

# How to Care for your Gear

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## **Protection:**

If you tend to have bloody matches - or you have lightly coloured gear- you may want to consider Scotchgarding your gear. You can get a canister for under \$10 at places like Walmart and Canadian Tire. Test it on a small, hidden area of the garment (under where your boot would go, for instance), before treating the whole garment. Be sure to follow the directions on the canister. Do this \*before\* you've stained your gear in the first place! :)

## **Don't Over-Wash Your Gear!**

While it may sound counter-intuitive, over washing your gear can be a bad thing, and will age it faster than if you don't. The thing is, though, sweat also breaks down spandex, and can dull the finish on holo and foil type lycras.

## **Immediately After Use:**

The secret to not over-washing? Keep a little spray bottle of vodka in your bag. As soon as you change out of your gear, spritz it generously with vodka, and allow it to air dry. The vodka helps sanitize and prevent bacterial growth / smell, without the need for actually washing it. Note: If you have actual dirt \*beyond\* just sweat on your gear, you should wash it.

Do NOT keep sweaty or wet gear in your bag for any longer than it takes to get it home / to a hotel!

## **Dealing with Blood Stains:**

If you get blood on your gear, deal with it right away - set in blood stains are almost impossible to get out. Rinse as much of it out as you can with COLD water (heat will set it), blot excess water out, and plan to soak it as soon as you get home / to your hotel. Don't allow it to dry without getting the blood out first.

Once you're able to - ASAP - soak the stained garment in cold water and a mild detergent. Lingerie soap is ideal for this, as they're often formulated to deal with blood, as well as being gentle on fabrics. You can find them in lingerie stores, the lingerie section of some nicer department stores, or online. Gently rub a little of the detergent right into the blood stain, soak, rinse, and repeat as necessary.

## **Spot Treating:**

If you have a little dirt, dust, food, or other non-blood grime on your gear, you can spot treat those areas. Rinse as well as you can, then gently rub a little mild detergent (see "washing" section) into the affected area. Rinse well, repeat as necessary.

## **Washing:**

Do NOT dry clean your gear - their chemicals break down spandex and can kill the finish on any fancier spandex. (Fois, holos, etc). Additionally, if you have any embellishment on it, their chemicals can dissolve the adhesive and ruin the garment.

Hand wash in cold water, use gentle detergent - ideally a lingerie soap. Whatever detergent you use, it should be gentle and free of chlorine bleach and fabric softener - both of those will break down the spandex.

Don't use a washing machine unless you \*absolutely\* need to, and use cold water with lingerie detergent in that case, also. Washing machines are OK (JUST ok, not good) for gear using only basic spandex. If you have hologram, foil, etc in your gear, it will age it quickly.

### **Drying:**

Heat destroys spandex - it kills the elasticity / memory of it, and will make your gear look old and fit poorly long before it should. After washing, roll your gear in one dry towel to blot out as much excess moisture as possible, then lay it out flat on a new, dry towel to air dry. Don't hang a wet garment, as the weight can stretch it out.

If you absolutely MUST use a clothes dryer, turn your gear inside out and tumble dry on the lowest heat.

NEVER ring your gear out, and never put them away wet - wet gear breeds mildew, which breaks down fabric.



*Look at the difference a single trip through a washer and dryer can make to brand new gear.  
Imagine how that damage adds up over multiple rounds through the washer and dryer!*

### **Ironing:**

Again - heat destroys spandex, so you should NOT iron your gear. If you wash and dry it as described earlier, you shouldn't have any wrinkles. Any wrinkles you DO have should come out as you wear them.

If you've balled your gear up and left it in your bag and really need wrinkles to come out, hang it in the bathroom and run a hot shower, or LIGHTLY steam it.

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