

Menstrual Pad Fabrics Comparison

September 18, 2013

WARNING: THIS POST CONTAINS DETAILS OF MENSTRUAL SANITARY PRODUCTS, IF YOU ARE SQUEEMISH OF THIS TOPIC OR ARE LIKELY TO TAKE OFFENCE TO THIS DO NOT BOTHER CONTINUING.

So here I'm going to talk about the different qualities of the fabrics used for cloth pads and my personal preferences.

TOP LAYERS

Cotton: I'm sure we've all experienced cotton before, it's very breathable and comes a lot closer to the feeling of regular underwear than higher pile fabrics, it can stain more easily though so its probably best to go for a darker colour. I prefer cotton tops for my light pads and pantyliners to be used in the last day or two of my cycle, this is because although it is breathable it tends to be quite tightly woven which makes it more difficult for the fluid to get down to the absorbent core. So if you have a heavy or gushy flow you are more likely to experience leaking while wearing cotton topped pads as the cotton will be overwhelmed and the fluid will just roll off the sides.

Cotton Flannel: This is one of my favourite toppers, its breathable but is woven in a way that will still let liquid through easily, it's very soft and natural feeling. It does however show more wear than any of the other toppers generally do, so make sure to only wash at 40 degrees and only use each flannel pad once per cycle to keep them looking their best for as long as possible. I use flannel topped pads from mid cycle to the end for slightly heavy flow to very light flow. It's quite a versatile fabric and comes in a wide range of colours and prints.

Sports Jersey: I have 3 pads topped in sports jersey all from the same seller (<http://www.etsy.com/shop/TerraPads>) an they are the best pads for my heavy days as they absorb super fast and feel dry and not sweaty. They aren't made from natural fibers but I don't mind this personally, they also don't stain very easily and don't really show wear.

Cotton Jersey: I have only got one pad with a jersey topping but I will definitely try to find more! It's not a very common fabric for cloth pads, I'm not sure why because it works brilliantly. It's very breathable and feels as flat as cotton and stands up to repeated washing about as well (much better than flannel does) but it absorbs moisture far quicker than either cotton or flannel because it is knit instead of woven, and feels drier for longer. I would probably use this on all my pads apart from the super heavy ones but as I said I only have one pad and have only found that one seller that uses it. I'm not sure if you can get it in different colours or prints, my pad is plain black as are all the other soya jersey pads on the sellers website (<http://www.angelpadz.co.uk> or a site she supplies to <http://www.luxurymoon.co.uk>).

Cotton fleece: A natural fabric, not really widely available in prints, a little warm for my taste but is very soft, I gave away my pad with this top fabric as I found it too warm, I did find it absorbed well though.

Microfleece: a wicking fabric, can be a little warm but has slight pile so is good for heavier flow.

Cotton/bamboo velour: Is a natural pile fabric, very soft, available in different dyed colour ways but no prints that I'm aware of, is good for heavy or gushy flow as the pile grabs the fluid before it can roll off.

Minky/Minkee: man made synthetic pile fabric, stain resistant, available in lots of prints, soft, but can be very warm.

Suedecloth: synthetic fabric which mimics suede, very low pile, very quick at absorbing, rarely stains, this is another of my favourites for heavy days as it absorbs so quickly and is a naturally stay dry fabric.

ABSORBENT CORES:

Cotton jersey: same kind of material that t shirts are usually made from, not very absorbent and a PUL backing would be crucial as moisture tends to sink right through jersey.

cotton battling: the same fabric they use in duvets, so can be quite warm and bulky, is not particularly effective for an absorbent layer.

Terry cloth: most commonly either cotton or bamboo terry is used, it has a towel like look about it so it can get bulky with more than 2 layers but is quite absorbent and nice if you like a squishy pad.

Cotton flannel: very thin and flexible but not ideal for heavy flows as it doesn't absorb very fast.

Bamboo fleece: very absorbent and slim, is a good option for women who have a heavy flow, want a slim pad but want to use natural fibers.

Hemp Fleece: similar to bamboo fleece but has been know the get stiff and smell with repeated washes.

Zorb: a man made fabric designed specifically for cloth diapers zorb can hold 10 times its own weight in water, it is the most absorbent fabric available for this purpose at the moment however it can be more susceptible to compression leaks.

WATERPROOFS/BACKINGS:

Cotton/Flannel: only used as a backing for liners or if a layer of PUL is behind it as it is not water resistant but offers a variety of prints that some may find appealing

Polyester anti pill Fleece: man made fabric is naturally water resistant and considered more breathable than PUL but can add bulk to a pad and some also find it quite warm.

Wind pro fleece: man made also but much thinner and slightly more waterproof than anti pill fleece.

PUL: Polyurathene Laminate is a man made waterproof fabric, some prefer this as extra safety, some find it inhibits breathability, and some find that pads of the same brand and absorbency level e.g. heavy, are in fact less absorbent with a PUL backing then with a fleece or wool one, it's personal preference really, I don't mind it myself but know of many who hate it.

Nylon and/or Procure: are similar to PUL but is not quite as waterproof but still has the same issues of breathability as PUL.

Wool: A naturally water resistant fabric, it is not as water proof as fleece but is more natural though may shrink in the wash and may cause allergies for some.

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