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A Handspun, Handwoven Approach to Upholstery Fabric

By

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Abstract

The use of handspun yarns for upholstery has been a largely neglected field. There has been very little research done in this area to date. The most important result of the research found here was that the handspun not only performed well but proved to be superior in many ways. The results were very satisfactory and helped to eliminate any fears I had of using handspun yarns for any purpose. This work shows that handspun yarns were and always will be a very valuable asset to not only the handweaver but to any other craftsperson who uses yarn.
A Handspun, Handwoven Approach to Upholstery Fabric

The use of fabrics for home decor has a very long history. Man discovered a long time ago that textiles can add comfort to his environment. Early peoples learned to manipulate fibers in more and more complicated ways and gradually began to construct such things as rugs, bedding, and bags. Fiber manipulation and the resulting textile techniques make a very important contribution to the development of civilization. As man became more civilized he also became more sedentary. This new lifestyle meant he was able to acquire more, heavier and larger possessions. Many of these possessions were made with animal or vegetable fibers.

Man began to domesticate plants and animals which resulted in a few people being able to produce food and fiber for many. This gave raise to more time to develop other crafts and trades. If you happened to be better at weaving than goat raising you could weave and trade your goods to the goat herder for your meat and milk. Thus the rustic beginnings of modern commerce.

As man developed his textile skills he began to devise more uses for textiles. A piece of fabric could be used for many things. You could wrap your possessions in a cloth and tie it to your belt or to your beast of burden. You could use the same piece of cloth to cover you at night or to use as a pillow. The same cloth could then be used to sit on for more comfort or to shelter you from the elements. Cloth
became clothes and as the craftsmanship in textiles grew, the addition of esthetic considerations became more important. Textiles became important not only for daily life but also for religious purposes and as status symbols. Even today in our own society there are types of weaves and fibers that declare social status and wealth.

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution cloth became cheaper and more plentiful. People were able to develop many more luxury item to enhance their life style. One of these developments was the padding of wooden furniture shapes. The first known upholstered furniture comes form the Middle Ages with the padding and covering of simple folding stools. This led to more and more elaborate interpretations that ended with "royal thrones."

The next commonly used upholstered item is thought to be the large winged arm chairs that form a couch called a day bed. These were found in the Surrey area of England and served as places to sit or sleep depending on the need. These were very quickly followed by couches and chairs that featured padded backs and arms. These provided even more comfort than their predecessors. The use of velvet, silks and needlework for the upholstery fabric was common.

Upholstered furniture consists of three main parts that are; the supporting structure, the padding and the exterior fabric. The art of upholstery requires very few tools namely a needle, some thread, a hammer and some tacks. Upholstery is still alive and well today and any of the truly fine furniture made today is hand upholstered. The
fabrics, however, are almost exclusively machine made. The main reason for this is the expense of handwoven materials and the lack of weavers who make home decor fabrics.

We now need to examine the requirements of good upholstery fabrics and then relate this information back to the fibers that might be used and finally to a handspun, handwoven approach.

Requirements for Good Upholstery Fabric

Upholstery fabrics need to be firm to avoid sagging yet flexible enough to allow tailoring. It needs to be aesthetically pleasing and reflect the personality of the furniture as well as the owner. The fabric must be comfortable to the user and able to withstand years of service in its chosen role. The fabric should be abrasion resistant and resistant to pilling and fuzziness. The color should be fade resistant and the fabric should be stain repellent and easy to clean. You should also consider flammability especially if you are doing a commercial commission. Many building codes require that all materials used in commercial buildings be treated with a flame retarder.

Now, let's take these requirements and apply them to handwoven fabric to see if we would be able to produce a suitable cloth. By weaving your own fabric you will be able to control the finest detail of your cloth. You can match your lifestyle and sense of individuality to your cloth. You will be able to achieve a level of quality and a
sense of style that can only be done with handwoven fabrics. In order to make your fabric you must meet three basic requirements: good quality materials, careful designing and well planned craftsmanship.

Handweaving allows you to explore many fabric structures that will enable you to design a fabric best suited to your very specific needs. Your weave structure should be kept as simple as possible. You want your fabric to be a compliment to your home and your piece of furniture and not the focus in itself. Weaves such as basket weave, tick weave, tabby weave, twill weave and variations are good, sound choices.

To address comfort, you will have to look at how and where your fabric will be used. Will this be sun deck fabric or 'round the fireplace fabric. A heavy, hair fabric would not be very comfortable in the sun room but would be very cozy in the family room.

You will want to check your yarns for abrasion resistance and make sure that they do not pill easily. This can be done easily by using Bette Hochbergs' method of testing. Take a bobby pin and thread a piece of the selected yarn into the rounded end. Hold the yarn tauntly by attaching one end to a stable object and holding onto the other end with one hand. With your free hand, run the bobby pin back and forth several times and then examine the yarn closely. Compare this piece of yarn with your yarn source to see if there is any noticeable damage. If you count how many times you run the
bobby pin back and forth, say 20 times, and check and then repeat the process again you will have an idea of the effect of extended wear.

**Fiber and Fabric Properties.**

Now, let's look at some of the characteristics needed for good upholstery fabric in more detail.

1. **Resistance to Abrasion.** This is an important consideration in choosing fibers for upholstery. The fiber you choose needs to be able to withstand the wear and tear of usage. This usage can vary from a decorator piece that is just for show to a piece of furniture that has to withstand the use by an active family with children and pets. The most abrasive resistant natural fiber is linen, followed by cotton, then wool and finally silk. For synthetic fibers look to nylon and acrylic as the best choices.

   The upholstery fabric on a piece of furniture with wooden arms can be expected to last at least twice as long as a piece of furniture with upholstered arms because the arms take the most amount of friction and therefore wear out faster. The next fastest place of wear is the front edge of the seat. You will notice that a welted front edge will wear much quicker than the cushion part of the seat. This is because this area is very taunt, raised and uncushioned. These are the major contributing factors of wear. In other words the tighter the
Handspun Upholstery Fabric

fabric, the more raised it is from the main surface and the less cushioned it is the more likely it is to wear faster.

A particular fabric's wearability is directly affected by the type and quality of the fiber used, the size, TPI, and ply of the yarns used, the type of weave used, the type of finishing used, and the use or lack of use of a backing.

Another factor that relates to abrasion is the resistance of a fabric to snagging. An occasional snag is not usually a problem but fabrics with long floats or loops would not wear well or look attractive for very long. If you are a people watcher, you will have noticed that people will pick at the upholstery fabric when they are nervous or bored. These are minor considerations but depending on the end use of your fabric these might be important things to look at.

2. Absorbancy. Absorbancy can be an important consideration depending on the end use of your fabric. If you are using your fabric for summer patio chairs you may want to consider cotton or linen. These fibers are very absorbant and will dry very quickly. If you were to choose these fibers for outdoor fabric, you will also have to consider characteristics such as mildew resistance and damage caused by sunlight. If you are looking for a warmer fabric that will conduct moisture away from the body to prevent clamminess you would want wool which can absorb as much as 30% of its weight in moisture.

