

Tips to Make Your Clothes Last

1. Shopping for a Quality Garment

- **Check for Quality Fabric:**
 - **Hanger Appearance:** Make sure the grain line is straight, and the garment drapes the way it is intended. Check front and back.
 - **Lining:** The lining should flow with the cut of the garment and be smooth. It shouldn't hang below the garment's hemline.
 - **Wrinkle Resilience:** Crush fabrics in your hand to check.
 - **Fabric Comfort:**
 - Feel the fabric, inside and out for a pleasant feel, and next-to-skin comfort.
 - Garments containing spandex are often more comfortable to wear.
 - **Check the Garment Construction:**
 - **Alignment:** Patterns, stripes, or plaids should line up at the seams.
 - **Stitching:**
 - There should be 8 to 12 stitches per inch.
 - Check that the seams are straight.
 - Due to seam breakage and fraying, wide seams are better than narrow seams.
 - **Hems:** At least 1-1/2" width hems are best. Hems should be nearly invisible, and should hang straight and evenly without puckering.
 - **Lined garments:** Usually are of better quality than unlined garments.
 - **Garment Symmetry:** The left and right sides of the garment should be even (i.e. patch pockets, collars, etc.), and should lie flat against the garment.
 - **Buttons and Buttonholes:** Should be sewn tightly with no loose threads.
 - **Zippers:** Should zip and unzip easily.

2. Purchasing Tips:

- **Best Value:** The best value doesn't necessarily mean the lowest price. Good quality clothing typically lasts longer than less quality cheaper garments. Buy the best quality you can afford. (A designer label can often be used as a guide for purchasing a good quality garment.)
- **Read the Label:** Fibre content, blend level and care instructions. Beware of care instructions that read "wash in cold water", which could indicate the fabric may shrink and/or the dyes may tend to run or fade.
- **Read the Hang Tag:** It contains additional information.
 - **Benefits:** The hang tag often identifies the fabric characteristics, and describes the quality.
 - **Warnings Are Sometimes Included:**
 - Possible shrinkage, stretching, or fading: (fabrics that may shrink, stretch, or fade can include some cottons, linens, or rayons).
 - Possible crocking: Fabrics may be unstable and rub off onto your skin or other clothing, and may fade or run when the fabric is cleaned.

3. Caring for Your New Garment:

- **Hang/Fold Properly:** Place garments in the closet or drawer when you are not wearing them. Garments should be folded and placed in a drawer or on a shelf. Frequent washings can shorten a garment's life, so it's important to avoid

washings when not necessary. When you take off a garment, check it for stains, tears, etc.; and take care of any issues immediately.

- **Multiple Wearings:** Sometimes garments can be worn more than one time before washing or cleaning.
- **Hanging Garments:** Use only good hangers to support your clothes. Don't hang wet garments on an exposed metal hanger.
 - **Knitwear:** Thin wire hangers can cause clothes to sag, or create a shoulder bump. Folding is best for knitwear.
 - **Suit Jackets:** Use hangers that support the shoulders and allow the garment to drape naturally.
 - **Plastic Shoulder Covers:** Use to cover a hanging garment to avoid dust accumulation.
- **Crowded Closets:** Cause wrinkles in your clothes. Allowing clothes to breathe can eliminate the need to iron/steam a garment before wearing.
- **High Quality Woollen Garments/Career Clothing:** These expensive investments need a little extra care.
 - **Brush Garment:** Use a soft lint brush after wearing to remove any dust or lint.
 - **3-Day Rest:** Woollen garments require a rest in between wearings. This allows wrinkles to fall out, gives the garment a chance to regain its shape.
- **Dry-cleaning:** Choose a reputable dry cleaner. Professional dry cleaning can extend the life of garments.
- **Dress Appropriately for Your Activities:** For example: When cooking, be sure to use an apron or an appropriate cover to prevent food stains on your clothes.

4. Stain Removal:

- **Point Out Spots/Stains to the Dry-Cleaner:** Also identify what the stain is.
- **Spot/Stain Remover at Home:** Check the fabric for colour-fastness by testing the stain removal product on an inside seam of the garment. Be sure to follow the instructions on over-the-counter stain removal products.

5. Proper Sorting:

Check Garments Before Cleaning:

- Empty pockets
- Repair any tears, rips, loose buttons
- Removable embellishments (i.e. pins/broaches)
- Close zippers and fasteners
- Check for stains
- **Sort garments into colour or like-fabric groups.**
 - Avoid placing terry towels or fleece garments that have lint with other non-lint items.
 - Turn sweatshirts and other fleece or pile fabric items inside out before washing.

6. Proper Cleaning of Garments:

A little common sense and effort in laundering can extend the life of a garment. While some consumers prefer the economy of buying garments they can wash, others are looking for the convenience of dry cleaning. Regardless, proper handling and cleaning will have the following benefits:

- Garments will maintain a fresh appearance longer
- Colour fading will be minimized

- Damage to fabric from laundering will be reduced
 - The useful life of fabric will be extended, making your money go further
- **Follow the Care Instructions carefully:**
 - **Follow the Care Symbols**
 - **Hand-washing Garments:** May also be successfully cleaned by placing them into a lingerie bag, and then using the delicate cycle and warm/cool water on your washing machine.
 - **Use the Proper Amount of Detergent for the Load Size:** Detergent left in the fibres can damage the fabric, and can irritate the skin of the wearer.
 - **Using a Dry-Cleaner:** Use only a reputable dry cleaner. Don't select your dry cleaner purely on price.
 - **Minimize the Use of Commercial Laundries:** Cleaning cotton and cotton blended garments are best cleaned at home. These companies use harsh chemicals, hot water, and cleaning processes, which can be very hard on fabrics. Excess use of these laundries can result in loss of garment colour, defusing of shirt collars and cuffs, shrinkage, and faster break-down of the garment.

7. Proper Drying of Garments:

Air Dry: Wherever possible, either hang the garment or lie it flat to dry.

- **Over Drying:** To avoid excess wrinkling, remove garments from the dryer while they are still slightly damp.

8. Proper Ironing of Garments:

Use an Ironing Board: For the best results

- **Garment's Care Instructions:** Check for the proper iron temperature setting.
- **Positioning on the Ironing Board:** Stretch the garment flat over the ironing board wherever possible.
- **Ironing Pants:** place the pant legs lengthwise across the ironing board, matching the side seam and the in-seam.
- **Move the Iron:** Keep the iron moving to prevent scorching or burning the garment.
- **Use of Spray Starch:** These products add extra crispness to collars and cuffs of cotton shirts.