



When bad things happen - Deal with it immediately!

by Deborah J. Nelson
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Wrinkles in your costumes? DON'T take an iron to them! Let them hang up for as long as you can, preferably in your bathroom to let the steam work on the wrinkles. In a pinch, an electrical hair curler can be used to remove some highly noticeable wrinkles. Non professionals should be very careful with irons and spandex -burned or melted spots on costumes cannot be repaired.

A zipper that is "catchy" or "sticky"? A graphite pencil "lead" rubbed on the INSIDE of the zipper -on the teeth, will lubricate the teeth to help the zipper zip better. If this doesn't help, you need to repair it when you notice it -don't forget it -it may separate (as in large gaping hole!) during a performance. (Most zippers can be put back on track, with the help of an expert sewing Mom, without having to replace the zipper.)

Loose elastic anywhere? If old elastic is damaged by too many launderings - Replace the elastic so your costume won't slip down or ride up. Check those finger elastics to make sure they are secure.

Holes in your costumes? The old, old adage holds true: "a stitch in time saves nine!" Any loose or broken seams should be reinforced immediately, so that your costumes will keep performing with you.

Snags? If your fabric is a spandex or mesh, the snags are ugly, but they will not cause the fabric to "run". Don't worry about them. This is just a cosmetic, close-up imperfection. Prevent additional snags by not rubbing up against brick walls or sitting on cement or splintery bleachers. Take off your jewelry, so you won't snag your costume with your rings. Trim your hang nails and fingernails, as they snag fabric, too.

Dirt or dust on your costumes' "bottoms" or hems? Spot clean them as soon as possible so that they don't become permanent stains.

Use FRESH AGAIN® to keep them fresh. Test and spray on the INSIDE of your costumes, please!

Pepsi or Coke spots on your costumes? Spot clean immediately so they won't "set in" and become stains. A grape juice stain? Don't do it! That is probably a job for a professional dry cleaner, as it may not spot clean well.

"Blood, sweat or tear" stains from all your costumed practices or performances, on ANY parts of your costume should be spot cleaned immediately.

Performance costumes should NOT be thoroughly cleaned more than once per season. Eliminate odors and staining by wearing tight cotton T-shirts under the costumes. Only put on your costumes at the last possible moment before performing. Wear warm-up uniforms the rest of the day.

What do we mean by "spot clean"? This DOES NOT mean soaking anything or using spray-on products of any kind. It is something that can quickly be done, using any hand, dish, or laundry soap. You dampen the area that is soiled with a washcloth or other fabric rag that is clean and will not lose its dye. Gently rub with the damp cloth that has a dab of soap (don't overdo it). STOP immediately, if what you are doing is ruining the fabric. (Beware of all "surface" prints, they can be trouble.) Any plain spandex fabric should not have any problems with spot cleaning. The damper you make the spot, the more likely that it will leave a "ring" around the area. To eliminate the ring - use a "feathering" stroke to transfer the dry area to the wet area and vice versa. It will not dry in a ring if there is not a distinct edge to the wet ring. A tip for drying - use a hand hair dryer or a rest room hand dryer, in a pinch!

Thinking of hair spraying your locks with your costumes on? DON'T! The chemicals in hair products can ruin sequins and finishes on some specialty fabrics. They will dull those expensive rhinestones. If putting on makeup is necessary when your costumes are on, be sure and put on smocks or other protective barriers, so that the makeup doesn't end up on your costumes. Self-tanners, lotions, body glitter and baby oil can do nasty things to costumes. Our recommendation is to tell team members to avoid the use of these products when wearing dance team costumes.

Hair accessories coming unglued? Have Superglue® available for a touchup.

Goo Gone® will take off makeup, slight lipstick stains, gum or the glue from rhinestone attachments.

Always have these costume repair items with your team: Superglue®, spot cleaner and damp rag, Febreze®, sewing needles with various color threads, small scissors or fingernail clippers, safety pins for a last resort, duct and electrical tape.

Your first choice: be careful. Your second choice: deal with it! Don't put your performance costumes away after a performance until they are in good repair, clean, and dry.

For more information, go to www.satinstitches.com/articles and click on "Girls DO Sweat! Tips for Sweaty Costumes", or call Satin Stitches at 763-323-9507.

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