

## Discharging Dye with Bleach

Discharge is the process of chemically removing color from previously dyed fabric. Because not all dyes will discharge in the same way, (and some won't discharge at all) you need to do a small-scale test with the discharging agent before purchasing commercial fabric. Fabrics dyed with reactive dyes will discharge to shades ranging from white to pastels to not at all, depending on the dye colors and discharging agent used.

### Discharging with Liquid Chlorine Bleach

Chlorine bleach may be used with cellulose fibers (cotton, linen, rayon) as well as with some synthetics. It will disintegrate silk and wool fibers.

#### Immersion in Bleach/Water Solution

Experiment to determine the bleach-to-water ratio necessary to discharge a particular fabric to a desired shade, starting with 1 part bleach to 5 parts water. A warm, fresh solution will discharge more quickly than a cold, used solution. Use the least amount of bleach possible, and don't exceed the proportion of 1 part bleach to 1 part water. Some dyes discharge more readily if the fabric is exposed to air several times during the discharge process.

Once bleaching is complete, the fabric must be neutralized to stop the corrosive action of the bleach. This can be done by rinsing the fabric in water and then soaking it in a solution of 1 part hydrogen peroxide to 10 parts water for about 10 minutes. Another method involves soaking the rinsed fabric in a solution of 1 tsp anti-chlor per quart of water after initial rinsing. After neutralizing with either method, wash the fabric in warm soapy water, and rinse it thoroughly.

#### Direct Application of Bleach Print Paste

To make a bleach print paste, mix a solution of 2 parts bleach to 5 parts water. Thicken this solution using at least 1 tablespoon of monogum thickener to 1/2 cup of liquid (you need to use this print paste fairly quickly, because the bleach breaks down the monogum). Once printing and bleaching have occurred (i.e., after about 3 minutes of exposure to the bleach paste), rinse the fabric in warm water to remove the paste, and neutralize the bleach using either of the neutralizing solutions indicated above. Alternatively, you may first apply the neutralizing solution directly to the bleached area to stop the bleaching action, and then rinse and neutralize as indicated above.

**BE SURE TO USE GOOD VENTILATION WHEN WORKING WITH DISCHARGE!**