
International Domestic Placement Group

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THREAD COUNT

Making your Next Trip to the Store Easier

Ever wonder about thread count?

Browse most any store and you'll find a plethora of thread counts are offered. But, without the proper assistance, the idea of thread count won't mean as much as it should to you.

Thread count refers to the number of threads per square inch of fabric. The fabric consists of vertical threads (warp) and the horizontal threads (weft), which are woven together. There are two other components that one needs to understand: yam size and ply. Yam size is the thickness of the yams that are woven together to make fabric. A higher yam size indicates that it is a finer yam. And finer yams are made only from high quality long staple cotton. A typical yam size range of 40 to 100 is what good-quality sheets are made with. Yam size is relative to thread count because when the yams are really fine, they are thinner and therefore there are more of them per square inch.

The other component that affects thread count is ply.

Single ply and two-ply. Single ply refers to fabric that is made from individual yarns that are woven together. Twoply fabric refers to yarns that are twisted together and then. two-ply enables weaving looms to be more efficient since the yarns are already twisted together in twos. Therefore, the thread count is going to be double. For example, a single-ply, 300 thread count will have the same construction as a two-ply 600 thread count. Two-ply can have its downside though, because the sheets can be made with a very high yarn size, and so the sheets can feel very thick and heavy.

As for the type of cotton that is used: Premium cotton, like Egyptian or Pima is very expensive, but will improve the feel of the fabric. For example, a 340-thread count single ply made with 60s yams of Egyptian cotton feels comparable to a 400 thread count single ply made with 80s long staple cotton.

And now, with a little more education under your belt, shopping for your employer's sheets will be much easier.