

DRY CLEAN YOUR CLOTHES THE NON-TOXIC WAY

..... Frequently Asked Questions

1 What's wrong with dry cleaning?

Dry cleaning isn't dry or clean. It's called dry cleaning because a chemical solvent is used instead of water as the cleaning agent. The most common dry cleaning solvent used in Canada is PERC (short for perchloroethylene). This toxic chemical creates hazardous waste and pollutes our environment. PERC also poses health risks to people who handle it (such as dry cleaning workers), and people who are exposed to PERC emissions from dry cleaners (such as nearby residents) or clothes (consumers).

Despite being identified as one of the "highest concern" substances for public health in Toronto, "probably carcinogenic to humans" by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, and "toxic" under Canadian law, PERC is still used by over 80 per cent of dry cleaners across Canada.

2 What's professional wet cleaning?

Professional wet cleaning is an environmentally friendly and toxic-free alternative to conventional dry cleaning. It uses small amounts of water and biodegradable soap in computer-controlled machines to clean even the most delicate of fabrics. This method of garment care isn't just effective at removing stains and odour. It also extends the longevity of your clothes by protecting the fibres of the garments.

3 Can clothes with "dry clean only" labels get wet cleaned?

Yes. Wet cleaning is safe and very effective at stain and odour removal, even for fabrics like wool and cashmere. Always consult your professional wet cleaner if you have concerns.

4 Doesn't water shrink fabric?

It's a common misconception that water is what causes fabric shrinkage. Fabrics often shrink because of the aggressive spinning in a washing machine along with high water temperatures and over drying of garments.



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What are some of the benefits of professional wet cleaning?

Aside from wet cleaning being safe for your health, it also has other benefits:

For your clothes: The wet cleaning process is much like hand washing. However, it's automated and controlled for the type of fabric, colour and build, such as sequins, pleats, structured garments, etc. Since the care for each garment is customized, it extends the longevity of the garment as the fabric fibres are protected. Wet cleaning leaves garments clean and smelling fresh, with no shrinkage or harmful residues. It can also effectively remove odour and perspiration stains from clothes, ensuring that discolouration doesn't accumulate over time.

For the environment: Switching from dry cleaning to wet cleaning can help you reduce your negative impact on the environment. Since wet cleaning uses only biodegradable detergent and water, the leftover water and soap mixture can safely go down the drain and is easily handled by local municipal water treatment facilities. Conventional dry cleaning, on the other hand, often results in harmful air emissions, spills or water contamination.

What's the difference between wet cleaning and laundry or hand washing?

While both laundering and hand washing are also water-based and require detergents, they are not the same as professional wet cleaning. Laundering uses standard washers and dryers to clean certain garments. The settings on these machines are preset, with only the amount of detergent being roughly controlled. Hand washing, on the other hand, may not be suitable for certain delicate fabrics. In comparison, wet cleaning precisely measures water, solvent, and moisture levels that are tailored to fit each garment's specific needs.

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A dry cleaner near me says that it's "green," but it doesn't wet clean. How do I know if it's truly eco-friendly or not?

Wet cleaning is the only eco-friendly method of professional garment care in Canada.

Dry cleaners that advertise their services as eco-friendly, green, organic, or natural might not be what they claim. These claims are currently not regulated in Canada. Here are some sneaky "green" chemicals that consumers need to look out for:

- **Silicone cleaning (Siloxane D5)** - often marketed as "green." However, siloxanes used in silicone-based cleaning are environmental pollutants. These solvents are flammable and potentially harmful to aquatic ecosystems.
- **Hydrocarbon solvents (also called petroleum solvents), such as DF2000 and EcoSolv** - are flammable, volatile, and toxic. These solvents contribute to smog and nasty air pollution through volatile organic compounds (VOCs).
- **Solvair, Solvon, K4, DrySolv, and Rynex** - just a few other risky alternatives to PERC that are often marketed as eco-friendly, green, organic, or natural.