

HOW TO ASSESS THE QUALITY OF GARMENTS

rule no. 1

Use a hands-on approach!

You need to see the garment 'in the flesh', inspect it from up close, try it on and move around in it.

fabrics

ALL FABRICS

Ask yourself: a) How high-quality is the fabric itself? · b) How suitable is the fabric for that particular item?

COTTON

Is the fabric soft? Does it feel breathable and comfortable on the skin? · Are there any pills? · To check how tightly woven the fabric is, hold it up against a source of light. You should not be able to make out objects. · Are there any gaps or size differences in between the individual threads that make up the fabric?

LINEN

Does the fabric feel comfortable on the skin? Linen should never feel scratchy. · Is the garment crease-free? · Would the garment still look good when it's a little wrinkled at the the end of the day?

WOOL

Are there any knots, loose strands, holes or gaps in the fabric? · How much pilling is there? A little is ok, a lot isn't. · Does the fabric bounce back or does it stay stretched out when you pull it a little? · Does the brand indicate the origin and type of wool that was used? · Does the fabric feel comfortable on bare skin?

DENIM

Does the fabric feel soft and like it's a little moist? · Are there signs of rubbing on the inner thighs? · Try stretching the seams a little. Do they pull apart or stay put? · What type of seam was used? Double or chain stitches are great. · For jeans: Inspect the side seams. Do they lie flat or is there a bump on the inside?

LEATHER

Do the grains on the leather look natural or printed? · Are there any scratch marks? · Were the individual pieces of the garment glued or sewn together? · Does the leather feel soft and supple?

SYNTHETIC FIBRES

Put the garment on and walk around for a while. Does the fabric feel breathable? · Does the fabric feel soft and smooth? · For form-fitting items: Does it include 2–5% of a stretchy synthetic fibre, like lycra or polyester?

seams

Turn the garment inside out. Are the seams straight and neat? Can you see any stray threads, loose stitches or areas that have been stitched over multiple times? · Check the strength of a seam by pulling on the fabric on either side. Do the threads separate? · Do the seams lie completely flat? · If the garment is patterned: do the patterns line up at the seams? · How secure are the load-bearing seams of the garment, i.e. the seams that connect two pieces of fabric? · Are the shoulder seams and side seams on trousers reinforced?

tailoring

For shirts, blouses, jackets and non-stretchy dresses/tops: Are there darts under the bust line and along the waist? · For constructed, non-stretchy jackets and tops: Is there a back seam? · For shirts and blouses: Does the item have a back yoke? · Try on the item and move around. Do the shoulders or the side of the garment rise when you raise your arms? For skirts and dresses: Does the fabric ride up when you walk? For tops: Is there a pool of fabric above your bust line? Either of these are a sign that the item doesn't fit your body well.

lining

Not all items need a lining. These do: lighter, see-through fabrics, jackets, coats, structured dresses, loosely woven fabrics, suedes and leathers as well as knits and tailored skirts. · If the garment has a lining: Does it feel good on the skin? Does it feel thick and sturdy? Does it have the same care code as the upper fabric?

details

BUTTONS & ZIPPERS

Are the buttons spaced out evenly and secured by multiple threads? · Is there an extra button included with the item? · Are the button holes adequately bound and reinforced? Can you see any raw edges (bad)? · Does the zipper move smoothly and lie flat against your body? · Does the zipper lock completely at the top?

POCKETS

For jackets: Are the pockets real (i.e. usable)? · Is the pocket opening reinforced by stitches?

LABELS

Is the label printed or woven? · Can you feel the label while wearing the garment?