DENIM JEANS

Denim jeans have long been a favorite in New Mexico. In recent years, they have become widely accepted as a fashion item. People of all ages wear them for a variety of activities.

Denim blue jean styles are more varied today then ever before, but their durability and convenience are almost as dependable as ever. Denim jeans wear well because of the fabric construction techniques used.

Fabrics used for today's denim jeans vary. The most common denim jeans are 100% cotton, 60% cotton/40% polyester, 50% cotton/50% polyester, and 60% polyester/40% cotton. Some denim used for jeans is a blend of cotton, nylon and polyester. Each fabric wears differently, but all are rugged.

Denim jeans of 100% cotton come in heavy canvas-like weights of 14-1/2 ounces per yard. Heavier fabrics are usually stiffer and wear longer. Jeans of 100% cotton tend to be cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter than jeans made of denim blends. They also absorb perspiration more readily. Some 100% cotton denim jeans have a durable press finish, others require ironing.

Blended denim fabrics tend to wear better than 100% cotton denim. The synthetic fibers add strength to the fabric and contribute a durable press quality to the jeans. Fabrics with synthetic fibers do tend to pill (form fuzzy balls of fiber that cling to fabric surface). With jeans made of traditional cotton/synthetic blends, slippage may occur along seams if jeans fit snugly.

A recent innovation in blended yarn construction, core threads, allows a blending of cotton and synthetic fiber by wrapping strong synthetic fibers with cotton fibers. When woven into denim fabric, it looks and feels like 100% cotton, but has more strength. Fading occurs as in cotton, but the problem of seam slippage, common to traditional blends, does not occur.

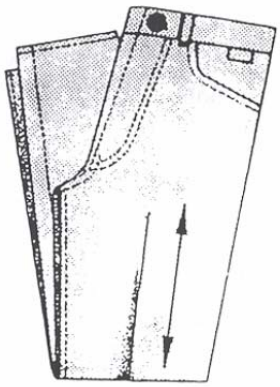
The amount of shrinkage one can expect from new denim jeans will vary. Shrink-to-fit jeans of 100% cotton are available. Other denim jeans are preshrunk and shrink resistant from one to two percent. If the label does not indicate the amount of shrinkage to expect, buy a larger size to allow for shrinkage.

The label and/or hang tags on denim jeans should tell the fiber content of the fabric, the amount of shrinkage to expect, and any special finishes on the fabric. Some labels may give the weight of the denim fabric.

Check the label for colorfastness of the jeans. Some jeans are purposely pre-washed to appear faded. Some are a deep indigo blue when purchased, but will fade each time the jeans are laundered.

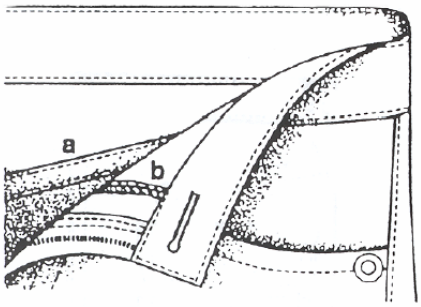
Others have a colorfast finish and will not fade at all. Jeans of 100% cotton denim and jeans of cotton-wrapped synthetic yarns tend to fade more than others do.

Observe the leg creases and grain line of the jeans. When the legs are creased in the center of each leg, the crease should parallel the fabric grain line. If the grain line is not straight, the seams of the jeans will not hang correctly.



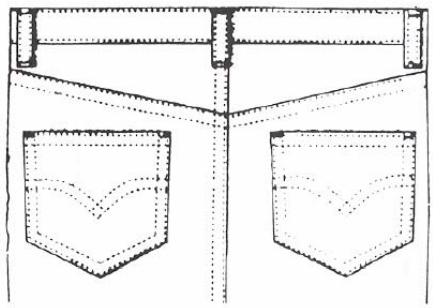
Grain line.

The seams of denim jeans are usually (a) flat felled or (b) serged (a special stitch which encloses seam edges). These seams leave no raw edges exposed and prevent raveling during wear and laundering.



