out at the shoulder.

shrinkage

All cotton knits may shrink a little. A highest quality T-shirt may shrink as much as five percent. This shrinkage will be the same all over the shirt. It will shrink evenly . . . and not get very short and much wider.

size

Some retailers frankly recommend clothes of knitted fabrics, especially T-shirts, *one size larger*, especially if you plan to dry them in a tumbler dryer.

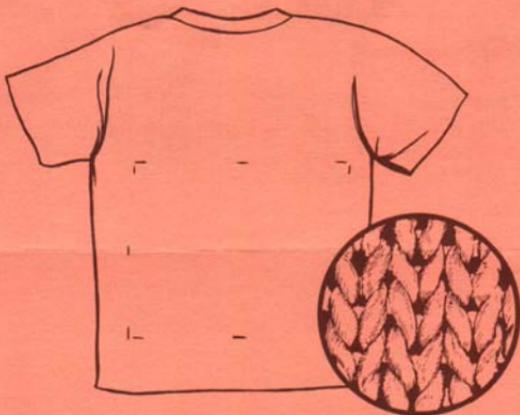
label

New processing developments for knits, however, are providing consumers with guarantees of shrink-resistance. Some processes guarantee less than 1% shrinkage in length.

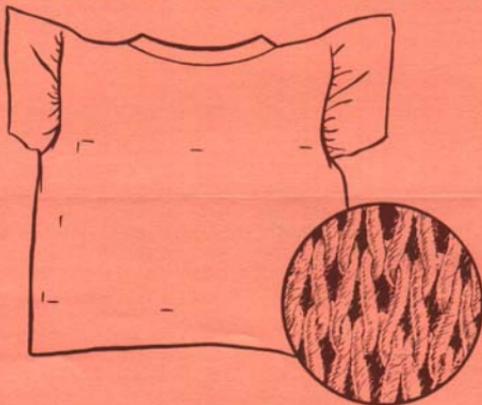
As you shop for T-shirts and other cotton knits *check the information given on the garment label* or on the package to note any shrink resistant guarantees and the percentage of shrinking to be expected. With these new processes you will be able to buy T-shirts according to exact fit and discontinue the practice of buying a larger size to allow for shrinking.

T-SHIRTS AFTER 20 WASHINGS AND TUMBLE DRYINGS

Inserts show close-up of knit before laundering. Ink marks on shirts originally marked a 10-inch square.



Clue To a Good Shirt Buy—the round knit loops. Laundering caused slight but even shrinkage in the shirt above.



Long Thin Loops Marked This as an Inferior Shirt. As the shirt was laundered, the stretched loops relaxed, and the shirt grew shorter and wider. The ruffled sleeve seams and stretched neck band are typical of inferior shirts after laundering.