Absorbant fibers are free of static cling and are more receptive to
dyes. These can be factors that affect your choice. All natural fibers have a moisture content of at least 10%. Synthetic fibers cannot absorb moisture easily but will readily absorb grease and oil. This can be a very detrimental characteristic especially in the family room. Synthetic fibers have given rise to a host of new cleaning products on the market aimed at removing embedded oil.

3. Affinity to Dyes. If you are going to do any dyeing of your chosen fiber(s) you will have to concern yourself with the dyeability of those fibers. If you have chosen natural fibers you have a wide range of appropriate dyes available to you. If you are using combinations of natural fibers or natural fibers with synthetics you will have to do some sampling to determine the effect of the dyes on the fibers. Different fibers will take up different dyes at varying rates and the results can greatly affect the overall appearance of your fabric.

It is important to learn about dyes and their reaction on various fibers. Protein fibers are most successfully dyed with acid dyes, while cellulose fibers should be dyed with fiber reactive dyes. There are many good books available on home dyeing and it is well worth the effort to look into this facet of the textile world.

The dyeing of yardage is best left to the professionals. It is very difficult to obtain even results on yardage because the average home is not equipped with the appropriate size of vats to give the yardage
enough room for even dyeing. The larger the piece to be dyed the harder it is to control the temperature and dye take up.

If your yardage is not properly dyed and/or if you have synthetic fibers in your yarns you may end up with poor penetration of dyes into the fibers. This could result in the loss of color due to abrasion. The dye can cake to the outer surfaces of the fibers and to latter fall off with use. This is known as crocking and is not very common but can be found in cheap poorly made fabric. A simple way to check for crocking is to rub the fabric in question with a piece of clean, white cotton cloth. If it will crock you will see the bits of dye on your cloth.

You may also have the effect of the dye not penetrating where the yarns cross in the weave. With wear and the slight shifting of the yarns you will get flecks of the undyed color showing through.

As a handspinner you have many options available to you as to when and how you will dye your project. You can dye the raw fibers, the blended fibers, dye the fibers and then blend them, or dye the yarn. Each treatment will give you a different result that allows you to fine tune your fabric design.

4. Chemical Reactions. You will need to decide how and where your cloth will be used. And you need to decide how your cloth will be cleaned. Cotton and linen are affected by mineral and organic acids. Things such as lemon juice or orange juice can cause problems. Therefore these fibers might not make the best choices if there will be children using the furniture such as in a family room where
spilled fruit juices might be common. On the other hand if you have a fabric made with wool, silk or other animal fibers you would not want to clean it with a strong alkaline soap or detergent. These types of fibers require the use of neutral pH cleaners. If in doubt use a weak solution of vinegar in your rinse water to neutralize any alkalinity.

5. Color. This is an aesthetic consideration as well as a practical one. You will want to look at the area where the fabric will be used and how you want the furniture to function. You will have to look at the other colors in the area surrounding your upholstered piece. You will have to decide whether you want your furniture to stand out or blend in. Will it be an accent piece or a comfortable everyday piece?

It is important that you consider the lighting used in the area where the furniture will be. Is there natural light or artificial light? If natural light is a predominate factor, the time of day can affect the colors dramatically. If artificial light is a dominate light source than the type of light must be considered. Incandescent light adds yellow to your colors while fluorescent lighting adds blue. You should make ample samples and look at them in the rooms you are designing for. Most color combinations will be stable but you should be aware of the shifting that will occur with the yellow and blue color ranges.

The color of your fabric will also be affected by the texture of the yarns and weave structure. You can change the overall effect of a piece of cloth by adding or subtracting texture. You will also be able
to change the look of things with the use of scale. Large, bold patterns work well on small accent pieces while small, quiet patterns work well on furniture that has classic lines.

Color can also be used to prolong the wearability of the piece of furniture. If you use white yarns on a couch to be used by a family with four children and a large dog, you can expect a short lifespan. But if you took the same couch and covered it with a fabric that was predominantly earthy colors with some texture you could add many years to the lifespan of the fabric simply because it does not show the dirt as readily. This does not mean that the fabric must be dull and uninteresting. The fabric I used for my project is a good example. There is lots of interesting things going on but it is very subtle and it does not show the dirt or hair from family and pets.

There are many ways to achieve color in your fabric. As a handspinner you have the ability to control the color right down to the fiber level. You can dye the fibers and spin the colors separately or blended. You can then achieve special color effects in the plying process or you can dye the spun yarn. The only limit you have is your imagination.

6. Comfort. You need to look at the end use of your furniture. Is it for the sun deck, the family room, a waiting room, for show? Each function requires you to decide the amount of comfort needed. If you will be sitting on the furniture for extended periods you will want something that is easy to be with whether that is cool to sit on, warm
to sit on, soft to sit on, etc. If it is used for short periods of time the fabric could be more textured and perhaps prickly or smoother and sticky. Each use needs to be looked at to determine the best fibers and weaves to use.

An important aspect of comfort is the feel of the fabric used for upholstery. You must remember that your fabric will not just be sat on but it will be felt and this can add another dimension to your designing. In our society we do not tend to look at these fine details that make the difference between a good choice and a fantastic choice. With careful planning you will be able to stimulate a sensual response to your fabric. Think of the different textures you can produce that would add tremendous character to your chosen piece of furniture. Smooth, ribbed, corded or rough fabric can give the user a tactile experience as well as visual pleasure.

7. Drapeability. Your upholstery cloth will not have the drape of a dress fabric or of curtain material. You need it to be flexible enough to mold to the shape of the furniture and the user but firm enough to maintain its integrity over a long period of time.

8. Effect of Light. The sun and artificial lighting cause oxidation of all fibers and fade all dyes. The ultra-violet rays from the sun and the light from artificial lighting, particularly fluorescent, cause the fiber molecules to loss their strength and turn yellow. In areas of high humidity, this disintegration is accelerated as it is in fabrics that have been dyed or have chemical finishes.
Wool and silk are very susceptible to this kind of damage and should be protected from too much direct sunlight. Cotton and linen are able to withstand sunlight quite well but again the use of dyes and chemical finishes will speed up the deterioration.

9. Fiber Quality. As with any creative endeavor, the quality of fiber should be a key consideration. Always use the best fiber you can afford. You are spending your valuable time trying to create something of beauty and endurance and the best way to protect that work is to use high quality fibers. I always use the rule that if it is worth doing by hand then it is worth using the best materials available.

10. Heat Conductivity. This is a consideration that goes hand in hand with comfort. Your fabric needs to reflect the time and place of its use. If you are making a sun deck material you will want to have fabric that will conduct both heat and moisture away from the body. This would allow for the maximum comfort. For these qualities you need to look toward cotton and linen as first choices. If you want a fabric that is warm and soft, wool would be a good choice. Wool has the ability to be warm but to also move moisture away from the body for long term comfort.

