
Consumer Decision Making Contest

1999-2000 Study Guide

JEANS

Jeans, both traditional ones and slacks with a jeans-like appearance, have become popular as casual wear for all ages and both sexes. This trend offers many advantages. Good cotton denim jeans are durable, comfortable, economical and easy-to-care for. These qualities can be attained if you buy jeans carefully.

What fibers do Jeans contain?

The label and hangtag on a pair of jeans tells the consumer a lot. You may choose 100% cotton or blends such as 50% cotton with 50% polyester, and occasionally 50% cotton with nylon and polyester fibers. 100% cotton jeans tend to be the most comfortable, the softest and most absorbent. All cotton jeans also become softer to the touch as they are worn and laundered. And, all cotton jeans do not pill (form fuzzy balls which cling to the surface) rapidly.

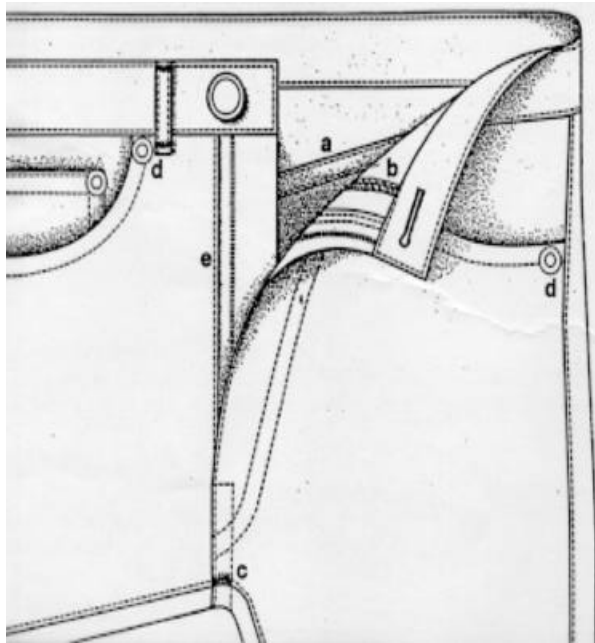


Figure 1

Jeans made of blends remain relatively stiff after wearing and laundering. They may also pill rather easily.

What does a consumer look for?

Shrink Resistance

Jeans should be shrink resistant to 1 to 2 percent. If the label does not guarantee this, buy a larger size to allow for shrinkage in washing and drying. Some consumers like jeans that are not preshrunk to permit “form fitting” (wetting the jeans and allowing them to dry on the body).

Fabric

The fabric should be firmly woven and durable. Don't choose slacks having the jeans look which are made of loosely constructed fabrics. Some of the knit fabrics which have a denim look are easily snagged and are less durable.

Seams

Flat fell seams have two rows of stitching and are enclosed on both the outside and inside of the jeans (Figure 1, a). Seams of this type leave no open seam allowances to unravel during wear and laundering. Make certain the seams are neatly constructed and firmly stitched. Where seams are not flat fell, they should be serged (overcast with thread) to cover the raw edge and reduce raveling (Figure 1, b). Seams that join at the crotch

and in the back should meet accurately for smooth contour, comfort, and durability of the garment (Figure 1, c).

Waistband

A waistband made of two or more layers of fabric will reduce stretching in the waist area. If the jeans have no waistband, look for interfacing (an extra layer of firm fabric sewn into the waist seam for stability).

Reinforcements

Look for thread bar tacks or rivets at places of stress like corners of pockets, belt loops and the bottom of the zipper placket (Figure 1, d).

Zipper

The zipper will be more durable if the fabric on both sides has been turned under and stitched. Because denim fabric is so heavy, a metal zipper offers more durability than a nylon zipper (Figure 1, e).

Styling

Features such as the width of the legs - boot cut, tapered, wide leg - and wide belt loops are found in reasonably priced jeans. Special styling, such as embroidered pockets, will add considerably to the price of the jeans.

Select the size that is right for you.

Selection of the correct size is determined by the estimated amount of shrinkage and fashion. Shrinkage of less than 2% is best. Fashion refers to the leg length and width.

Check the fit.

A girl's waist to hip proportions differs from a boy's. When buying jeans designed for the opposite sex, try them on before making the purchase. Minor alterations may be needed for proper fit.

Care after the purchase.

Most jeans have a sewn-in label. Read it and follow the instructions.

Jeans are usually machine washed in warm water. Wash dark colored jeans with other dark colors. Reds should be washed separately; pastel and white jeans can be put in the regular wash.

Do not use bleach in most cases, unless you really want them bleached.

Tumble dry and remove the jeans from the dryer promptly. Remember that if you overwash or overdry, you are using more energy than you need.

Wash jeans that are made-to-fade separately. The hotter the water, the faster they fade.

All-cotton jeans in dark colors and heavy weight fabrics do not show wrinkles easily. If you do iron jeans, use a steam iron.