

## **DON'T WASH ANOTHER PAIR OF JEANS BEFORE YOU READ THIS!**

Most people have one or more pair of jeans and many of us consider a particular pair of jeans their absolute favorite wardrobe item. With designer jeans costing as much as \$500 a pair, we asked celebrity dry cleaning expert Johnny Johnny Xirouchakis, of Manhattan's Aphrodite Cleaners/Crystal Services for some tips that you may want to share with your readers or viewers:

**Q:** I have several pairs of jeans, some pretty expensive. I'm confused about how to care for them. I'm especially concerned about shrinkage, texture, and possible color change. Should they be drycleaned or washed? I send them to the cleaners most of the time, but I'm not sure how they are actually cleaned. Can you help?

**A:** The traditional jeans material is (cotton) denim, which is marketed in various weights and colors. Many kinds of jeans are pretreated by the manufacturers to minimize shrinking and color fading. Some are not. It is always advisable to read the garment care labels at time of purchase.

Either dry cleaning or laundering may be appropriate, depending upon the look and fit you want. Dry cleaning is the way to go if you want minimal shrinkage and, in most cases, color stability. Some shrinkage will occur over time, since a small amount of moisture must be added to the cleaning process in order for the detergent component to clean efficiently. The feel of a dry cleaned pair of jeans is generally a bit less stiff than a laundered pair.

Laundering will usually involve noticeable shrinkage and sometimes color fading. This occurs during wash cycles that are set at high temperatures and likewise for drycleaning cycles. If you want to avoid undue shrinkage, specify that you would like a cool water wash with air drying (like the good old clothesline). Note that air drying can impart a stiff feel, which can be counteracted by fabric softeners. If you do like a stiff feel to your jeans, ask that they be starched. Also, always advise your cleaner whether or not you want the legs to be creased (creases look a little more "formal").

All garments are required by law to have "care labels" that specify the cleaning method or methods that should be utilized based on manufacturers' testing. These labels are especially helpful when dealing with jeans that may incorporate beading or appliqués. Be assured that your professional cleaner will read the label and act accordingly, and try as well to give you what you want.