

Tender loving care

How much after care are you giving your memade garments? We think they deserve the best!

Written by Michelle Rowley



Garments that are best folded are made of materials that can endure a bit of creasing. Try to avoid hanging heavy weight knit fabric items.



You spent hours contemplating which fabric would be the absolute best pairing with your pattern. You took your measurements (again!) and carefully considered which size/s on your pattern to cut out. You might have even been especially good and spent the time tracing out those pieces. You made various pattern adjustment to achieve the perfect fit and you even bothered to pre-wash your fabric before you cut out all those carefully thought-out pattern pieces. Then you lovingly crafted the garment of your dreams, unpicking every imperfection on the way and diligently ironing every seam as you go. When you proudly wear your perfectly fitted beautiful self-made garment for the first time, it was all worth it.

"MOTHS LOVE HAIR, SKIN AND FOOD PARTICLES SO DO NOT FEED THEM!"

General wardrobe maintenance is important too, this includes cleaning your wardrobe regularly to clear dust, as moths love hair, skin and food particles, so do not feed them!"

But what happens next? After all the time, care and attention we give our memade garments in the preparation and making, how much effort do we make to preserve all that hard work afterwards? During the sewing process, we take steps (such as stay-stitching necklines and finishing seams) to help our precious memade clothes have a longer life. Yet, once they're made, we often forget to continue that care and the beautiful dress you spent hours creating gets bunged in the washing machine with the rest of the

family's laundry. Self-made garments are special and should be treated so. Here are some of the key factors to consider when washing and storing the most treasured pieces in your wardrobe.

TO HANG OR TO FOLD FROM THIS DAY ON?

While our available storage space and funds will dictate our storage capabilities, we should all aim to store our precious makes in a cool dry space to protect them from potentially damaging damp and sunlight.

advises The Lifestyle Organiser, Elizabeth Wickes.

Whether you to choose to fold or hang your garments, may again come down to your available space but knowing the best option never hurts. Try to avoid hanging heavy weight knit fabric items such as sweatshirts, as their weight can drag the garment down leading to distortion. Similarly, lighter weight knit fabric items such as t-shirts should be folded rather than hung to avoid stretching them out of shape. "Garments that are best folded are made of materials that can endure a bit of creasing. Synthetic materials like lycra and nylon can



all be folded easily without any wrinkles appearing," says Laura Price, Director at home organisation company, The Home Organisation. In contrast, Laura adds: "Hanging garments that crease easily will save you time and money. You don't want to have to get the iron or steamer out every time you want to wear an easily creasing item. Tops, shirts, jeans and trousers made of natural fibres all benefit from being hung."

GETTING THE HANG OF IT

Not all hangers are created equally. Different types of hangers should be used for different types of garments. By using the most appropriate type of hanger for your garment type, it not only helps to preserve the qualities and shape of the garment but also enables us to access our clothes more easily. Clothes can slip off hangers never to be seen again or become misshapen after sitting too long on the wrong-sized hanger. It's time to match your garment to its rightful hanger.

"CEDAR WOOD HANGERS HAVE THE ADDITIONAL BENEFIT OF KEEPING BUGS AT BAY"

STRAPPY TOPS AND SILKY ITEMS

Always finding one of these slippery summer staples lying forgotten on the wardrobe floor? Look for hangers with divots to help keep these tops in their rightful place. A hanger with texture, such as flocked velvet, also helps to stop the slippery escape artists from doing a runner – and protects the delicate fabric too.

SHIRTS AND BLOUSES

Ready-to-wear shirts, and other garments, often come with those annoying hanging loops that we sometimes cut off but shouldn't! When the loops are placed in a hanger's divots, it eases the pressure on the narrower parts of the piece when it's hung. As I've yet to meet a sewer who sews hanging loops into a shirt, its best to opt for thick wooded hangers that will preserve the shape of the collar whilst allowing the shirt to hang naturally.

TROUSERS AND JEANS

Say goodbye to the wire hangers! These items, especially jeans, tend to be quite weighty and therefore need a heavier weighted hanger that can take the weight. Wooden hangers with a bottom beam, that you can fold your trousers over, are the best option. Cedar wood also has the additional benefit of keeping bugs at bay. The wider the bottom bar the better, as this will help to prevent the garment creasing.

SKIRTS

Opt for hangers that have clips to hold the skirt in place, which will help to reduce wrinkling. Try to find rubber-coated clips which will prevent the clips from marking or damaging the fabric.

BLAZERS AND COATS

Nobody can sew up a lined blazer or coat in



IRON IT OUT

Look sharp in your new memade garment

It can be nerve-racking letting your beautiful newly-made garment meet a hot metal plate. However, if you know the best temperature setting for your garment's fibre content, you can let it glide over your masterpiece with confidence. While natural fibres cotton and linen can withstand a high heat setting, turn it down to medium for knits and jerseys and set the heat setting to low if you're ironing viscose or polyester.



TIME TO DRY

Our recommendations for tumble drying your clothes

It can be very tempting to throw everything in the dryer to speed up the drying process and have your garment ready in time for an occasion you urgently want it for. However, taking the time to dry your clothes properly could save you from needing to dry your eyes at the sight of a teeny tiny shrunken top you spent hours making. Having made a garment ourselves, it's likely we'll know it's fibre content so you can refer to the guide below before heading straight to the dryer.

a flash. As these items have usually had a lot of time invested in their creation, they're particularly worth investing in the right hangers for. Look for wooden hangers with fully contoured shoulders which mirror the shape of the garment and have a rounded neck to support the jacket's collar. Be careful that the width of the hanger doesn't extend beyond the shoulder seam, as this could distort that all important shape.

30°C, while cotton, linen, polyester and jerseys can be washed at 30 - 40°C. For all garments, try to avoid over washing. "Lots of people tend to over-wash their clothing which reduces the garments life span. If your clothes smell fresh after wear, they don't necessarily need to go into the washing machine. Any marks can be spot cleaned with a damp sponge," adds Personal Stylist, Lindsay Edwards.

LAUNDRY LOVE

Since self-made garments don't come with handy care labels to remind you how to wash, dry and iron your garments, (or perhaps more importantly how not to!), then it's important for sewists to know the basics in the caring for different fabric fibres to avoid shrinkage, discolouration or distortion.

If you've splurged out on sewing yourself a luxury garment from either silk or wool, you definitely want to maximise the longevity of your special creation. Both these fibres should be left to specialist care from a dry cleaner. Silk, however, can be handwashed in cool water with a silk detergent if you're careful not to wring it out. If you choose to wash a silk item yourself, squeeze it very gently before leaving it to air dry on a towel. Don't go anyway near it with your iron!

All other fibres can safely go in your washing machine. Viscose is best washed at



Michelle Rowley (she/her) is a dressmaking tutor and writer with a love of fashion history. She lives in the Northwest with her family. See more @stitchywhitney.

FIBRE	SAFE TO TUMBLE DRY ON A LOW SETTING	WE ADVISE NOT TO TUMBLE DRY
Cotton	✓	
Linen	✓	
Jersey	✓	
Viscose		✓
Polyester		✓
Silk		✓
Wool		✓

You can fold nylon and lycra but it's best to invest in wooden hangers with fully contoured shoulders for jackets.

