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The Denim Issue: Can Jeans Save the Earth?

Current Research:

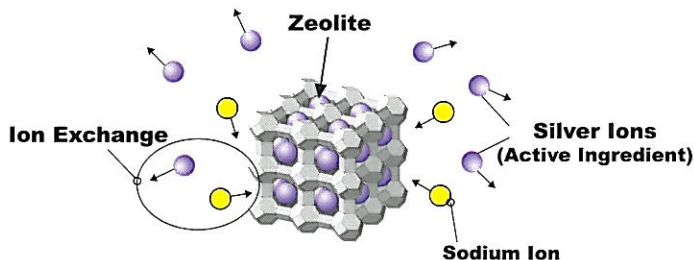
- Saving the Earth with Faster-Drying Polyester
- Performance of Carpet Relief Texture Effects

Pre-Reduced Indigo—
Back in Fashion



Whiter, Better Smelling Fabric

Agion Technologies has launched Agion Active, a textile treatment combining silver-based antimicrobials that kill odor-causing bacteria with another substance that eliminates environmental, ambient, or absorbed odors. "Agion Active has widespread potential in any application where odor is an issue," said Paul Ford, CEO.



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The zeolite cage holds the silver ions, allowing controlled release.

Unlike antimicrobials that are built into the fibers of fabric, Agion Active is incorporated during the finishing step of the manufacturing process. This gives manufacturers cost-savings and greater flexibility by allowing them to easily shift from one color or style to another without creating large, costly inventories. Agion Active also keeps white fabrics white during manufacture with no concern for discoloration—a common drawback with silver-based antimicrobials. Ford explains that "sacrificial ions" protect the silver from discoloration.

Consumers Don't Read Care Labels

According to recent research from Cotton Incorporated's *Lifestyle Monitor*, the vast majority of consumers (97%) do laundry themselves rather than taking everything to the cleaners. The same research indicates that consumers are paying less attention to garment care instructions—although over half of consumers (57%) "always" or "usually" read laundering instructions before washing a garment, this figure is down significantly from 64% in 2007 and 77% in 2003.

The declining numbers of consumers who diligently read the care instructions may raise a "red flag" for brands and retailers. Care labels provide important instructions on how to clean textile products to help them last longer and maintain their appearance and performance. When consumers ignore the labels, everyone suffers. *Lifestyle Monitor* research shows that when consumers are dissatisfied with garments after laundering, they tend to fault the retailer, brand, or manufacturer—even when their own laundering practices may be to blame.

And consumers' laundering habits can contribute to problems with garment performance, especially fading and shrinking. Fading is generally caused by abrasion during washing, and shrinking results from over-drying. Consumers under 35 are less likely than older consumers to read care instructions, and more of them have problems with new garments fading or shrinking.

Although consumers are paying less attention to care instructions, retailers and brands can counter this trend by taking action to raise awareness of care instructions and the effects of laundering practices on garment performance. To encourage compliance and ensure consumer satisfaction, some retailers and brands have started making fabric and care information more prominent at the point of purchase and on their web sites.

