

Goodbye Winter... Hello Summer!!

by Arlene Converse



The cold weather is almost gone and summer is right around the corner! When the winter snow starts to melt away, and the local swimming pool is making preparations for its hot, busy season, it is time to pack away our winter clothes until next year. All those sweaters, coats, gloves, hats, and thermals are all thrown into the nearest container, tossed into some out of the way place or simply re-hung on hangers in our closet. We wear them, take them off and never give a thought to cleaning them properly after the cold weather is gone. Did you know that while you're wearing your sweaters and coats, they are subjected to many elements that are not visible to the eye, that when not cleaned properly, become your worse nightmare next winter. Hairspray, perfumes, rain water, etc., all sit on the fabric, attracting insects and when not cleaned will damage a garment over time. If you do not want any nasty surprises next winter, follow these tips to ensure the safety and care of your clothes. A little effort, after cleaning, when you pack your clothing will make a big difference when it is time to unpack and wear them next winter.

AVOID NASTY SURPRISES!

Clean all outfits thoroughly before packing. Particles left on items can stain and set into your clothes after several months of storage. Cleaning the clothes also means that insects will be less likely to take up residence in your sweaters. Most clothing just needs to be washed normally or dry cleaned according to the manufacturer's instructions on the care label of the garment. Taking the time to clean your garment before you pack it away will keep your clothes safe during storage.

STORAGE

Plastic storage containers can be used for storing clothes, although if any bug larvae are in the clothing, they will have a feast. Cardboard boxes can be used for temporary storage. Make sure you use new clean boxes to avoid staining and insects. Even then be aware that cardboard boxes can attract bugs. One of the best storage containers is an unused suitcase that has been thoroughly cleaned. Line containers with acid free tissue. It may be possible to pack the clothes in plastic storage containers although trapped moisture can be an issue depending on the storage conditions. Check on your storage. Don't abandon your stored clothing into oblivion. Regularly check on items to make sure that there are no issues. When you are ready to pull clothing out of storage, clean all items before wearing them. Inspect your storage containers to make sure that they are free from cracks, stains, or damage as well. Before you store items again, some storage containers may need to be replaced. Be sure to buy storage containers that will work well with your storage. Never store garments in drycleaning bags.



These bags are used for transporting garments from the cleaners to your home and never intended for long term storage of any garment.

CEDAR BLOCKS OR MOTHBALLS?

Be careful with the use of mothballs. Many children and pets are naturally attracted to them with deadly results. Another option would be cedar blocks or cedar lined storage. Mothballs and cedar can be effective against insects, but keep in mind that neither is a completely guaranteed. And cleaning before storage, even with the use of cedar block or mothballs, is essential. Just like with other cleaning products, storage chemicals should be used with care and according to directions.

WARNING!

Many a drycleaner has dealt with a garment that has been improperly stored and subject to insects. The damage that is created by insects during storage is not detectable until after the garment is cleaned. Then what appears are small holes throughout the garment. This is not a result of drycleaning rather a result of damaged fibers by the insects that become unraveled creating holes, once it has been cleaned. It is virtually impossible for a drycleaner to know if a garment has been exposed or damaged from storage until after it has been cleaned.

HANG OR FOLD?

Although it may be tempting, do not hang sweaters or other knit items that can become misshapen by long term hanging. Many a good sweater has been stretched beyond repair due to long term improper hanging. Instead carefully fold the items and place into the storage container. Stack your folded items from the lightest items on top to the heaviest items on bottom. Stacking items loosely will allow air to keep circulating, even during a long storage.

If you do choose to hang items, utilize all of the extra hanging loops to keep the clothing from becoming misshapen. Wrap the clothing in something breathable (i.e. fabric). Make sure the clothing has enough room to have air circulate. This will keep down the risk of mildew and mold. It will also keep the clothing from wrinkling and creasing during storage. I do not recommend storing clothes in plastic bags. The bags do not allow the clothes to breathe enough. Mildew and mold from improper storage is typically not reversible.

COOL, DRY AND DARK!!!

Remember Clean, Cool, Dark, and Dry. Your storage area must be all 4 of these in order to protect your clothing. Clean any area thoroughly before storing. Choose a place that is not likely to be exposed to heat. Avoid areas near heating sources. A dark place will prevent fading and keep the area and clothing cool. Make sure the storage area is dry because wetness will attract mildew and insects.

Toudanines Cleaners highly recommends properly cleaning all winter garments prior to storing for the summer. Stains and dirt that remains a garment, uncleaned for an extended period of time can damage a garment and only becomes visible after the next cleaning. Take care of your clothes! Sweaters, Coats, Hats, Gloves can be expensive. When winter returns, your garments are ready when you need them to be and in good condition!

Summer is right around the corner and we love summer! Look to our next article for tips on summer clothes and how to properly prepare and take care of your garments. Toudanines Cleaners considers it a privilege to be of service to you and appreciates your continued patronage!

Arlene Converse is President of Toudanines Cleaners in Boerne, San Antonio and Schertz, Texas. They currently own and operate 3 locations in Boerne and throughout the San Antonio area. In 19 years they have owned and operated 17 stores in 11 cities throughout the state of Texas. For more information visit our website at www.ToudaninesCleaners.com, Facebook and Twitter. If you have a question for The Dry Cleaning Lady, please submit it to info@ToudaninesCleaners.com.

