

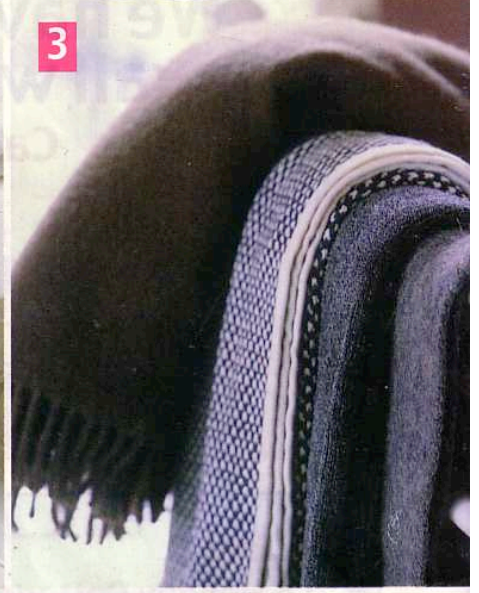
Creature Comforts



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For the finer things in life, indulge yourself with the latest natural fabrics. **Sharon Davies** shows you how.

As we move towards the new millennium in an electronic world, we are beginning to crave for more natural things in the home, interiors that make us feel good, comfortable furniture and fabrics that inspire. For a relaxed yet stylish interior, opt for the latest contemporary natural fabrics and textured weaves.

1. However many times a voile or sheer is washed, like this Chen Voile, part of the East West Collection from NoNo, it always looks good. Priced at £12.95 per m.

2. Linen is one of the oldest textiles known. Woven from flax, linen sheets feel cool, look good and after repeated laundering manage to improve with age. Try these bedclothes in pure Irish linen from Toast. Flat sheets start from £59, pillowcases £12, and duvets £69.

3. Keep warm in this 100% wool Ullort brown travel rug, £15 from Ikea.

4. For a complete treat, indulge yourself with these 60% linen/40% cotton towels available in Ivory and Natural. From The Simple Curtain Company a hand towel costs £14, bath towel £30, back scrubber £9.50, hand mitt £5, or pay £55 for the set.

5. Organise the laundry with these pure linen laundry and dry cleaning bags, £14.99 each, from The White Company.

6. Towel yourself down with these sumptuous, bath towels available in Natural or Ivory, £29.95 from Home Elements.

Fabrics To Go For

•The choice of natural fabrics to be used throughout the home is endless. For quality and style choose linen, muslin, calico, pure cottons and woollens, or for complete extravagance choose silk. •Crisp linen and cotton work well in the kitchen and dining room, while cosy woollens and soft muslins make any bedroom feel warm and snug.



1. For a touch of simplicity accessorise your living room with these Lotus cushion covers. Made from 100% cotton organdie, they are £19.50 each from The Simple Curtain Company.
2. Natural fabrics in neutral shades create a calming environment and a comfortable look. Use linen to create a contemporary look with this 100% pure linen tie-top pelmet £39, from The Simple Curtain Company.
3. For a clean, smart kitchen, invest in these crisp 100% pure linen tea towels. Available in check, zigzag or stripe, they cost £6.95 each from Home Elements.

Natural fabrics and neutral tones make any room feel relaxed and warm. Whether nutmeg, soft cinnamon, or subtle creams, make accessorising easy by using neutral colours on armchairs, sofas and curtains and accent with vases, throws, cushions and rugs in complementary shades.

4. Chair upholstered in Leporello Stripe, £35 per m.
5. 'Fantasia' curtains with tab-top voile panel from Freemans. Prices start from £19 for each curtain and £18 for the voile panel.
6. Wing chair upholstered in Antonio Check, £35 per m. All from Jane Churchill.

Useful Information

Nono. Tel: 01565 757401.
Jane Churchill. Tel: 0181 877 6400.
The White Company. Tel: 0171 385 7988.
Home Elements. Tel: 0800 3285351.
Freemans. Tel: 0800 7319371.
IKEA. Tel: 0181 208 5607.
Sarah Feather Design.
Tel: 01943 864500.
Toast. Tel: 01558 668800.
McCord. Tel: 0870 9087020.
The Simple Curtain Company.
Tel: 01403 791818.

Cost

Contrary to popular belief, natural fabrics are reasonably priced and represent good value. They are timeless, look good after every wash, and last forever.

Top Tips

- Make natural fabrics last longer by treating them with a stain protector.
- Allow for shrinkage when buying natural fabrics, normally 10%, and wash before making up.
- Many natural fabrics have 'Dry Clean Only' care labels, but this does not necessarily avoid shrinkage.
- An alternative to dry cleaning is to carefully hand-wash fabrics, considering whether it is pre-shrunk.
- Make ironing easier by spraying fabric with starch and for a fresh scent, mist with lavender water.



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7. Blissfully simple in style 'Florence' bedlinen from The White Company is 100% cotton, and guaranteed to promote a good night's sleep. Prices start from £14.99.

8. Canvas is strong and dense and suitable for upholstery and sturdy loose covers. Consider this easy-to-clean Canvas Slip Covered Storage from McCord. Linen store £89.99, double wardrobe £119, and single wardrobe £79.99.

9. Linen is a luxury in every sense of the word. It is comfortable to wear, sleek to the touch and its tightly woven fibres provide it with

water resistant qualities. Step out of the bath into this luxurious 100% pure linen bathrobe from Home Elements at £64.95.

10. Try these combed-cotton bath towels from The White Company for a taste of indulgence. Prices start from £4.50.

11. Create a contemporary feel with this dried daisy, reclaimed timber picture, £185 from Sarah Feather Design.

12. For entertaining and a touch of class, lay your table with these elegant linen place mats and napkins, £19.99 for a set of two from The White Company.

Care Check List

- Keep natural fabrics looking beautiful with a little extra care and attention.
- Prone to shrink, natural fabrics are best laundered on a cool wash (40°C Max).
- Whenever possible use fabric conditioner to keep the fibres soft and smooth.
- Give natural fabrics a quick burst in the tumble dryer to help smooth the fibres and minimise creasing.
- Before drying, stretch pillowcases, sheets and duvet covers from corner to corner, and pull into shape.
- For best results always iron natural fabrics whilst slightly damp and then hang until completely dry.
- Woollens should always be hand washed in lukewarm water.
- Over time pure wool blankets can become dry and scratchy. Replace the wool's natural oils by adding a few drops of eucalyptus oil when washing.