

Mohair and Its Characteristics

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Mohair – Nature’s Luxury Fiber

Mohair is grown by Angora goats. Mohair is considered a luxury fiber and should not be confused with Angora fiber which comes from rabbits. Mohair is as warm as wool although it is much lighter in weight making it ideal for traveling. Mohair is also desirable due to its warmth, durability and beauty. Because of this mohair has been used to make garments for kings, sultans and as part of the tabernacle in the bible. Mohair is similar to wool, although it does possess other unique properties not found in any other type of fiber.

Characteristics of Mohair:

- ✚ **Luster:** The luster of mohair is one of the most important characteristics. Lustre is the natural shine of the fiber caused by light being reflected more directly by the larger outer scales of the fiber. This luster or sheen helps dyed mohair resist fading caused by time and the elements and makes it very hard wearing.
- ✚ **Non-Flammability:** Mohair is almost non-flammable. When placed under, or near, a naked flame, it tends to shrivel into a bead like ash. Once taken away from the flame, burning stops instantaneously. Early children’s Teddy Bears were made from mohair because of this property and because there is less allergic reaction to mohair than wool.
- ✚ **Durability:** Mohair can be twisted or bent without damaging the fiber. This is due to its structure, supporting the claim that it is the most durable of all animal fibers.
- ✚ **Elasticity:** Mohair will stretch an average 30% over its length and then will be able to spring back into shape. Due to this property, mohair garments resist wrinkling, stretching or sagging during wear.
- ✚ **Moisture Relation:** All natural fibers from animals have the ability to absorb and release atmospheric moisture. They breathe where man-made fibers do not.
- ✚ **Resistance To Soiling:** This property commends its use for woven fabrics, due to the factor that dust does not come to rest on slippery fibers. Shaking and brushing can easily remove any dust remaining on woven fabrics.

- ✚ **Dyeability:** Mohair dyes easily and brilliantly.
- ✚ **Tensile Strength:** Mohair possesses great strength. Diameter to diameter, it is stronger than steel.
- ✚ **Fineness:** The single most important characteristic in selecting mohair.

Other characteristics and variations in mohair:

- ✚ **Style & Character** – a distinct characteristic of mohair. Style is the solid twists or ringlets in mohair while character is the crimps or waves in the staple. A balance between the two is preferred. Recent studies have suggested that style and character are related to the uniformity of fiber length in mohair. Thus, mohair with super style and character should have longer fiber and should spin better than mohair with average or poor style and character. Style and character affect the commercial processing results of mohair. Mohair with good style and character have a more uniform and predictable processing result where mohair with less style and character have a less predictable result.
- ✚ **Uniformity** – the consistency of the lock character, length of the staple and the diameter of the fibers throughout the entire fleece.
- ✚ **Handle** – the degree of softness to the touch.
- ✚ **Density** – the compactness of the fleece; how much fiber the animal produces in a square inch.
- ✚ **Luster** – light reflecting properties, giving a sheen effect.
- ✚ **Freedom from Kemp & Medulated Fibers** – The ideal Angora goat will have no kemp or medulated fibers. Kemp fibers have a hollow core, are coarse and shorter than the mohair. Kemp sticks out of the yarn and makes garments feel scratchy. Kemp fibers are brittle and will break when bent. They are short, chalky and do not take dye. These fibers are not acceptable in any fiber animal. Medulated fibers Medulated fibers may be as long as the mohair, have some hollow characteristics but are not as much of a problem as kemp. Medulated fibers will take dye. Medulated fibers will bend like mohair but will not have the same curl or micron than the mohair in which it is found.