

How to Care for Your Gear so You won't be Re-Homed

If your player is playing, your player is getting sweaty. If they're sweaty then their lacrosse gear is sweaty. Take that wet gear, hide in a warm, dark bag and that lacrosse equipment WILL get foul, fast.



Bacteria on our body feed on some of the small inorganic and organic compounds in sweat, breaking it down, and this process produces the byproduct, bromidrosis. This byproduct is what produces THAT smell. The problem with sweaty gear and equipment is more than just smell. Those sweat-filled pads, gloves, uniforms, and cleats are a breeding ground for infectious bacteria that is easily transferred from person to person. We run the risk of getting seriously sick if bacteria-ridden equipment comes into contact with cuts, bruises, and abrasions.

The first thing players need to do after EVERY practice and game is to lay their gear on a flat surface or hang it up in an open, well-ventilated space. This allows air to circulate and it will dry more quickly. A little fan action never hurts either. BONUS, it dissipates the smell.


Don't walk away just yet. You should liberally spray that damp gear down with Isopropyl Alcohol or white vinegar. The smell will dissipate as it dries. These are also cheap, household items that kill bacteria, neutralize odor, and are safe on equipment and skin.

Rank smelling equipment bags? That's like Hotel Bacterifornia. Lysol works great. Helmet? Cleats? Lysol works fine here too as long as it has time to dry so as to not irritate skin.



These are all great starts to staying healthy during the season, but you should also wash pads every other week or so. You can let them take a nice, long, relaxing soak in the tub or you can spin them, smack them, and let the washer agitate them.

The best bet is to use a LITTLE (more just leaves a residue that makes odor worse) mild detergent combined with Oxiclean, Borax, white vinegar, or color safe bleach.

If you go the washing machine route and your machine has an agitator then throw in a few towels to help protect the gear from damage. 

1. Use the gentle cycle and the hot water setting.
2. Add your mild detergent and whichever booster you're using.
3. Securely fasten any Velcro, buttons, laces, etc., to prevent fraying.
4. If your machine allows for it, stop the cycle after the tub has filled with the water and detergent, and allow the gear to soak for 10 to 15 minutes.

Pads and gloves should **ALWAYS** be air dried. Items that can go in the dryer should also be set on low heat because high heat will only bake those odors into the fibers.

If you decide that the soak in a tub is more your speed then,



1. Fill the bathtub with very hot water, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of laundry detergent and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of whichever booster you choose (Oxi, vinegar, color safe bleach or Borax).

2. Put the pads in the tub and hold them under the water until they are saturated with the detergent solution. Now swirl and swoosh them around a bit—this agitation will help to release some of the buildup on the pads. Then just let them soak for 30 to 60 minutes. Longer is fine.

3. Now rinse the pads. So: drain the tub and turn on the running water. Hold each pad under the tap and squeeze out as much of the suds as you can using your hands.

4. Once the pads have been rinsed well, roll each one up in a towel to help absorb the water you couldn't get out with just your hands. Hang them up to dry.

Here are a few tips for keeping helmets and cleats odor-free. Your cleats can be stuffed with newspaper after use, which will absorb a lot of moisture and cut back on odor development. When an odor *does* occur, use an odor-eliminating shoe spray or get a set of sneaker balls to pop into the cleats. Removing the liners and allowing them to air dry, or giving them a quick hand washing, will also help greatly when it comes to keeping your skates stink-free.

Helmets can be washed with a sponge and a small amount of mild detergent or shampoo. The trick to this is to make a bowl of water and shampoo, dip the sponge into that solution, wring it out very well, and wash the helmet with the suds that process creates, rather than with a lot of water. Once the helmet has been washed, repeat that process with clean water. Dry it off as best you can using a towel and then allow to air dry completely.

