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Care of Outerwear Garments

In recent years many new outerwear fabrics and insulations have been developed. Some are both washable and dry-cleanable, while others should be only washed or only dry-cleaned. To help insure maximum warmth and wear life of an outerwear garment, it is essential that they are given proper care.

Keep in mind that the following information is general. Always follow instructions on the care label.

TYPE OF CARE

Labels on some outerwear garments read **DO NOT DRY-CLEAN**. Dry-cleaning could damage fibers and reduce the insulating qualities of the fibers, therefore reducing the warmth provided by the garment.

Some cleaning solvents are toxic and difficult to remove from insulations. If they are not removed, they could cause rashes and respiratory problems.

Some fabrics, insulations and/or findings used in outerwear garments require dry-cleaning. The label on these garments will read **DRY-CLEAN ONLY**. Take these garments to reputable, experienced dry-cleaners. Avoid coin-operated cleaners. If cleaning solutions are not clean, some of the more recently developed insulations can act as filters, leaving the soil on the insulation.

GARMENT PREPARATION

Before cleaning a garment, repair any holes, rips or splits in seams. This is especially important to prevent the loss of down in a down filled garment. Empty all pockets and shake out dirt particles, lint, etc.

To prevent strain on garments, close **all** closures, including zippers, self-closing tape and snaps. Belts should be removed. To prevent tangling, zip them in a pocket.

If a washable garment is spotted or especially soiled, hand scrub the soiled area. Use a soft, nylon bristled brush and warm, sudsy water.

A stain remover such as K2r® might be helpful. If using a special product designed for washing down garments, follow the container directions for removing soil.

CARE OF DOWN FILLED GARMENTS

Whenever possible, wash down filled garments by hand or on the delicate or permanent press cycle of a washing machine. Since the natural oils in down are necessary for maximum life, loft and resiliency, it is very important **not** to remove them.

Use **warm** water only, never hot, and a **mild** soap or low suds detergent. Avoid enzyme and heavy duty detergents, as they are very harmful to down. Never use a bleach. There are special products available for washing down, but they are not required.

To hand or machine wash a garment, dissolve a mild soap or low suds detergent in warm water. Immerse the article in the washing solution. Squeeze the article several times to remove the air.

If hand washing, squeeze the washing solution through the article until it is clean. If washing in a machine, add several terry towels to distribute the load.

Rinse the article several times to make sure all the soap or detergent is removed. Residues of any kind will cause the down to clump together and it will lose its loft and insulating qualities.

When machine washing, avoid wrinkling by removing the garment from the washer as soon as possible. When down articles are wet, it is important to lift and support them very carefully. The weight of the wet filling can strain or tear seams and even force the down through the fabric.

Down filled articles can be dried several ways. They can be air-dried for several hours, and then fluffed up in a clothes dryer. To distribute weight, drape the article over several drying lines. Fluff the matted down clumps with your fingers every few hours. Then, finish drying the article in a dryer.

Use a **low** heat setting only. Add two or three clean terry towels to absorb moisture, and a clean pair of tennis shoes to break up the clumps of down. Be sure the article is thoroughly dried, as down can mildew if it stays damp too long. Immediately following the drying cycle, remove the garment and place it on a hanger.

If a clothes dryer is used for the entire drying process, check the temperature of the dryer every hour. Nylon zippers could melt if the drying temperature is too warm.

If it is necessary to dry-clean a down filled article, be sure to take it to a reputable dry-cleaner. Thoroughly air a down filled article after having it dry-cleaned as some cleaning solvents have residual fumes that are harmful to your health.

If, during wear or cleaning, a down pod or quill begins to work its way out through the fabric or a seam DO NOT try to pull the down out. It will just pull more out behind it. With your fingers, work from the back of the fabric, and try to grasp the down and pull it back inside.

With good care, a high quality down filled garment will last many, many years.

CARE OF FIBERFILL GARMENTS

Fiberfill garments made from washable fabrics and findings can be hand or machine washed. **To hand wash**, soak the article in lukewarm water with a mild soap or low suds detergent for 20 to 30 minutes. Then, gently squeeze the washing solution through the article until it is clean. If the article is unusually soiled, it may require a second washing.

Rinse the article in clear water until all traces of soap or detergent have disappeared. Do not wring the garment; press the water out by hand. Hand wringing could distort fibers, which would lower their insulating qualities.

Fiberfill can be machine or air-dried. If air-dried, hang the article over several lines to distribute the weight evenly. If moisture runs to the bottom of the garment, press it out by hand. Synthetic fibers will dry quickly when being air-dried.

When machine washing, use a mild soap or low suds detergent, warm water and a permanent press or gentle cycle. Fiberfill garments can be machine tumble dried. Use a low heat setting. To avoid wrinkling, remove the garment immediately following the drying cycle and place it on a hanger.

Extra care should be taken when machine washing and drying. If machines are fully loaded, damage can be minimized, as the tumbling action is reduced.

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CARE OF NEEDLE PUNCH GARMENTS

In garments using needle-punch, check the label to find the recommended care. The appropriate care will depend on the outer fabric and lining as well as the needle punch. Needle punch, by itself, is usually both washable and dry-cleanable.

RESTORING FABRIC FINISHES

There are several ways to restore stain and/or water-repellent finishes to outerwear garments. Dry-cleaners usually provide this service or there are many do-it-yourself treatments with products such as Scotchgard® or Kenyon Wash Cycle Water Repellent®.

Scotchgard®, a fabric protector by the 3M Company, comes in a spray can and is sprayed on garments after cleaning. It helps make outerwear water-repellent (not waterproof) and also repels grease and water stains.

Kenyon Wash Cycle Water Repellent® by K-Kote Weatherproof Fabric Finishes restores water-repellency to washable garments. This product is added to wash water before clean garments are added. The garments are run through the wash, rinse and spin cycles, then tumble or line dried. This repellent lasts through two or three washings.

No doubt new products will be developed to add stain, water-repellency or other characteristics to garments. For best results follow product instructions carefully.

STORAGE

Insulated outerwear garments should be stored clean and in a cool, dry area. Place the garments on hangers or in a loosely folded manner. Since fabrics need to breathe, do not store in dry-cleaning bags.

Avoid compressing the insulation. It may not restore itself to its original loft and therefore it would provide less warmth.

Since down will mildew if left damp for too long, thoroughly dry down filled garments before storing.

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