One of the prime benefits of buying a custom made shirt is the ability to pick out your own fabric. After the skill of the tailor making the shirt, the quality of the fabric is the single most important factor in ensuring a well made dress shirt.

Fabrics are available in boundless varieties, with equally wide variations in quality. Thus, choosing the right fabric can be an overwhelming process.

To enhance your shopping experience with 16stitches.com and to help you select the perfect fabric for your bespoke shirt, we have put together the Fabrics Manual. This manual will help you know what a fabric feels and looks like without actually touching it.

The first step towards understanding fabrics is to understand the various terms used to describe a fabric:

### 1.1 Composition

Fabrics for a dress shirt can be made of different materials with different compositions, cotton being the most common. Even cotton can be of different quality that can be measured by its fiber or staple length. Longer staple lengths mean better quality cotton.

The various types of cotton fabrics offered by 16 Stitches are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Staple length</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100% Cotton</td>
<td>15-40 mm</td>
<td>Cotton varies according to its fiber and thus, they have varied staple lengths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% Egyptian cotton</td>
<td>&gt; 40 mm</td>
<td>Egyptian cotton is considered to be one of the world's finest cottons. Fabrics made of Egyptian cotton are softer, finer and last longer than any other cotton in the world. It is known for its long staples and superior quality which makes it a premier choice for dress shirts. Linen has extremely long fiber lengths and is a very strong material. Good quality linens are generally very smooth to the touch, and often have a slight sheen to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% Linen</td>
<td>&lt; 1400 mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65% Cotton, 35% Linen</td>
<td>&lt; 1400 mm, 15-40 mm</td>
<td>Linen blends contain fibers from both the cotton and the flax plant, giving them the properties of both.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 Yarn Characteristics

Sometimes, shirts have a label that says, “80s two ply cotton”. While most people ignore this quality mark, few understand its value. This is the description of the yarn used to make the fabric. The feel and comfort of the fabric depends upon the yarn used to weave it. The characteristics of any yarn can be determined by two factors: Ply and Yarn number.

Yarn can be of two types, one ply (single yarn) or two ply (two yarns twisted together). Fabrics made with two ply yarns are stronger and have a silkier feel to it. In general, fabrics are manufactured with two ply yarn in the warp (length of the fabric, see diagram above) and one ply yarn in the weft (width of the fabric, see diagram above).

The next factor to determine the quality of the yarn is the yarn number, also known as the thread count. Often referred to with a number like 80s, 100s or 200s, the yarn number is the thickness of the yarn i.e. the number of hanks (1 hank = 840 yards) of yarn in one pound. A higher yarn number means finer (thinner) yarn.

Note: In terms of thickness, a one ply 50s yarn is the same as a two ply 100s yarn. Therefore, “80s two ply cotton” would mean that both the warp and the weft are made with two ply yarn that have a thickness of 80 thread counts.
Colour information

To present correct colours on a computer screen is very difficult and most screens differ substantially from each other. For example, a colour that appears brown on one screen might appear olive green on another. When producing pictures of our fabrics, we use special colour-calibrated equipment to make the colours look as life-like as possible. However, to avoid matching errors we always provide information on what colours a fabric contains. These colours are visible in small boxes with a text describing the colour. If you are still uncertain of a colour we suggest you order a sample to make sure you get a fabric that suits you.

Weaving information

Weaving is the method in which the threads (warp and weft) are put together to make a fabric. The style of the weave plays an important role in not only how the shirt looks but also how it feels against the skin. Not only can the density of the weave be changed but also the way threads interact with each other to give the fabric different texture, feel and look. Below is the description of the fabrics categorized by their weaving technique:
Plain:

Plain weaves are the most simple of all the weaves. Same size warp and weft threads are woven together one by one so they form a simple criss-cross pattern. Each weft thread crosses the warp threads by going over one, then under the next, and so on.

These are used to make the most basic of the Business shirts.
Basket Weave:

Basket weave is a variation of plain weave in which two or more threads are bundled and then woven as one in the warp or weft, or both.

Basket weave can be identified by its checkerboard-like appearance made of two or more threads in each group. The effect is something slightly more texturally rich and work well for the dress shirts.
Poplin:
Poplin is a tightly woven fabric that, like the plain weaves, is constructed with equal size warp and weft threads. The difference from a plain weave is that the poplin warp yarns are much more tightly packed. They have a slight sheen, which makes it dressy.
**Oxford:**

Generally, a heavier cloth than poplin, Oxford fabrics are made using basket weaves where multiple weft (horizontal) threads are crossed over an equal number of warp (length) threads. Oxford weave fabric consists of two, thin warp yarns woven to every soft, thicker yarn in the Weft.

Oxford shirts are more casual and considered to be great Friday or weekend shirts. When weaved with a white weft and colored warp the fabric is called oxford chambray.
**Pinpoint:**

Pinpoint is a variation of the oxford cloth, but use finer yarns as used in poplin. As a subtle mix of both oxford and poplin, shirts made out of pinpoint fabrics are both dressy and casual.
Royal Oxford:

Royal oxford is the largest weave of the oxfords, and has the most noticeable texture and the highest sheen. Despite the texture, this weave has a smooth, elegant hand, holds up well after being pressed, and the high seen is appropriate for more formal settings.
Fil-à-fil:

Fil-à-fil fabric is essentially a plain weave where one colour yarn is interwoven with another colour yarn giving it an irregular effect. It is a thin and comfortable material suitable for solid color shirts.
Twill:

Twill is a special weaving method that creates a diagonal ribbing pattern in the fabric. One or more warp fibers alternately weave over and under two or more weft fibers in a regular repeated manner. This produces the visual effect of a straight or broken diagonal 'rib' to the fabric.

Twill fabrics are softer and wrinkle resistant, and are suitable for both formal and casual occasions.
**Satin Twill:**

Satin weaves are fundamentally twill weaves modified to produce fewer intersections of warp and weft. This type of weave pattern leads to the creation of long ‘floats’ which because of the scarcity of interlacing (and thread density) in turn produce the smooth, even and lustrous sheen often associated with satin.
**Herringbone:**

Herringbone is a variation of the Twill weave with a V-shaped weaving pattern (resembling the skeleton of a herring fish).
Houndstooth:

The traditional Houndstooth check is made with alternating bands of four dark and four light threads in both warp and weft/filling woven in simple 2:2 twill, two over/two under the warp, advancing one thread each pass. The result of this broken twill weave is what can best be described as a four-pointed star check design.
**Dobby:**

The dobby weave is an advanced weaving technique in which a special loom is used to create unique geometric patterns in the fabric. This texture is created by rising and lowering the warp threads individually, allowing the weaver to create the dobby weave's distinctive patterns. Dobby weaves often contain multiple yarn sizes and weaving techniques, for example small twill stripes on a plain weave or a zig-zag pattern.
Washing Advice

This is the description of the symbols on the washing label.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Symbol" /></td>
<td>Wash in 40 degrees centigrade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Symbol" /></td>
<td>Hang to dry on a hanger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Symbol" /></td>
<td>Iron at medium heat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Symbol" /></td>
<td>Do not tumble dry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>