11. Insects. There are many species of insects that attack textiles. The leading culprit is the common clothes moth which destroys wool, fur, down, feathers and other animal fibers. These creatures go in search of animal fibers while in the larva stage. They eat these fibers
to satisfy their need for sulfur. They have been known to eat through synthetic fibers to get to wool fibers and will eat the wool out of a wool blend fabric. They sometimes eat cellulose fibers but they are unable to digest these fibers.

Carpet beetles, love animal fibers including silk while silverfish and firebrats feast on cotton and rayon.

In industry there are finishes that are applied to fabric to protect them from insect damage. Some of these finishes alter the look and feel of the cloth and may not be a desirable alternative. Other treatments must be dry cleaned only which may not be desirable. For the home fiber artist prevention and safe fiber storage practices are the best alternative. The chemicals used by industry are far too toxic and dangerous for home use.

It is a good practice to vacuum your upholstery fabric well frequently to help discourage insect infestations.

12. Life Expectancy. All the decisions you make while designing your upholstery fabric will affect its life expectancy. Your long term goal should be to not only produce a fabric that will remain hole free for years but that will also hold up under appropriate cleaning procedures to maintain a lovely, clean, liveable fabric. You ideally want a fabric that will age gracefully with added character. Most people can relate to the added beauty of linen that comes only with repeated use and laundering and this should be considered with your upholstery fabric as well.
13. **Mildew Resistance.** Cellulose fibers are the most susceptible to mildew damage. The mildew is produced from microorganisms in the air. This organisms likes to live in dark, humid areas and will not attack clean, dry fibers. Mildew attacks the fibers causing them to weaken and stain. The stained area is usually a grey or green color. The stain can be removed with a few good washings using bleach. There are industrial finishes used to prevent mildew but most of them wash out over time. These finishes also have the disadvantage of using metallic compounds as the prevention agent. These compounds include such things as copper, and mercury which are toxic.

14. **Porosity.** The porosity is the ability of the cloth to let air and moisture move through the cloth. This is an important element relating to the comfort of the cloth. For upholstery fabric used to cover dining room chairs this would be of less importance than fabric covering an office chair or a family room sofa. The porosity of a fabric is affected by the density of the weave, the type of cushioning used, the type of finishing used and the style of the piece of furniture.

15. **Shrinkage.** This is a characteristic that is very important for the handspinner and handweaver to consider. The handspinner can control and eliminate most of the shrinkage from a yarn by designing the yarn carefully and chosing the appropriate finishing technique.
Different fibers will express different amounts of shrinkage and this needs to be taken into consideration in multiple yarn warps.

Yarns that are made from very crimpy fibers such as wool will shrink more than smooth, straight fibers such as linen or silk. The amount of twist added to a yarn will affect the amount of shrinkage. The more twist in a yarn the more it will shrink.

The best way to deal with shrinkage is to make a sample and decide from there if the chosen yarns are the best ones. This gives the handspinner a definite edge in being able to produce the exact yarn wanted for any project.

16. Soil Resistance. The type of fiber, the weave and the type of finish applied all contribute to a fabric's soil resistance. The color can be important as a light fabric will show dirt faster than a dark fabric. Today there are several very good products that can be purchased to apply to your upholstery fabric to protect it from soiling. It is best to go to experts in the field of upholstery and ask about the newest products on the market. There are also very knowledgeable people available through your area home economist that can tell you what is best for your particular fabric.

17. Static Build-up. Static electricity can be very annoying and is something you want to avoid in upholstery fabric. Static builds up on fibers and causes your clothes to cling to your body, it crackles when disturbed and it can spark. This build up happens most frequently with synthetic fibers. Synthetics are not very absorbant as opposed
to natural fibers which are very absorbant. The natural fibers are able to collect enough moisture for the air to control the electrons which cause the static electricity. The synthetics are not able to move the electrons and therefore build up a charge until it is released. This built up charge also collects dust, dirt and lint which makes synthetics harder to keep clean. There are some commercial finishes that can be applied to upholstery fabrics and carpets to help control the static build-up.

18. Stretch and Recovery. All fibers have the ability to stretch but the amount they stretch and their ability to recover is unique to each fiber. This ability to stretch or be elastic is determined by the molecular structure of the fiber itself. Wool with its overlapping scales and its crimp is very elastic while linen with its rigid linear molecular structure is not very elastic. The way a fiber recovers from being stretch varies as well. Some fibers rebound very quickly while other fibers slowly return to their former shape. Wool makes an excellent choice for clothing because of its elasticity and its tremendous recovery while linen is excellent for tablecloths and upholstery because of its dimensional stability.

Wool is the most flexible natural fiber with an ability to elongate 20% - 42% with a 99% recovery, followed by silk with a 23% - 31% stretchability and a 92% recovery. These are followed by rayon, cotton, ramie and finally flax with 2.7% - 3.3% stretchability and a 65% recovery.
19. **Warmth.** The warmth of a fiber depends on its molecular structure and the way it is made into yarn. Protein fibers feel warmer than cellulose fibers because protein fibers do not conduct heat very well. Yarns that are designed with air pockets in them are warmer than smooth, compact yarns without air pockets. Some fibers have hollow cores which act as insulating tubes that hold heat. Of the natural fibers silk is the best able to retain heat, followed by wool, cotton, ramie and finally linen.

20. **Wrinkle Resistance.** It is important that upholstery fabric be resistant to buckling, sagging and wrinkling. Upholstery fabric must have give to prevent stretching while being sat on and then have the ability to snap back to its original shape.

Wool fibers are the most elastic of the natural fibers. Wool can be stretched out of shape and then allowed to relax back time and time again. This elasticity comes from the molecular structure and from the crimp structure of the fiber. This makes wool an excellent choice for clothing. It will stretch 20-42%. Silk stretches 23-31%, cotton 5.6-9.6% and linen stretches the least at 2.7-3.3%.

Linen and cotton are common choices for upholstery warps because they have very little give which helps to retain a firm fabric shape.
Fibers for the Handspinner to Use

As a handspinner I would look to natural fibers first. Cotton, linen and wool top the list. If you were able to use a commercial warp for your project it would be worth looking into synthetics such as Verel and Orlec. They perform much like cotton and make very good choices.

A fabric that is warp faced is a good choice and twills wear very well. Wool is excellent to use for upholstery. Wool is resilient because of its crimp. It wears well and will retain its original appearance for years. Wool resists soiling and is relatively easy to clean.

Good upholstery wool fibers should be coarser and have a long staple length. Breeds such as Lincoln, Romney and Cotswold would be excellent selections. When spun worsted, these fibers are lustrous, strong and will wear well.

