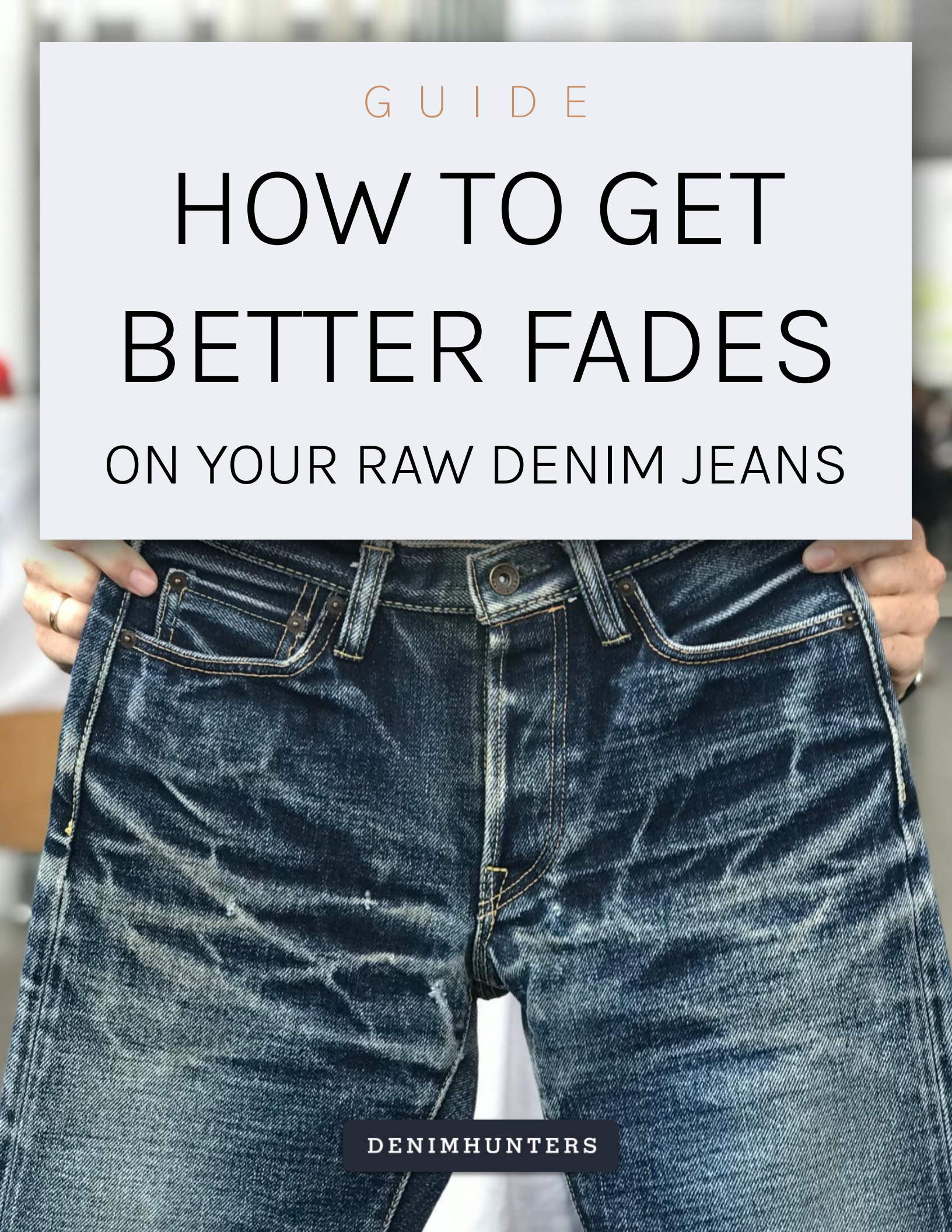
GUIDE

HOW TO GET BETTER FADES

ON YOUR RAW DENIM JEANS



DENIMHUNTERS

10 tips to better raw denim fades

#1 Choose unwashed ring-spun selvedge denim

#2 Soak before you wear

#3 Wear them (a lot!)

