

CHAPTER 03

ANIMAL FIBRE

Wool:

Wool is a natural fibre grown by animals that cover most of their body. The fleece (animal coat of wool) protects the body from cold conditions by insulating and holding in the heat. This raw material made up of protein **keratin** - the same protein found in human hair.

Wool, obtained from the fleece of domestic goats, sheep, rabbits, etc. The color of wool fibres may vary from off-white to light cream. Fabrics made from wool are soft, smooth, absorbent and do not wrinkle easily. These do not allow the body heat to go out and act as insulators. This is why the fabric made out of these fibres is used as winter wear. Most wool sheared during spring months. Wool is a weak fibre and is easily affected by common washing soaps, powders and friction.



Wool is one of the most common textiles in the world. Merino wool is the highest quality wool, sourced from Merino sheep. Its fleece is 3-5 inches long and most valuable. These sheep produce finer wool than other breeds. There are different types of wool and depend on the animal it comes from like camel, goat etc.

How wool fabrics manufactured?

The following are the steps involved in wool manufacturing.

Shearing – It is the process of removing the fleece with shear or razor, just like a getting a haircut as the wool grows right back. Grease applied to prevent the damage to skin.



Scouring – The sheared skin washed and soaked in warm water or treated with chemical additives, to clean wool grease, dirt and dust. This process called as washing or scouring.

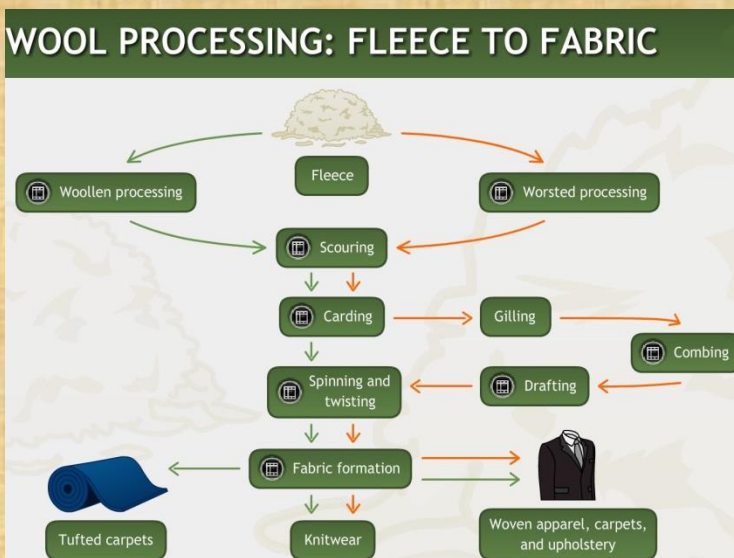
Sorting – Once scoured, the clean wool sorted into bales by separating piles of Coarse, long and broken ones.

Carding/ Combing – It is a process of separating and straightening of wool fibres to make it easier to spin into wool yarn. The wool fibres

bleached and dyed with different colors. Then the fibres combed by using combing/carding machine.

Spinning – The next step is to spin the wool into yarn using a spinning machine. A machine rolls and pulls out into a thick rope and another twists it into a long thread.

Weave or knit the yarn – Now the yarn is ready to weave. Woolen fabrics, knitted easily by using needles. In looms, warp (vertical) threads and weft (horizontal) threads are important to weave any type of fabric.



Since ages, wool is appreciated as one of the most effective forms of weather protection known to mankind and also used for so much more.