Line linen is better for upholstery then tow line because of its length and greater strength. One of the best wearing upholstery fabrics is made up of line linen warp and worsted wool weft.

Mohair would make excellent upholstery fabric. Mohair could be used alone or in combination with wool or other fibers. Mohair is harder wearing than wool and usually more lustrous. It also is more expensive.
Silk makes beautiful fabric for your upholstery needs. However, it can prove to be very expensive. You would want to reserve its use for special small pieces.

**Spinning Techniques**

1. **Woollen Spinning.** The woollen technique is used to keep yarns light, warm, soft and full of heat trapping air spaces. Woollen yarns are generally made from short stapled fibers. These attributes are not what is needed for good upholstery fabric. These yarns cannot be subjected to hard wear and therefore, woollen spinning would not be considered a suitable technique.

2. **Worsted Spinning.** Worsted yarns are usually drafted from long stapled fibers. These fibers have been carded or combed into a parallel configuration. The best worsted yarns have been combed to remove all the short fibers while aligning the remaining fibers. The fibers are then spun from the cut end to produce the smoothest possible yarn. Yarns spun in a worsted manner are very smooth and strong. Worsted spun yarns make an excellent choice for upholstery yarns.

3. **Novelty yarns.** Novelty yarns can add a wonderful dimension to your handwoven fabric. When choosing a novelty yarn for upholstery fabric it would be best to use one that is well spun and quite stable. You need to design your novelty yarn to be of similar
grist as the main yarns. This will help keep the fabric well balanced and will prevent premature wearing.

Your novelty yarns need to be well stabilized and should not have large loops that will catch or large bumps that will cause instability in the fabric.

4. Blending Fibers. Upholstery fabric lends itself to blended fibers. The reasons for blending fibers can vary from increasing wearability as in adding nylon to cotton or wool for instance, to adding interest with a silk wool blend. The blending can take place during the carding process or different fibers can be plied together. Either method is appropriate depending on the results you are looking for.

Blending can also involve the blending of color and/or fiber types. This opens up another whole world of options for you to consider. You can spend a great deal of creative time getting past this option. You have the ability as a handspinner to design your yarn to match your needs exactly. This is a wonderful option because you cannot always find the right color or fiber content in store bought yarns.

Handweaving Considerations

The fabric you want is one that is strong, firmly woven, with all the yarns of about the same size. Your fabric should not pill, fuzz,
show lint, or soil easily. Your structure needs to be closely sett and firmly beaten.

You need to avoid weaves with surface floats. This floats will tend to snag and cause premature aging of your fabric. There are some wonderful weaves that give you floats on the back of your fabric which might be nice to use where a little extra padding is wanted. With the floats on the inside of the fabric they will be protected and not cause any problems.

It is important to do samples before embarking on your project. I know that I learned a lot by doing my samples for this project and that the sampling process prevented most surprises in the required fabric. I think that sampling is even more important when using handspun. It is frustrating to weave something that does not turn out as planned when you are using commercial materials but to make a mistake with handspun would be devastating.

It must be remembered when weaving samples that you will be able to beat the weft in closer on a narrow warp than on a wider one. For this reason it might be necessary to do a sample the actual width required. It is also a good idea to do a sample with several sleyings side by side. This will help you decide which sett is the best for your project.

Tabby or twill weave structures are excellent choices for upholstery fabric. Twills wear like iron and have many design options. With so many other considerations to worry about I would
limit myself to a fairly simple weave structure. I also feel that the simpler structure will show off you spinning more than a complicated weave.

Planning The Fabric

Your fabric will be more pleasing for a longer period of time if it is subtle without loud or large patterns. Your upholstery should be something that blends in with your room, something that can be accented with a pillow or a throw. It should be a canvas to reflect your ever changing moods and color schemes. You need to look closely at the size of you selected piece of furniture as well as the room where it will be located. What other major objects will it be with? What lighting will be used?

If you think of your room as a whole, a place to live in, you will have more satisfactory results. You are going to put a lot of time, effort and money into your cloth. You want it to be able to stay classic for the next 20-30 years or at least as long as you plan to use that piece of furniture.

With the proper planning and a practical eye you will not be disappointed. In fact, I believe you will be increasingly amazed that something you make with your own hands will withstand the wear and tear of everyday use far better than most anything else you can buy.
Another consideration will be the climate the furniture will be used in. You will not want a fuzzy, woolly fabric on your deck furniture. Fibers like horsehair and synthetics are very strong but because they lack porosity, you will find them uncomfortable to sit on for long periods of time.

If your fabric will be used in a sun room, look to cotton and linen as wise choices. If you are looking at your living room or a study, your could justify luxurious silk fabric that will last years in less used areas.

Look at any pattern you use on your fabric and how it will look on your piece of furniture. Be on the look out for movement of one conflicting with the other.

Upholstered Furniture

You will have to look at where your piece of furniture is upholstered and where the most wear or soiling will occur. It is a well known fact that upholstered arms of a chair wear twice as fast as any other part of the piece. The back of the chair will soil quicker where the head of the user rests. With these factors in mind, you need to make extra fabric to cover these areas (antimacassars). These antimacassars can be cleaned on a regular basis and ultimately double the life of your chair.
The other areas of an upholstered chair to wear out is around areas of corded welting. This welted area is taunt and raised which lends it to more wear.

By looking at the style of upholstered furniture you are doing you can decide if its appropriate for handspun, handwoven application. Styles with less welting are easier for a handweaver to deal with and would therefore be a first choice.

Criteria for My Upholstery Fabric

I began looking for upholstery fabric that would suit my lifestyle and reflect my love of natural fibers. I need a fabric that will stand up to children, that is to say spilled milk and cookie crumbs. I need a fabric that will release or hide the dog hair and dirt (a black and white collie and a golden cocker). There is also a very hairy cat and a few parrots to consider. We live on a farm and I need the fabric to resist or camouflage the hay, straw and seeds that a perpetually drifting in.

I thought this was a pretty lofty request and contemplated admitting defeat and choosing another topic. However, after some research I realized that my needs were within reach. I also realized that in fact, handspun, handwoven might just be the best option.

The average person would not have access to a fabric that meet all their needs. I began to feel the power of my skills and a new
direction for designing. I believe that as a handspinner I have at my fingertips an extensive knowledge of fiber properties and can design fabrics that are structurally sound, aesthetically pleasing and uniquely mine.

Upholstery fabric must have a strong surface structure. This is achieved by designing fine, well twisted yarns that are sett closely together. The resulting fabric is “dimensionally stable”. In commercial circles, this term refers to a quality of shape retention that is the strength of a fabric to withstand wrinkling, sagging and stretching. Upholsterers test a fabric’s stability by pulling on diagonal corners. The fabric should not be too elastic.

You will want to test for pilling and abrasion effects. Rub your fingers in a circular motion on the fabric. A good fabric should show no fuzziness or pilling.