#4 Postpone washing

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#6 Don’t wash too much

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#9 Starch your jeans

#10 Join a fading competition

FAQ: What is raw denim?

Raw denim is a type of denim that is not pre-washed or treated in any way. This results in a stiffer fabric that is more difficult to break in, but also results in much better fades. Denim fades are the result of the fabric being broken down over time and taking on a unique patina.

From outsider to influencer

Denimhunters is a knowledge portal for denim enthusiasts and professionals. We help denim lovers make educated buying decisions with our extensive Denim Encyclopedia and our Well-Made Essentials Buying Guides.

“I always felt like a misfit in the small town I grew in,” says our founder, Thomas. “My childhood dream was to work with denim. It has a story like no other fabric, and evolves with you as you wear it, creating *your* story too.”

In 2008, Thomas got his first job selling raw denim jeans. Back in those days, not knowing any better, his sales pitch usually involved stubborn and wildly misinformed ‘guidance’ that the customer should never *ever* wash their jeans for six months. Many asked why. Good question.

“That’s when I began my personal denim education; my denim hunt. I wanted to learn every about raw denim and why it fades. I had to; not knowing how to answer those questions had a direct negative impact on my sales numbers.”

A few years later, in 2011, Thomas launched Denimhunters. He quickly built a wide-ranging network in the denim industry, and the site became a trustworthy source of denim knowledge and advice.

Three years later, after he graduated with a Master’s Degree in Marketing from Copenhagen Business School, Thomas launched my full-time career as a marketing consultant, specialising in the denim industry.

“Today, I’m living my childhood dream. I help companies tell stories that excite, engage, and convert.”

In this guide, we share 10 tips that will help you get better fades on your raw denim jeans faster.



Thomas Stege Bojer

Denim expert, marketing consultant, family man

#1 Unwashed ring-spun selvedge

Pick raw, unwashed selvedge denim jeans. Simple as that. Onewashed jeans are great and all, don't get me wrong. But to get high contrast fades as quickly as possible, you need unwashed denim.

Before you buy, makes sure that you can answer yes to these questions two questions:



1) Is it selvedge denim?

The denim should be woven on shuttle-looms (in other words, is should be selvedge denim). This weaving method puts less tension on the yarn, which gives getter fades.
This is (really) easy to answer; just check the outseams for selvedge edges.

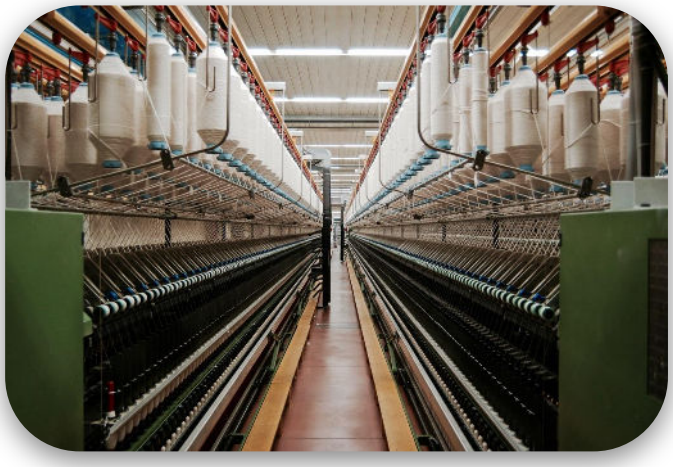
2) Is the yarn ring-spun?

Probably 99% of all selvedge jeans are made from ring-spun yarn. But ask the seller you're buying from or review the online product description (if you can't find this information then ask).

You want the denim to be made from ring-spun yarn because this spinning process ensures that as little indigo as possible gets into the core of the yarn. Basically, the colour will just be sitting on the surface. And that's the best starting point for high-contrast fades.

If you need inspiration for great fading jeans to buy, visit our buying guides.





