

Production Process: Cotton vs Rayon [Infographic]

19 to 7. Those are today's key numbers, and they refer to the number of processing steps for two key fibers: cotton and rayon. While we've discussed [cotton vs. rayon](#) before, for this post we're dialing in specifically on the simple production process for cotton, and the complicated one for rayon.

Since cotton is a natural fiber, you've probably already guessed that it has the lower number of steps. But why is this important? Because fewer steps means you're using less resources. With rayon, the fact that it's a regenerated fiber contributes to its 19 steps—and it's important to note that 12 of them occur *after* rayon leaves the pulp mill.

Below you'll find the processes laid out side by side, which only makes rayon's additional steps more staggering when compared to cotton. As we always say, seeing is believing. And with cotton's seven simple steps, which fiber would you trust more?

PRODUCTION STEPS

Purified Cotton and Viscose Rayon Fibers



COTTON

- 1 Harvest Plants
- 2 Ginning
- 3 Opening/ Cleaning/ Cake Making
- 4 Alkali Scouring
- 5 Purifying
- 6 Finish Application
- 7 Drying & Baling

A NATURAL FIBER WITH A SIMPLE PROCESS

Benefits of Cotton:

- Less chemicals
- Less waste
- Annually renewable
- Largely grown with natural rainfall
- Eco Friendly
- Consumer preferred



RAYON *(from trees)*

- 1 Harvest Trees
- 2 Debarking
- 3 Chipping
- 4 Chemical Processing
- 5 Hydra-pulper
- 6 Blending
- 7 Screening & Cleaning
- 8 Wood Pulp Steeping
- 9 Wood Pulp Shredding
- 10 Aging
- 11 Xanthation
- 12 Dissolving
- 13 Ripening
- 14 Filtering
- 15 Degassing
- 16 Wet Spinning
- 17 Drawing
- 18 Finish Application
- 19 Cutting & Baling

A REGENERATED FIBER WITH A COMPLEX PROCESS

STAGE 2
PULP MILL

STAGE 3
VISCOSE RAYON
PRODUCTION