An upholsterer buys his fabric in 48-54 inch widths. From this he is able to cover most pieces seamlessly. However, this results in more waste that a handspinner or a handweaver could bear. It is best to measure your furniture at its widest point and add on shrinkage, draw-in and seam allowances. This is as wide a piece of cloth as you’ll need. If you break your upholstery pattern pieces down into same sizes, or near same sizes, you may find you could save a lot of spinning and weaving by making more than one warp.
Samples

I spun and wove several samples before I decided on the one I wanted for my rocker cover. I really learned to enjoy sampling and learned to cut my precious yarns and fabric. To my amazement it did not self destruct. The more I did the more I wanted to do. My handspun was a pleasure to work with. I began to feel more confident and look forward to many years of productive spinning.

I have included two of the experimental samples here. These two were the most successful and are ones that I will most likely develop into larger projects in the future.

In designing these two I used the same general color scheme. One is using yarns of similar grist while the other consists of a fine warp with a heavier weft feature yarn.

The Twill Backed sample would look better if the yarn had been evenly dyed. The fabric has a nice hand and will make very suitable upholstery fabric. The Tabby Squared turned out well. I would like to try it with finer yarns with perhaps a silk accent yarn.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Twill Backed Sample

Spun by: Carol Patenaude  Date: November 16, 1989

Fiber(s) used: Romney wool - White

Form the fiber was in: Fleece

Source(s): Mohair Magic

Cost: $6.00 per pound ($3.50 for fleece + $2.50 for carding)

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: Several fleeces were washed and taken to the Carstairs Woolen Mill for carding. The roving was dyed (see dye record page 32). The roving was then vertically and spun.

Spinning technique(s) used: A traditional technique was used.

Wheel used: Ashford Elizabeth  Ratio used: 8.5:1

Twist Per Inch - singles: 10  Ply: 7.5

Yards Spun: 182 yards  Yards per Pound: 1025

Weight: 2.84 oz  Count: 3.66

Finishing: Washed and lightly ironed.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Twill Backed Sample

Spun by: Carol Patenaude Date: November 16, 1989

Fiber(s) used: Romney wool - White

Form the fiber was in: Fleece

Source(s): Mohair Magic

Cost: $6.00 per pound ($3.50 for fleece + $2.50 for carding)

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: Several fleeces were washed and taken to the Carstairs Woolen Mill for carding. The roving was dyed (see dye record page 32). The roving was split vertically and spun.

Spinning technique(s) used: A worsted technique was used.

Wheel used: Ashford Elizabeth Ratio used: 8.5:1

Twist Per Inch - singles: 10 Ply: 7.5

Yards Spun: 182 yards Yards per Pound: 1025

Weight: 2.84 oz. Count: 3.66

Finishing: Washed and lightly blocked.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Twill Backed Sample

Spun by: Carol Patenaude  Date: November 16, 1989

Fiber(s) used: Romney wool- white

Form the fiber was in: Fleece

Source(s): Mohair Magic

Cost: $6.00 per pound

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: Several fleeces were washed and taken to the Carstairs Woolen Mill for carding. They were dyed after spinning (see Dye Record). The roving was split vertically.

Spinning technique used: A standard manner was used.

Wheel used: Ashford
Ratio used: 8.5:1

Twist Per Inch: 4
Ply: 4

Yards Spun: 1728 Yards per Pound: 343.86

Weight: 7.93 oz Count: 1.22

Finishing: Washed and blocked.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Twill Backed Sample

Spun by: Carol Patenaude Date: November 16, 1989

Fiber(s) used: Romney wool - white

Form the fiber was in: Fleece

Source(s): Mohair Magic

Cost: $6.00 per pound

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: Several fleeces were washed and taken to the Carstairs Woolen Mill for carding. The spun skein was dyed after spinning (see Dye Record sheet page 31 ). The roving was split vertically and spun.

Spinning technique(s) used: A worsted manner was used.

Wheel used: Ashford Elizabeth Ratio used: 8.5:1

Twist Per Inch - singles: 6 Ply: 4

Yards Spun: 170 Yards per Pound: 343.86

Weight: 7.93 oz. Count: 1.22

Finishing: Washed and lightly blocked.
**Dye Record**

Project: Twill Backed Sample

Fiber: Wool

Type of Dye Used: Ciba Acid

Type of Dye Used: Stock Solution Used: 1 %

Shade Used: 1 %

Amount of Fiber Dyed: 100 gms. of yarn.

Total amount of dye used:

Dye used: Color A: Ciba Royal Blue RRF - 20 ml
  Color B: Ciba Erjonyl Red 2BL - 80 ml

Amount of Assistants Used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Fiber</th>
<th>Leveling Agent(s)</th>
<th>Fixer(s)</th>
<th>Water (L)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 gms. of yarn</td>
<td>1 1/2 tsps.</td>
<td>100 gms.</td>
<td>400 mls.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
  Glauber Salts  |

Procedure Used: The dye was added to the water and the wetted yarn was added. I followed standard dyeing procedure.
Project: Twill Backed Sample

Fiber: Wool

Type of Dye Used: Ciba Acid

Stock Solution Used: 1%

Shade Used: 1%

Total amount of dye used:

Dye used: Color A: Ciba Brilliant Yellow 4 GLS - 14 ml
Color B: Ciba Royal Blue RRF - 6 ml
Color C: Ciba Erionyl Red 2BL - 80 ml

Amount of Assistants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Fiber</th>
<th>Leveling Agent(s)</th>
<th>Fixer(s)</th>
<th>Water (L)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 gms. Roving</td>
<td>0 gms.</td>
<td>100 gms.</td>
<td>400 mls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vinegar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedure Used: The dye was added to the dye pot and the wetted roving was added. I did not use a leveling agent and did not stir the dye pot while processing. I wanted an uneven color to add depth.
Weaving Record

Title/description of project: Twill Backed Sampler
Woven by: Carol Patenaude Date: January 1990
Loom used: LeClerc 15" Reed: 12 EPI: 12
Warp yarn(s) used: Handspun (see Spinning Record page 29)
  Romney wool, worsted spun, from dyed roving
  Source(s): Handspun from Romney wool
Weft yarn(s) used: Handspun (see Spinning Record pages 29 & 30)
  Romney wool, worsted spun, dyed
  Source(s): Handspun
  Number warp ends used: 96 Length of warp: 1 yard
  Order of warp yarns: all one yarn Total yardage: 96 yards
Weft: Total yardage: 32 yards heavy yarn and 64 yards of fine yarn
Draft name: Twill Source: Mary Snyder

Weaving: This was woven by using two shots of the fine yarn in a tabby weave followed by one shot of the heavy yarn using a 1,2,3,4 sequence. This is a very versatile weave. Many combinations of colors and weaving sequences are possible.

