



# THE THREAD

Unraveling the Mysteries of Fibers, Fabrics and Floor Coverings

## ANTI-FADING TREATMENTS... Much Ado About Nothing

*Every few years we hear the same old rumors - that a new "anti-fading" fabric treatment is now on the market - or that a new protection product containing "UV inhibitors" has been developed. We first heard such rumors in 1990, the first time we commissioned a comprehensive testing program with a major university to check on the validity of the claims. Every product tested DID NOT reduce fading and none lived up to their advertising.*

*Eighteen years later, we are still amazed at the claims that are being made by some of the companies who want to break into our industry. The best defense against these baseless claims is to know the facts.*

### The Promises

Unfortunately, there are several companies that continue to trade on false promises that their products can actually prevent or reduce fading on upholstery fabrics.

One new company advertises that their product can reduce fading by up to 40%. Even though that percentage

reduction might not produce an obviously noticeable result for our clients, the best way to dispel such a claim is through scientific testing.

### The Testing

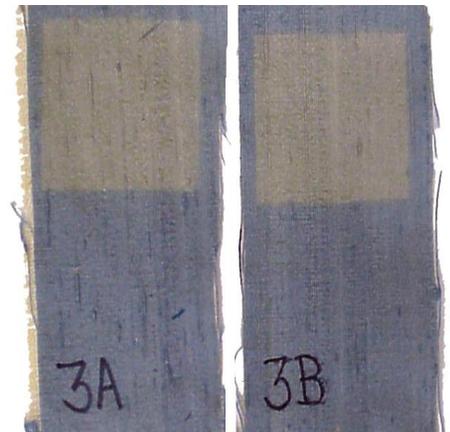
First, we ordered a sample of the product and applied the treatment in question to four different silk fabrics. We chose silk because both real-world experience and previous lab testing has proven that most silk fabrics are very sensitive to sun fading.

After the treated fabrics dried for three days, we sent them to a testing lab, along with untreated swatches of the same fabrics.

The lab performed a standard lightfastness test on the samples. Before the test, each sample was placed in a paper sleeve that covered all but a small square of the fabric. This small opening in the sleeve is the section of fabric that is then subjected to the light source.

For the actual light exposure, all of the samples, treated and untreated, were mounted inside a test chamber that

contains a special type of light fixture called a "Xenon Arc" lamp. This special light is used because it comes closest to duplicating natural sunlight. (A much smaller version of this same type of light is used in the halogen headlamps on your car.)



*Note that there is virtually no difference in the level of fading between untreated (left) and treated (right) fabric samples. Both samples exhibit the kind of fading typically seen on silk that has been subjected to lightfastness testing.*

### The Results

Once the fabrics were run through an equal number of hours in the fading apparatus, the samples were removed and rated by a technician as to

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their level of fading. The scale for this rating is as follows:

- 5 – Negligible or no change
- 4 – Slightly changed
- 3 – Noticeably changed
- 2 – Considerably changed
- 1 – Much change

The four fabrics submitted and subjected to the fading test were rated as follows:

Fabric 1

Untreated: 3.5  
Treated: 3.5

Fabric 2

Untreated: 1.5  
Treated: 1.5

Fabric 3

Untreated: 1.0  
Treated: 1.0

Fabric 4

Untreated: 2.5  
Treated: 2.5

As you can see, on the four different silk fabrics, **the anti-**

**fading treatment made no difference in the degree of color change.** The differences in the numbers are the result of the dyes used, and the manufacturing processes involved -- but the anti-fading treatment had absolutely no impact.

**The Bottom Line**

The trend continues...none of the products that say they will improve fade resistance or stop it completely have ever lived up to their claims. Repeated testing has shown no significant benefit whatsoever.

Fiber-Seal Systems is always searching for new ways to improve our products and stay ahead of the market. We continue to research the available anti-fading additives in hopes that we might one day find something that works. Please be sure that when that

product is discovered, Fiber-Seal Systems will be first to introduce it to our clients!

**Need Help With Upholstered Fabric Protection Or Cleaning?**  
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