



Caring for and storing Halloween costumes

According to a 2019 National Retail Federation survey, consumers planned to spend almost \$9 billion on Halloween-related merchandise last year. Almost half of those surveyed said they would wear a costume, spending an average of \$31.05. This equals more than \$3 billion spent in the United States on Halloween costumes.

Costumes have evolved from simple masks or capes, to encompass intricate embellishments and life-like details. Many costumes are made from materials that will survive for future Halloweens if they are cared for properly. To extend the life of costumes and prevent them from going to an early grave, follow a few simple steps. First, check the care label and use that as a guide. You can judge whether it's worth your time and resources to actually clean a particular costume. There are some made with such inexpensive materials that they may not be worth saving. But at a minimum, any reusable costume can benefit from a little fresh air. Before storing, let it air out a while to help remove odors.

Costume cleaning

- Costumes made with specialty fabrics or trims such as faux leather, faux fur, or feathers are best cared for by a dry cleaner.
- If decorated with tulle, netting, beads, or sequins, it's best to hand-wash the costume in a clean sink or tub using a gentle detergent. Swirl the costume gently in the water and rinse thoroughly.
- You can machine wash costumes that have little embellishment and are made of polyester, nylon, or acrylic. Use a gentle cycle and cold water.
- Don't put costumes in the dryer. For the best results, air dry them. Either lay the costume flat on a towel or drying rack, or carefully place it on a hanger to dry.

Costume storage

- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct sunlight.
- You should carefully hang any costumes that may become misshapen or damaged when folded. When needed, use tissue paper to stuff the arms or bodice area of a costume to help maintain the original appearance.
- Loosely wrap masks, hats, or other props in tissue paper or bubble wrap. Carefully place them in a bin so they are easy to find next Halloween. Stuff soft-sided hats or witch's hats with tissue paper to keep them from losing their shape.

Holiday hints: Have a lot of Halloween décor or costumes? Sort by function and store the items in labeled bins. As you decorate, donate any items that you have not used or displayed during the past few Halloweens.

References

<https://nrf.com/insights/holiday-and-seasonal-trends/halloween>

<https://cleanlaundry.com/safely-wash-store-halloween-costumes/>

<https://www.rinse.com/blog/care/costume-care-how-keep-your-favorite-halloween-outfits-fresh/>

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