Finishing technique used: Washed by hand and laid flat to dry

Addition comments: This fabric is used for upholstery. There are lots of possibilities for color and design.
Weaving Record

Title/description of project: Twill Backed Sampler
Woven by: Carol Patenaude Date: January 1990
Loom used: LeClerc 15" Reed: 12 EPI: 12
Warp yarn(s) used: Handspun (see Spinning Record page 29)
Romney wool, worsted spun, from dyed roving
Source(s): Handspun from Romney wool
Weft yarn(s) used: Handspun (see Spinning Record pages 29 & 30)
Romney wool, worsted spun, dyed
Source(s): Handspun

Number warp ends used: 96 Length of warp: 1 yard
Order of warp yarns: all one yarn Total yardage: 96 yards

Weft: Total yardage: 32 yards heavy yarn and 64 yards of fine yarn
Draft name: Twill Source: Mary Snyder

Weaving: This was woven by using two shots of the fine yarn in a tabby weave followed by one shot of the heavy yarn using a 1,2,3,4 sequence. This is a very versatile weave. Many combinations of colors and weaving sequences are possible.

Finishing technique used: Washed by hand and laid flat to dry

Addition comments: This fabric would make a nice upholstery fabric. There are lots of possibilities for color.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Tabby Squared Sample

Spun by: Carol Patenaude Date: December 1989

Fiber(s) used: Romney - white

Form the fiber was in: Fleece

Source(s): Mohair Magic

Cost: $6.00 per pound (includes fleece + $2.50 for carding)

Preparation used to produce spinning: The fleece was washed and sent to Carstairs for carding. The roving was dyed (see Dye Record Page 37) and was split vertically and spun.

Spinning technique used: A standard manner was used.

Wheel used: Ashford Ratio used: 6.6:1

Twist Per Inch - single Ply: 3.5

Yards Spun: 106 yards Yards per Pound: 619

Weight: 2.74 oz.

Count: 2.21

Finishing: Washed and blocked.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Tabby Squared Sample

Spun by: Carol Patenaude        Date: December 1989

Fiber(s) used: Romney - white

Form the fiber was in: Fleece

Source(s): Mohair Magic

Cost: $6.00 per pound ($3.50 for fleece + $2.50 for carding)

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: The fleece was washed and sent to Carstairs Woolen Mill for carding. The roving was dyed (see Dye Record Page 37). The roving was split vertically and spun.

Spinning technique(s) used: A worsted manner was used.

Wheel used: Ashford Traditional        Ratio used: 6.6:1
Twist Per Inch - singles: 5        Ply: 3.5
Yards Spun: 106 yards        Yards per Pound: 619
Weight: 2.74 oz.        Count: 2.21

Finishing: Washed and lightly blocked.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Tabby Squared Sample

Spun by: Carol Patenaude  Date: December 1989

Fiber(s) used: Romney - white

Form the fiber was in: Fleece

Source(s): Mohair Magic

Cost: $6.00 per pound

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: The fleece was washed and taken to the Carstairs Woollen Mill for carding and was dyed (see Dye Record Sheet Page3). The roving was then drafted and spun.

Spinning technique(s) used: A worsted manner

Wheel used: Ashford Traditional  Ratio used:

Twist Per Inch - singles: 5

Yards Spun: 132 yards

Weight: 3.17 oz

Finishing: Washed and lightly blocked.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Tabby Squared Sample

Spun by: Carol Patenaude  Date: December 1989

Fiber(s) used: Romney - white

Form the fiber was in: Fleece

Source(s): Mohair Magic

Cost: $6.00 per pound

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: The fleece was washed and taken to the Carstairs Woolen Mill for carding. The roving was dyed (see Dye Record Sheet Page3). The roving was split vertically and spun.

Spinning technique(s) used: A worsted manner was used

Wheel used: Ashford Traditional  Ratio used: 6.6:1

Twist Per Inch - singles: 5  Ply: 3.5

Yards Spun: 132 yards  Yards per Pound: 666.25

Weight: 3.17 oz  Count: 2.38

Finishing: Washed and lightly blocked.
Dye Record

Project: Tabby Squared Sample

Fiber: Wool

Type of Dye Used: Acid - Ciba

Stock Solution Used: 1%

Shade Used: 1%

Total amount of dye used per pot:

Dye used: Color A: Ciba Royal Blue RRF - 80 ml
Color B: Ciba Erionyl red 2BL - 20 ml

Amount of Assistants per Pot:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Fiber</th>
<th>Leveling Agent(s)</th>
<th>Fixer(s)</th>
<th>Water (L)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 gms.</td>
<td>0 gms.</td>
<td>100 ml.</td>
<td>400 ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vinegar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedure Used: Standard dyeing procedure was followed with the dye added to the dye pot. The roving was added and dyed. I did not use a leveling agent because I wanted the color to be uneven. I did not stir the roving while it was dyeing to maximize the uneven dyeing.
Dye Record

Project: Tabby Squared Sample

Fiber: Wool

Type of Dye Used: Ciba acid dyes

Stock Solution Used: 1%

Shade Used: 1%

Amount of fiber dyed: 100 gms.

Total amount of dye used:

Dye used: Color A: Ciba Royal Blue RRF - 20 ml
           Color B: Ciba Erionyl Red 2BL - 80 ml

Amount of Assistants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Fiber</th>
<th>Leveling Agent(s)</th>
<th>Fixer(s)</th>
<th>Water (L)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 gms. roving</td>
<td>0 gms.</td>
<td>100 gms.</td>
<td>400 mls.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedure Used: The dye was added to the water in the dye pot. The roving was added and dyed using standard dyeing procedures. I did not use a leveling agent because I wanted an uneven color. I did not stir the dye bath during the dyeing process to maximize the uneven color.
Weaving Record

Title/description of project: Tabby Squared Sample
Woven by: Carol Patenaude          Date: January 1990
Loom used: Leclerc 5 in. Reed: 11m EPI: 10
Warp yarn(s) used: Handspun (see Spinning Record pages 34 & 35)
Source(s): Handspun
Weft yarn(s) used: Same as warp yarns
Source(s): Handspun
Warp Width: Blatched 11 cm
Weaving Record

Title/description of project: Tabby Squared Sample
Woven by: Carol Patenaude Date: January 1990
Loom used: LeClerc 15 in. Reed: 4m EPI: 10
Warp yarn(s) used: Handspun (see Spinning Record pages 34 & 35)
Source(s): Handspun
Weft yarn(s) used: Same as warp yarns
Source(s): Handspun
Number warp ends used: 70 Length of warp: 1 yard
Order of warp yarns: 2 dark, 4 light, etc.
Total yardage: 70 yards
Weft: Total yardage: 60 yards
Draft name: Tabby Source: Common pattern

Weaving: This is a simple tabby weave using four shots of the red color followed by two shots of the purple color. This weave would be nice done with the purple a novelty yarn or as a heavier accent yarn.

