

# [The clothing used by the natvie people of the north west coast](https://assignbuster.com/the-clothing-used-by-the-natvie-people-of-the-north-west-coast/)

Topic:  The Clothing used by the Native People of the North West Coast The first clothes made by the Northwest coast people was with Cedar bark which
was scrapped until it was soft and then woven into fabric for garments. The
cloth was brought to life by using the roots and barks, which were interwoven
onto the garment to make it more attractive. The colder the area more the
insulation required, this was got from animal skins and fur used along with the
bark fiber to make the garment. This creation was called Chilkat, which had a
lining of cedar bark to which mountain goat wool was interwoven.
The coastal people had an ingenious way of making cedar clothing in which, the
cedar bark was twisted into threads and woven into a soft warm cloth that was
perfect for the cold weather. Cedar rain ponchos were made of shredded cedar
barks woven together which may not have been very comfortable but served the
purpose of keeping warm.
Furs of otter, wolf and fox were used for lining the garments. The northwestern
people had a close proximity to nature and thereby used raw material like animal
skin to make the garments in which quills and shells were used for decoration.
Flint blades were used as scissors for cutting processed leather and sinew
which was the dried back muscle of craibou was used as thread to stitch the
material together. The holes were made using bone awl which were sewed
together with fine bone needle. The women had excellent sewing skills and were
masters in making very tiny stitches with sinew thread. The sewing done with
bone needles and sinew, swelled when wet, making the garment watertight. This
has been replaced by steel needles and polyester threads today. Caribou hide
with the hair on it was an excellent insulating material and was used in making
boots along with dried sealskin to protect the feet from frostbites.
The cedar bark weaving was done on a circular loom, which allowed continuous
weaving leaving no seams. The cloth made with the cedar bark was then lined
with animal fur to make it more warm during the cold winters. The circular disc
with a centre pole carved out of whale vertebra was the spindle whorl, which was
used to spin their wool into yarn. The spindle whorl came in various sizes, which
determined the thickness of the yarn strands.
Parkas and coats with hoods made of caribou hide was a favorite with the people
of the Northwestern coast. These are usually so well made that they lasted a few
generations. The cloth was spun from vertical looms with a combination of wool
and cedar barks. The two popular styles of weaving were Raven’s tail and
Chilkat.
The Ravens tail is usually made of basic black and white yarn, woven
in geometric patterns and is unique due to the use of two or three strand twining
methods. It is set on the loom vertically and in separate rows horizontally which
gives the finished product a symmetrical finish.
Chilkat weaving is commonly followed throughout the northwester coast, where
the women were the weavers and the men the designers. This yarn was spun
from the mountain goat wool which was dyed with different colors. The twinning
techniques brought out the creativeness of the weaver who worked on each
design individually until it was completed. The designs were first painted on
wood called pattern boards before producing them. The weaver had to duplicate
the design on both sides giving it a fabulous striking effect as these robes were
worn in dance regalia. The shirts had sea otter fur on the collars, necks and
cuffs. The back was typical of all Chilkat shirts, having horizontal bands with blue
and yellow running zigzag from top to bottom.
The northwestern coastal people were also experts in beadwork. The original
wooden beads, porcupine quills and dentalia shells used for decorating garments
were replaced with glass beads. The men wore breechcloths, which is a
rectangular piece of hide that hung from hips to the bottom in the front and back.
Leather leggings were used along with it in winter. Other tribes wore short kilts or
even thick fur pants. Women were dressed in leggings and skirts. The materials
and designs differed with each tribe.
The designs created by these skills artisans were masterpieces, which enhanced
the personality of the person wearing it. Special attention was given to collars,
which were decorated with elaborate beadwork. Garments made of quivit, which
is the undercoat of the musk ox were colorful and charming. Quivit weavers are
still famous for their exquisite specialty made from this unique material.
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