

How Long Can You Wear Sweatpants Without Washing Them?

So, it's day 85249 of quarantine and you've lost count of [how long you've been wearing those sweatpants](#). It's OK — it happens to everyone. But with loungewear becoming the uniform of choice for the foreseeable future, it's time to learn how to take care of those beloved sweats so they can last for the long term. If you're wearing them on a daily basis, that's all the more reason to implement a stricter washing regimen.

Dr. Joshua Zeichner, director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, tells Bustle that the closer fabrics come to directly touching your skin, the more frequently they should be washed.

“If you are sweating heavily [from exercise](#) or you are not showering as often as you should, the garments may become soiled more easily,” Zeichner explains. “Undergarments should be changed and washed daily, ideally so should your sweatpants. Especially in the areas between the legs and in the groin, sweatpants may become contaminated with microorganisms, including yeast and bacteria.”

If daily washes aren't feasible for you — say you don't have [easy access to a washer and dryer](#) or you run out of detergent — it's fine to wear those sweats for an extra day or two.

“Leggings and sweats are like undergarments, exposed to natural body temperature, perspiration, and sweat from exercising,” says Katie Brown, owner of [Rytina Fine Cleaners](#) in Sacramento. “They should be washed after each use. However, if you wear them inside as loungewear without working out in them, you can skip a wash or two to preserve the elasticity of the material. It's a personal preference.”

Ahead, experts break down everything you need to know about keeping your favorite sweats as clean and comfy as ever.

How long can you wear sweatpants before washing them?

Again, one day is the ideal. A maximum of four days is a good metric to follow, advises Dr. Peterson Pierre, a board-certified dermatologist in California.

“You can go about three to four days in your sweats or loungewear before washing them,” Pierre says. “Any longer than that, and oils, bacteria, dander, and sweat can accumulate, leading to

itchy skin and even an acne flare. It's important to wash your favorites about twice a week even if you're not leaving the house."

How can you keep your favorite loungewear in shape, especially though constant washes?

The expert founders behind [The Laundress](#), Gwen Whiting and Lindsey Boyd, have detailed a step-by-step washing strategy that will keep all your go-to comfy essentials in tip-top shape no matter how many wears you rack up:

1. Pretreat for stains. Whittling and Boyd suggest using products like the [Stain Solution](#) or the [Wash & Stain Bar](#). Being proactive with stains means you won't have to unnecessarily subject your garment through another round of rigorous washing.
2. Always key? Using a gentle, fabric-specific detergent that won't wear down the items wash after wash. For silk or synthetics, go with the [Delicate Wash](#). Cotton or linen loungewear can be washed with the [Signature Detergent](#). If you're working out at home or outside, use the [Sport Detergent](#) for activewear.
3. Place loungewear in a [mesh washing bag](#) before machine washing to prevent fabrics from snagging in the drum of the machine.
4. Silk, wool, and delicate synthetic fabrics should always be air dried (lay flat in its original shape on a drying rack or clean towel). All other loungewear is typically fine to place in the dryer on the medium or low setting, although air drying is gentler on fabrics and helps preserve color and shape.

What's the best way to hand wash sweats and loungewear?

First, sort laundry by color, fabric, and construction. If you have a large pile of white cotton garments, you can wash them all together in the tub. For smaller loads, save time and water by opting for the sink or a [wash basin](#).

"In general, it's easier and less daunting to keep up with the laundry by washing a small load everyday or every other day to avoid it from piling up," Whiting says. "Washing clothes in the tub is very similar to hand washing in a basin or sink. Before you start washing your items in the tub or sink, be sure to clean it."

Next, pretreat any stains just as you would when not hand washing your clothing. If you're washing cotton, linen, and/or durable synthetics (such as polyester), run warm or hot water long enough to cover the garments. Next, add the appropriate amount of detergent depending on the load size — two to four capfuls should suffice.

"Agitate the water with your hands to create a soapy solution and let the garments soak for 30 minutes," Boyd explains. "Remove the laundry from the tub by pressing each garment against

the edge of the tub, and placing in a clean bucket or sink. Then, open the drain to release the soapy water, and close the drain before filling the tub back up with clean warm water.”

Next, place the garments in the clean warm water. Swirl thoroughly to rinse away suds, and drain one more time. If any garments still have suds, run them under the faucet until the rinse water is clear. Don't wring garments, which could damage fibers. Instead, press garments against the edge of the tub to get rid of excess water. Hang or lay flat to dry. If you're washing silk or delicate synthetics, follow the same steps in a sink or wash basin, using cool water and a detergent specifically for delicates.

Why is it important to regularly wash your favorite sweats, no matter how infrequently you're leaving home?

“Perspiration and natural body oils will build up as clothes are re-worn, creating stains and odor-causing bacteria,” Whiting says. “That's why it's important to wash them regularly.”

And remember: If you go out in public — even if it's a five-minute grocery trip — remove your clothes as soon as you get home, place them in the hamper, and change into something clean. Since viruses can live on fabrics, it's better to play it safe.