Finishing technique used: Gently washed by hand and laid flat to dry.

Addition comments: This fabric turned out well. There is lots of room for design possibilities.
It was hard to narrow down the many choices I had. I decided to design a fabric that had a variety of fibers in it. I also decided not to dye any of the fibers. In some of the sampling I had done I enjoyed the dyeing but I did not feel confident enough with it to get what I wanted in the time I had. I chose to use four different fleeces and added a yarn that was a combination of linen and cotton, as well as a tow linen yarn.

The weave is called Minor Texture and my source was a weaving class I took years ago with Mary Snyder. My yarns were made up of a tow linen/Pima cotton yarn, a medium grey Romney yarn, a white Romney yarn, a light brown domestic fleece, and a white Lincoln yarn.

I knew that time was short and that by spinning several different types of fibers I would feel like I was making small steps with each completed skein. If I had spun just one yarn I would have panicked and died of heart failure.

This fabric turned out to be quite satisfactory and I'm happy with the results. I decided to make fabric for cushions for my rocking chair. This would give me something to test out before embarking on a larger project. When I was making these decisions I did not believe I could accomplish what I set out to do. I was sure that my handspun was not good enough for upholstery fabric. As things
progressed my fears seemed to dissipate and I became more confident. I would not be afraid to spin and weave any kind of fabric as a result.

This fabric has a nice hand and should wear well on my rocker. The natural colors will help hide the cat and dog hair and even the cookie crumbs. I used the old cushions from the rocker for my pattern. The cushions were made by measuring the desired length of each one and doubling the resulting number. I folded the cloth wrong sides together and inserted a piece of upholstery foam cut to size. I carefully pinned all layers together and laid my pattern on top. I then took a black felt marker and traced around the edge of the pattern. I cut along the resulting line and headed to the sewing machine. I stitched around the cushion with a stretch zigzag stitch followed by a row of straight stitch. I'm sure one row of stitching was probably enough but I wanted to be sure. I made bias tape from some grey corduroy material I had and used it to finish the edge of the cushion and for the attaching ties.

The construction went much easier that I had anticipated. The fabric did not fray and it was very easy to sew. I have a very old Kenmore sewing machine and it had no trouble with this fabric. I'm sure a serger would also do a very nice job. I am looking forward to planning a larger project and refining my skills further.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Minor Texture Upholstery Fabric

Source: Mary Snyder Weaving Workshop (Olds College 1982)

Spun by: Carol Patenaude Date: February 2, 1990

Fiber(s) used: Tow Linen

Form the fiber was in: Roving

Source(s): The Fiber Hut

Cost: N/A

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: The roving was split vertically and spun.

Spinning technique(s) used: A worsted manner was used.

Wheel used: Ashford Elizabeth Ratio used: 12.5:1

Twist Per Inch: 6.5

Yards Spun: 450 yards of two ply

Ply per Pound: 546

Weight: 90 yards weighed 2.64 oz

Count: 64

Finishing: The yarn was boiled in water with 1 tsp of washing soda and 1 tbsp of soap flakes for one hour. It was then rinsed well and wrapped on a yarn blocker to dry.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Minor Texture Upholstery Fabric

Source: Mary Snyder Weaving Workshop (Olds College 1982)

Spun by: Carol Patenaude Date: February 2, 1990

Fiber(s) used: Tow Linen

Form the fiber was in: Roving

Source(s): The Fiber Hut

Cost: N/A

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: The roving was split vertically and spun.

Spinning technique(s) used: A worsted manner was used.

Wheel used: Ashford Elizabeth Ratio used: 12.5:1

Twist Per Inch - singles: 10 Ply: 6.5

Yards Spun: 450 yards of two ply Yards per Pound: 546

Weight: 90 yd weighed 2.64 oz Count: 3.64

Finishing: The yarn was boiled in water with 3 tbsp. of washing soda and 1 tbsp. of pure soap flakes for one hour. It was then rinsed well and wrapped on my yarn blocker to dry.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Minor Textured Upholstery Fabric

Source: Mary Snyder Weaving Workshop (Olds College 1982)

Spun by: Carol Patenaude Date: February 1, 1990

Fiber(s) used: Tow linen and Pima Cotton

Form the fiber was in: Both were in roving

Source(s): Tow linen is by Euro, Smith and Ewe. Pima cotton is Smith and Ewe

Cost: Tow linen was $1.50 per ounce and the Pima cotton was $1.40 per ounce.

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: The rovings were split vertically and spun.

Spinning technique(s) used: A worsted manner was used.

Wheel used: Ashford Elizabeth Ratio used:

Twist Per Inch - singles: Linen - 10 Ply: 7 Cotton - 15

Yards Spun: 100 yards of two ply Yards per Pound: 1422

Weight: 40 yds weighed .45 oz. Count: 9.49 (for linen at 300)

Finishing: The yarn was wrapped around a piece of wood, and boiled for one hour in a solution of water, 1 tbsp. water, 1 tbsp. soda and 1 tbsp pure soap.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Minor Textured Upholstery Fabric

Source: Mary Snyder Weaving Workshop (Olds College 1982)

Spun by: Carol Patenaude Date: February 1, 1990

Fiber(s) used: Tow linen and Pima Cotton

Form the fiber was in: Both were in roving

Source(s): Tow linen is by Euroflax from Mohair Magic. Pima cotton is Smith and Ewe

Cost: Tow linen was $1.50 per ounce and the Pima Cotton was $1.40 per ounce.

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: The rovings were split vertically and spun.

Spinning technique(s) used: A worsted manner was used.

Wheel used: Ashford Elizabeth Ratio used: 12.5:1

Twist Per Inch - singles: Linen - 10 Ply: 7 Cotton - 15

Yards Spun: 100 yards of two ply Yards per Pound: 1422

Weight: 40 yds weighed .45 oz Count: 9.49 (used Linen at 300)

Finishing: The yarn was wrapped around a piece of PBS pipe and boiled for one hour in a solution of water, 1 tbsp. washing soda and 1 tbsp pure soap.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Minor Textured Upholstery Fabric

Spun by: Carol Patenaude  Date: January 29, 1990

Source: Mary Snyder Weaving Workshop (Olds College 1982)

Fiber(s) used: Romney Roving - medium grey

Form the fiber was in: Roving

Source(s): Mohair Magic.

Cost: $11.00 per pound

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: Spun from roving. Roving was divided into horizontal sections before spinning.

Spinning technique(s) and manner was used:

Wheel used: Ashford Traditional  Ratio used: 6.6:1

Twist Per Inch - singles:  Ply: 7

Yards Spun: 520 yds of singles  Yards per Pound: 1123

Weight: 290 yards weighed 13 oz.  Count: 4.01

Finishing: Washed and steam blocked.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Minor Textured Upholstery Fabric

Spun by: Carol Patenaude          Date: January 29, 1990

Source: Mary Snyder Weaving Workshop (Olds College 1982)

Fiber(s) used: Romney Roving - medium grey

Form the fiber was in: Roving

Source(s): Mohair Magic.

