

# long live your costumes and uniforms

What your team wears while performing can certainly boost spirit. But spectacular garments cost big bucks, often eating up a large chunk of your yearly budget. So, it's important to keep them looking their best and lasting their longest. However, most costume fabrics are supposed to look good for a season, not last for years and years. And unlike street clothes, dance costumes and uniforms should not be laundered after every performance. Many of these fabrics are not launderable at all. Shiny materials, sometimes described as "magic dot" or "night reflections," can easily lose their dots during cleaning, while hologram and foil surface prints on spandex cannot be dry-cleaned. Washing with water can also be detrimental.

What do you do when perspiration, deodorants and other stains take their toll on costumes and uniforms that you are not able to replace? Keep your team's performancewear looking great and smelling fresh with these tips.

## LEARN HOW TO INCREASE THE LONGEVITY OF YOUR TEAM'S PERFORMANCEWEAR.

by Deborah J. Nelson

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### from the top

**1** Appropriate undergarments should always be worn—even with tights. Just choose a style with no visible pantyline.

**2** Whenever possible, underarm dress shields or absorbent pads are advisable, though not permanently sewn into the garment, as the odor will remain in the shield and, therefore, in the costume or uniform.

**3** A tight cotton T-shirt worn under performancewear will soak up perspiration.

### spot check

**4** Never store your costumes or uniforms if soiled in any way. Immediately attending to stains and spotting makes the chore much easier. In fact, some marks will not come out if allowed to set for any length of time. Inspect all costumes after each performance to avoid irreversible problems.

**5** To keep body odor to a minimum, only put costumes away when they are dry—not damp with perspiration. Performancewear should be thoroughly aired out after every use. Storing them with a dryer sheet will also help to mask the smell of sweat.

**6** A spray product like Febreze™, which states that it safely eliminates odor on fabrics, can be used on spandex without damage. Make sure you test it on one costume or uniform first and be careful not to spray directly on any sequins. Allow the garment to dry completely before storing.

**7** Always spot-test before attempting any cleaning. If the manufacturer provides a swatch, use it for this purpose. If you don't have a swatch, test a hidden section of the item. Again, test one costume or uniform before proceeding to the entire line, so you avoid big losses if the cleaning method fails and the item needs to be replaced.

### keep in mind

**8** Never soak a costume or uniform. If needed, gently rinse.

**9** Dry cleaning will not take out body odors. Deodorizing will, but it simply masks the body odor with a fragrance. Dry cleaners will add a deodorizer, but only if asked to, as some customers have allergic reactions to fragrance.

**10** Any spot cleaning or deodorizing is an extra cost and must be requested ahead of time. Spots must be pointed out when you bring in the garments.