

## Uses of Cotton

Cotton has played an important role in human history ever since it was first used, which anthropologists date back to prehistoric times. [The most widely used fiber in the world today](#), cotton is extremely versatile, soft, and sturdy.

Let's take a look at some of the innovative ways that businesses and people are using cotton today.

### Fabrics

Did you know that many of the fabrics commonly seen on clothing labels originated from cotton fibers? Cotton can be woven or knitted into velvet, corduroy, denim, jersey, flannel, velour, and chambray. That means we have cotton to thank for much of the clothing we wear, even if it doesn't say cotton on the label.

Cotton and related fabrics are used to make just about everything in the apparel industry – from leisure wear to underwear to socks and t-shirts. They are also used to make bed linens, comforters, and blankets.

### Baby Care & Feminine Care (Nonwovens)

For many years, nonwoven products in [baby care](#) and [feminine care](#) featured man-made fibers almost exclusively. But as time passed, consumers demanded next-to-skin topsheets made from natural fibers that were softer and hypoallergenic. Now, an increasing number of many high-quality diapers and baby wipes are made from soft, breathable cotton, [the perfect match for a baby's delicate skin](#).

Cotton is also a common ingredient in extra-gentle lotions, body washes, and shampoos designed for babies. In feminine care, too, cotton is often seen in pure, natural products. High-quality hygiene pads, panty liners, and tampons may be made from 100% cotton, both conventional and organic, or in some cases a blend of cotton with synthetic materials.

### Other Consumer Products

[Cotton](#) can be easily processed into a number of products that we use on a daily basis, like coffee filters, book binding, paper, and bandages. Cottonseed oil, which is made from crushed seeds of cotton plants, is used in a multitude of products including soap, cosmetics, and margarine.

Cotton is also an important component of many products used for travel and recreation, including tents and tarpaulins, fishing nets, cords, and ropes.

### Agriculture and Industrial Applications

Don't forget, cotton is a food and fiber crop. Cotton seed is often fed to cattle and horses as a healthy source of protein. Humans can't digest the cellulose found in cotton, but animals have a special enzyme that breaks it down. Even stalks and leaves from the cotton plant can be made useful; stalks are ploughed underground to enrich soil, and fiber extracted from them is used to make pressed paper and cardboard.

Additionally, cotton serves a function in just about every industry, from pharmaceuticals to rubber and plastics. Cotton linters (the short fibers that remain on the plant after it is ginned) are used in x-rays, swabs, and cotton buds in the medical field, as well as in cleanroom suits and supplies. Cotton linters are also used in mattresses, furniture, automobile cushions, [and even flat screen televisions](#).

As you can see, cotton is one of the most widely used and versatile materials out there. We have cotton to thank for many of the products we use daily like clothing, linens, and household supplies. Services that we rely on, like the medical and automobile industries, rely on cotton in the production and delivery of services. Look around you – chances are, you can count on two hands the number of things you see that were made with cotton or its byproducts. Cotton really is everywhere.