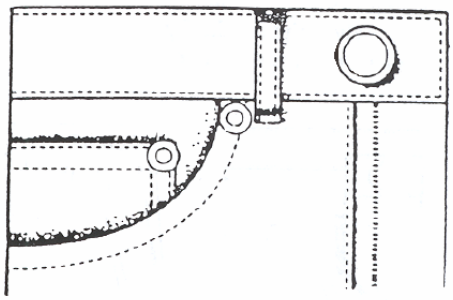
Seam construction #1.

Seams should be sewn with straight rows of stitching and be neatly finished. Stitches should be firm and even in size. Where seams intersect at crotch, yoke, pockets, etc., they should be smooth and as flat as possible for comfort and durability.



Seam construction #2.

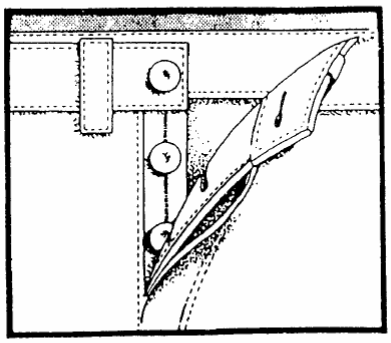
The waistband should be two or more thicknesses of denim joined to the pants with one or more rows of firm, straight stitching. The ends should be securely finished—not just overcast stitched. The fastener should be located so, when snapped, the band lays flat. The fastener should be easy to close and open, but should hold securely with normal wear.



Waistband.

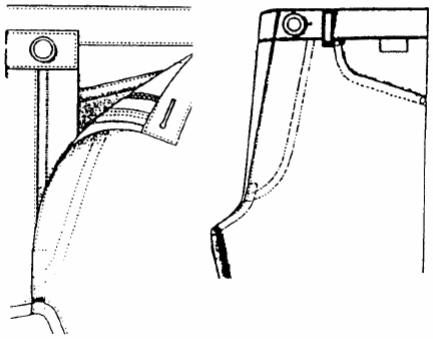
Jeans may utilize a zipper or buttons to close the fly. If buttons are used, they should be firmly attached to the underlap. The buttonholes should be worked through at least two thicknesses of denim and be the

correct size and spacing for the buttons. The fly overlap should cover the buttons smoothly, creating a neat appearance when the jeans are buttoned.



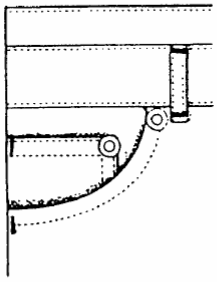
Button closure.

A zippered fly should be neatly finished with the ends of the zipper tape turned under to prevent raveling. The rows of stitching should be even and straight, holding the zipper securely in place. The zipper should have a heavy brass or stainless steel track and a self-locking pull tab. When zipped, the fly overlap should conceal the zipper and lie neatly in place.



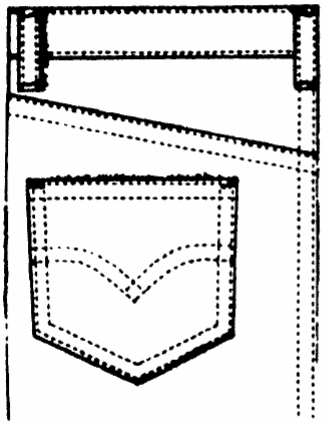
Zipper closure.

Reinforcements are used in good quality denim jeans to make them more durable. Rivets and/or thread bar tacks are used in places of stress such as corners of pockets, belt loops, and the bottom of the zipper placket.



Reinforcements.

Side pockets should be inspected when jeans are selected. The bottom of the pockets should be stitched twice so seam edges are enclosed. This prevents raveling and helps ensure against holes in pockets. If these seams are not enclosed, the edges should be overcast to prevent raveling.



Pockets.

Back pockets should be stitched in place with two rows of stitching. The top of the pocket should be reinforced with a bar tack of thread or a rivet at each side. The top edge of the pocket should be turned under and firmly stitched to prevent raveling.

Belt loops should be firmly attached with thread bar tacks at top and bottom. The edges of each loop should be turned under and stitched in place to prevent raveling.

The styles of jeans will influence the cost and the wear of the jeans. Consideration of such factors must be given any purchase in relation to cost and use.