

Care and Feeding of a New Lamé

Contributed by Administrator
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Question: How do I take care of a new lamé? How can I repair a lamé with a few dead spots?

When you get a new lamé, or you have one that is already working well, you want to make sure that you keep it in good repair. When beginning to care for your lamé, you should remember that the lamé is a metallic jacket made up of both fabric and metallic threads. The lamé is in good working order when the metallic threads are intact and able to conduct electricity with little resistance.

The natural enemy of the foil and sabre lamé is sweat. The salt in your sweat will work to corrode your lamé from the first time that you fence, so you want to do everything possible to minimize the damage and extend the life of your lamé. Most of the things that you can do are really common sense, but in order to save a couple of seconds of time some people throw that out the window.

After a night or day of fencing, make sure to put your lamé on a hanger and hang it up in a dry area between uses. Do not wad it up and toss it in your weapon bag along with your damp uniform - that is a sure way to kill your lamé and suck another hundred dollars out of your wallet. If you are one of those people who has especially corrosive sweat, then you will also want to gently rinse out your lamé in the bathroom sink and then pat it dry with a towel or paper towels before hanging it up.

If you have to pack your lamé in a bag, then roll it rather than folding it to prevent the metallic threads from being broken. Also, keep your lamé with your weapons in a separate compartment from your uniform. This will help preserve both your weapons and lamé.

Cleaning your lamé:

Every now and then, you will want to clean your lamé to get rid of any salt deposits that have escaped your simple rinsing. Make sure to never put your lamé in a washing machine or dryer or to use hot water or abrasives on it. When washing your lamé, you should dunk it in a mixture of mild detergent (even something as mild as "Woolite") along with some ammonia (just enough to smell it). After you have rinsed out your lamé, hand it up to dry.

If you have a lamé that has a small dead spot, or a spot that fails inspection, you can try spot-cleaning the lamé with a bit of ammonia-based cleaner such as Windex. Gently spray on a little bit of Windex and let it dry - then you can take it back to the armory table and see if it passes with the quick fix. If your lamé is totally dead, however, you will need to use more extreme measures such as using a patch of good material to patch up the lamé.

In general, a good lamé should last you at least a full year of competitive fencing if you take care of it, even more if you are a more recreational fencer.

Hope this helps,
Craig