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KNIT SIMPLE

handle with care

Jacqueline Sava, inventor of Soak wool wash, shares a few tips for caring for those hand knits you worked so hard to create.

It was an ordinary Monday morning at the Soak office. A coworker I'll call Chris (her name has been changed to protect her inappropriate blocking habits) called us over to look at the beautiful scarf she was wearing. "I worked on it all weekend, and I love it." From far away, the scarf looked like a ribbed piece—lovely, fluffy, curly, narrow. Up close, however, we noticed the intricacy of the lace pattern and just how wide and textured it really was. Why was the scarf not showing its true potential? It needed a good hand-washing.

You can safely hand-wash a wide range of plant and animal fibers. Many experts suggest that you knit a test swatch in the same yarn or yarns you'll be using for your project. Hand-washing and blocking this swatch will show you how the fibers and dyes will react to moisture and heat. Always refer to the yarn's ball band for care recommendations, especially if you are mixing fibers. Once you've determined that your garment can handle a dunk in the sink, get yourself some no-rinse wool wash; needless to say, I'm partial to one particular kind.

GETTING STARTED

Use Lots of Water

Fill the sink so there is movement and water flowing freely around whatever you are soaking. If you aren't using enough water, dirt and oils will not fully come out.

Use Cool Water

Soak your knits in cool or cold water. Warm or hot water can cause felting (with wools) or shrinkage of some delicate materials.

Less (Detergent) Is More

With low-suds/no-rinse formulations like Soak, less is always more. Use one teaspoon

of wool wash per gallon of water. Don't let the lack of bubbles tempt you into adding more detergent; bubbles are not what cleans the fibers.

Test for Colorfastness

If you didn't knit a test swatch, rub a small amount of wool wash on an inconspicuous part of your garment. Leave it there for two minutes, then rinse. If the fabric did not bleed, you're good to go. (Don't fret if you soaked the fabric for more than two minutes, or even left it in the sink overnight. Most wash products

Never lift a soaking-wet garment out of the water; the weight will distort the shape.

Lay Flat to Dry

Remove the mostly dry piece from the towel and lay it flat; it should dry in a place that allows air circulation on all sides. Flip the piece over halfway through the drying process; this will help ensure it maintains its original shape.

Machine Washing

You can wash your delicates in cold water on the delicate cycle. Traditional powder washes are not as effective as liquids in High Efficiency (HE) washing machines. Machine-washers, beware: Do not use hot water/agitation or you will felt your projects.

Soaking Swatches

If you are soaking a test swatch, measure your stitch count after the swatch has dried. The stitches will have relaxed and the square will likely have grown in size.

Moths and Knits

The best way to avoid pests is to keep your fabrics clean—moths are attracted to skin oils trapped inside fibers. Wash all your garments before you put them in off-season storage.



contain no harmful ingredients.)



BLOCK PARTY
Left: Chris's scarf, designed by Véronik Avery, shown pre- (left side) and post- (right side) soaking. Right: Jacqueline Sava's Stripe Tuck scarf, worked in Louet's "Mohair," dries on a towel.

