

Cheryl Oberle's Hand Washing Guide

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If you have doubts about washing a particular article, first wash a swatch as a test. Fill a large sink with warm water. The temperature of the water need not be warmer than body temperature. Very cold or very hot water "shocks" the fibers, so avoid extremes.

Use a mild soap, shampoo or your favorite product. (**Note:** when working with hand-dyed wools, washing products designed to replace the lanolin in the wool or that are designed to not be rinsed out may "unfix" the dyes from hand-dyed animal fibers and cause continued and irreversible "bleeding" of the dyes). Use one or two teaspoons of soap and mix into water with your hand.

Place article to be washed in the water. Gently push it down and squeeze to get it thoroughly wet. Let it soak for ten minutes. Squeeze soapy water through the fabric a few times. Let the water drain out of the sink, pushing the article against the sink to remove most of the soapy water.

Refill the sink with cool water. Gently knead article to rinse out soap. Drain sink again and repeat rinse procedure. If a dye is bleeding excessively, simply continue rinsing until the rinse water is clear. You may add a teaspoon of vinegar to the last rinse. Fabric softeners or your hair conditioner also work well to soften wool in the final rinse.

After the last rinse, allow the article to drain well in sink, pushing against sides of sink to remove most of the water. Do not wring.

Either roll the article in a large towel and squeeze so towel soaks up the excess water or use a washing machine spin cycle. The spin cycle does the best job of removing most of the water from the article. Place the article in the machine and set the cycle selector to a slow spin cycle. Allow machine to spin for two or three minutes and then remove the article and lay it out to dry. It will dry much more quickly if it has been machine spun. If stretching is a concern, as with some cottons, put the article inside a pillowcase before spinning.

Lay out article on a blocking board or on a large towel on the floor and gently smooth out with your hands to press. Use a tape measure to check the finished measurements. Don't stretch too much. Let dry completely.