

## Taking Care of Your Clothes and Accessories – Part 1



As stylists, we at Stilista do a lot of talking about what to buy and what to toss. But the question we get a lot is about how to preserve those great (and often pricey!) pieces so that you can enjoy them for as long as possible. So we are dedicating this week's blog to that!

### **Wool / Cashmere**

Those beautiful sweaters, vests, caftans, even scarves tend to be very delicate. For this reason, we recommend dry-cleaning garments as much as possible, or hand-washing in cold water with a gentle detergent like Woolite and laying flat to dry. Never ever (ever!) put wool sweaters in the dryer unless you are purposely shrinking them to fit your 7-year-old nephew. When you store these items in your closet or dresser, add in some cedar blocks as those keep away moths, and do not have that grandma smell that moth balls have. Finally, if you do get a snag or small hole, do not toss out the garment – you'd be surprised what a good alterations place can mend!

### **Leather and Suede**

As durable and stain-resistant as leather is, it needs protection from the elements of nature. The biggest foes to leather are water and salt / snowmelt and as New Englanders, we see a lot of both! For leather footwear and outerwear Stilista recommends whenever possible, you avoid wearing your best leather in bad

weather. As standard maintenance, treat your shoes with mink oil monthly to have a water barrier. If you do get some salt on your shoes, clean it off as soon as you get home with some cooking oil and a soft towel. Leather stores also sell sprays that protect from water, and that is an easier solution for jackets and coats. Suede is a much more delicate fabric than leather. One good soak can ruin the appearance of the suede garment. For that reason, we recommend you treat each suede garment with protective spray (also sold at leather stores like Wilsons or shoe repair places) every time you wear it and avoid wearing in bad weather. For both leather and suede boots, make sure you stuff the toes with newspaper or even a special boot insert when you pack it away for the summer months to keep the shape.

## **Outerwear**

The main rule for outerwear is that you should not machine-wash it, but rather dry-clean once a season. Dry-cleaning often will wear out the fabric, so if you are a spiller (like one Stilista stylist who shall remain nameless) stick to darker colors and patterns for coats so that stains are less visible. The only type of outdoor garment you can wash is a puffer coat, but even not all of those, so check the label for instructions. To store outerwear in the off season, keep them on hangers and out in a garment bag or a large suitcase with dryer sheets between garments to avoid mustiness. And leave a \$20 in the pocket once in a while – it is a nice surprise come winter! Check back next week for tips on taking care of the more delicate items!

And as always contact us for all your style and personal shopping needs! **617.78.STYLE** - [www.stilistaboston.com](http://www.stilistaboston.com)