

Regular Care and Maintenance of your Fencing Gear

SABRES

- _____ Tighten the pommel nut.
- _____ Repair or replace the insulation on the knuckle guard and on the bell guard.
- _____ Check the socket. All nuts should be tight.
- _____ Make sure the blade is bent properly. Remove all rust.
- _____ Test the circuitry.

CORDS

- _____ Check your head and body cord circuits, including the lamé wire.
- _____ Use a small screwdriver to check and tighten all screws on your body cord, including those on the housing on each end and those that hold the retaining device.

CLOTHES, including MASKS and GLOVES

- _____ Machine wash your plastron, jacket, knickers, and socks regularly.
- _____ Inspect your plastron, jacket, knickers, and glove for rips or holes.
- _____ Wash your cup or chest protector by hand, rinse it well, and leave it to air dry.
- _____ Inspect your sabre mask for dents, rips, frayed areas, rust, or loose or missing parts.
- _____ After every tournament, or at least once a month, thoroughly rinse your sabre mask bib with water and leave it out to air dry.
- _____ After every tournament, or at least once a month, rinse your lamé thoroughly in the shower. Do not use soap. Make sure the whole thing is absolutely soaked through, and keep rinsing until water sprayed on the outside is running out of the liner. Hang in shower to drip dry. Do the same thing with your sabre glove.
- _____ Inspect your fencing shoes and get out the duct tape if they need repair.
- _____ Leave your fencing shoes out to air after each time that you use them. Sprinkle baking soda in them if they are particularly damp. Or stuff them with crumpled newspaper and let them sit overnight.
- _____ Check your lamés, sabre mask, and sabre glove for rips, holes, or frayed areas.
- _____ Have an armorer check your lamés, sabre mask, and sabre glove for dead spots.

Keep your blades, body cords and lamés away from anything sweaty. This means that you should probably have a separate compartment in your fencing bag, or a separate plastic bag in there, for your jacket, plastron, foil glove, socks, and anything else that you transport while it is sweaty.

Ideally, jackets and plastrons will be on hangers after use, so that they can dry out. Lamés (clean or sweaty) should never be stuffed in a bag, but always hang on hangers, preferably in a breathable garment bag, so that the delicate conductive material is protected from being scraped or poked by other objects. Turning a lamé inside out to let the lining dry probably does more harm than good, as puts stress on all those tiny wires in the fabric.

Masks and sabre gloves are tricky—they get sweaty, but also have parts that should not be near sweaty gear. The conductive bib of sabre masks, and the face of all masks, will last a lot longer if the mask is kept away from your sweaty clothes. This is another reason to keep your jacket and plastron (the sweatiest of all) on hangers. You can also clip sweaty gloves to a hanger with clothespins to let them air dry.