Cost: $11.00 per pound

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: Spun from roving. Roving was divided into three or four vertical sections before spinning.

Spinning technique(s) used: A worsted manner was used.

Wheel used: Ashford Traditional          Ratio used: 6.6:1

Twist Per Inch - singles: 10.5          Ply: 7

Yards Spun: 520 yds of 2 ply          Yards per Pound: 1123

Weight: 290 yards weighed 4.13 oz.          Count: 4.01

Finishing: Washed and lightly blocked.
Title/description of project: Minor Textured Upholstery Fabric

Spun by: Carol Patenaude  Date: January 31, 1990

Fiber(s) used: Wool - Light grey-brown

Form the fiber was in: Fleece

Source(s): A domestic fleece that I got from Mary Bressar about 15 years ago.

Cost: $3.50 per lb.

Preparation: I had washed the fleece and taken to the Weaverton Mill to be carded.

Spinning: A worsted manner was used.

Yarn used: Lord Elizabeth  Ratio used: 8.5:1

Twist: singles: 8.5  Ply: 6.5

Yards: 620 yard of two ply  Yards per Pound: 952

Weight: yards weighed 2.42 oz.  Count: 2.57

Lightly: The yarn was washed and lightly blocked.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Minor Textured Upholstery Fabric

Spun by: Carol Patenaude Date: January 31, 1990

Fiber(s) used: Wool - Light grey-brown

Form the fiber was in: Fleece

Source(s): A domestic fleece that I got from Mary Bressar about 15 years ago.

Cost: $3.50 per pound

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: I had washed the fleece and taken to the Carstairs Woolen Mill to be carded.

Spinning technique(s) used: A worsted manner was used.

Wheel used: Ashford Elizabeth Ratio used: 8.5:1

Twist Per Inch - singles: 8.5 Ply: 6.5

Yards Spun: 520 yard of two ply Yards per Pound: 952

Weight: 144 yards weighed 2.42 oz Count: 2.57

Finishing: The yarn was washed and lightly blocked.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: **Minor Textured Upholstery Fabric**

Spun by: Carol Patenaude          Date: January 30, 1990

Fiber(s) used: Lincoln fleece - white

Form the fiber was in: Fleece

Source(s): Mohair Magic

Cost: **$7.75 per pound**

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: Washed and teased. Carded with hand carders into worsted rolags

Spinning technique(s) used: Spun in a worsted manner.

Wheel used: Ashford Traditional          Ratio used: 9 x 4

Twist Per Inch - singles: **8.5**          Ply: **5.5**

Yards Spun: **128 yards**

Weight: **2.85 oz**

Count: **2.57**

Finishing: Washed and lightly blocked.
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Minor Textured Upholstery Fabric

Spun by: Carol Patenaude Date: January 30, 1990

Fiber(s) used: Lincoln fleece - white

Form the fiber was in: Fleece

Source(s): Mohair Magic

Cost: $7.75 per pound

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: Washed and teased. Carded with hand carders into worsted rolags

Spinning technique(s) used: Spun in a worsted manner.

Wheel used: Ashford Traditional Ratio used: 6.6:1

Twist Per Inch - singles: 8.5 Ply: 5.5

Yards Spun: 128 yards Yards per Pound: 718

Weight: 2.85 oz Count: 2.57

Finishing: Washed and lightly blocked.
Handspun Upholstery Fabric

Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Minor Textured Upholstery Fabric

Spun by: Carol Patenaude  Date: January 28, 1990

Fiber(s) used: Romney wool

Form the fiber was in: Fleece

Source(s): Mohair Magic

Cost: $6.00 per pound

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: Several fleeces were washed and taken to the Carstairs Woolen Mill for carding into roving.

Spinning technique(s) used: A worsted manner was used

Wheel used: Ashford Traditional  Ratio used: 6.6:1

Yards Per Inch - sing: 12  Ply: 8.5

Yards spun: 264  Yards per Pound: 938.7

Weight: 1 oz  Count: 3.35

Finishing: Dyed and blocked
Spinning Record

Title/description of project: Minor Textured Upholstery Fabric

Spun by: Carol Patenaude Date: January 28, 1990

Fiber(s) used: Romney wool

Form the fiber was in: Fleece

Source(s): Mohair Magic

Cost: $6.00 per pound

Preparation used to prepare for spinning: Several fleeces were washed and taken to the Carstairs Woolen Mill for carding into roving.

Spinning technique(s) used: A worsted manner was used

Wheel used: Ashford Traditional Ratio used: 6.6:1

Twist Per Inch - singles: 12 Ply: 8.5

Yards Spun: 264 Yards per Pound: 938.7

Weight: 4.5 oz Count: 3.35

Finishing: Washed and lightly blocked
Weaving Record

Handsome Upholstery Fabric

Mini's Textured Upholstery Fabric
Weaving Record

Title/description of project: Minor Textured Upholstery Fabric
Woven by: Carol Patenaude Date: June 15, 1990
Loom used: LeClerc 22" Floor Reed: 4m EPI: 10
Warp yarn(s) used: Handspun wool, cotton and linen yarns. (See Spinning Records pages 41-47).
Source(s): Handspun
Weft yarn(s) used: Tow linen yarn, light grey yarn and medium grey yarn wrapped together.
Source(s): Handspun
Number warp ends used: 190 (32 each yarn)
Length of warp: 2.78 yds
Order of warp yarns: light grey, tow linen, cotton/linen, Romney white, Lincoln, medium grey
Total yardage: 576 yards
Weft: Total yardage: 422 yards
Draft name: Minor Texture Source: Mary Snyder

Finishing technique used: Fabric wash washed in the washing machine for 3 minutes on a gentle cycle and laid flat to dry. The fabric was then steam pressed.

Addition comments: I was a little worried about the mixture of yarns in the warp but found it to be very forgiving and wove very easily. This fabric was fun to do and has a very nice hand for upholstery fabric. It was easy to sew on a regular sewing machine and there was no problem with fraying or stretching.
Final Thoughts

Upholstery fabric and upholstered furniture is the result of hundreds of years of technological development. As I began researching for this paper I learned that upholstery fabric required a great deal of planning and a high level of spinning and weaving skills. I was not sure I was up to the challenge but I continued on my journey. The journey was very rocky, mostly because of outside interference. There were many times that it was all too much and I wanted to quit. But something kept me going. Something within me knew I could do it despite all the problems. So many doors lay open now that I'm not sure which one I'll try next but I am not afraid to try any of them. I know I have the skill to overcome any problems that may arise. The skills I have learned here have extended into other facets of my life and I feel more confident about taking on new challenges. I have made many friends and shed many tears and all of these things have helped me find myself. This has been a very long and hard journey but one that I am so happy to have taken.
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