#2 Soak before you wear



This approach is strongly debated among raw denim aficionados. Some swear by it, others would never ever do it.

The reason we recommend is that soaking your raw denim jeans in cold water (with NO detergent or anything) before you start wearing them softens the denim a bit, which will make it last longer, but it doesn't really remove any colour.

The result: You'll be able to wear the jeans longer, which ultimately yields higher-contrast fades.

#3 Wear them (a lot!)

This one should go without saying, but you need to actually wear the jeans to get fades.

Wear the jeans as much as you possibly can. All the time. And hard. The more you wear them, the faster they'll fade.

Wear the jeans when you're cleaning the house, playing with your children, doing gardening , moving, and whatever else you can think of.

Wearing them while running or working out in the gym generally isn't a good idea (actually, it's just silly). You'll likely be sweating quite a bit, which just forces you to wash the jeans sooner.

Wearing them for (casual) hikes or bike rides will be fine, though.

Just don't use sandpaper or bleach your jeans, that's just stupid, and considered cheating if your in a fading competition.

#4 Postpone washing

To get high-contrast fades, you should generally wash them as little as possible. That means no more than every 2-3 months (and that's assuming, of course, that you wear them *every day*!).

But, life in your jeans goes on. And life can be messy. You spill coffee, beer or whatever beverage you prefer on your jeans. They get mudding from the gardening you do in them. Your kids wipe their creasy fingers in your jeans. And so on.

Before you wash them, though, try these two methods:

1) Refresh your jeans outside

Wearing your jeans hard and every day can result in, well, stinking jeans. This is totally normal, so don't fret. And there is a simple solution; let your jeans breath, literally. Hang them outside (ideally on a slightly windy day) and let the air refresh them.

This is the excuse you have to NOT wear your jeans for a day. You can also do the airing at night and wake up to a refreshed pair of jeans.

Regardless of when you do it, make sure the jeans stay dry.

2) Spot clean

If you spill something on your jeans, just wipe it off (gently!) with a damp cloth or towel, possibly added a few drops of water on the stain. Do NOT rub too hard as this will just create a bright(er) spot on the fabric.



Be aware that you'll likely get some indigo transfer on the cloth or towel, but don't worry this'll wash right off. When if comes to dirt and mud strains, let it dry completely and then brush off as much as you can. Finally, remove any remaining dirt with damp cloth.

#5 Don’t rotate your jeans

Don’t rotate between other jeans. Only wear this one pair, every day.

Make it a challenge for yourself if you think you’ll get tempted to wear other jeans. Try keeping score of the number of days you’ve worn them. This will keep you focused on goal and help you develop a good habit.

If you think you’ll have fall-backs and wear other jeans, hide your stash. Considering having someone else (like your partner or roommate) hide them somewhere you don’t know.

#6 Don’t wash too much

Wash the jeans only when needed. Washing too earlier in the break-in phase slows down the fading process.

Eventually, though, you do have to wash the jeans. Washing removes (even more) indigo on the abraded areas of the jeans.

ALWAYS turn your jeans inside out before you wash them. This prevents nasty vertical lines on the legs.

The gentlest approach is to hand wash. If you machine wash, choose a low temperature program and low spin cycle.

Kiya Babzani from Self Edge (an American retailer of some of world’s best raw denim) has been in this game for almost two decades, so he knows what he’s talking about. As he says, fades come mostly from actually wearing the jeans, not washing them.

If you wash early, or often, you’ll still get great fades, it just takes longer, and they’ll most probably *not* be high-contrast ones.

You can learn about how to wash your raw denim jeans in this guide on our website.

#7 Hang dry (NEVER machine dry)

Don’t ever put your jeans in the dryer. At least not if it’s high-contrast fades you’re after. Instead, let your jeans hang dry, ideally outside or in a well-ventilated place.

#8 Repair breaks early



Eventually, the denim will start tearing in places with high friction, such as the crotch area, but also around creases on the thighs and at the back of the knees.

Best practices is to NOT let the tears develop.
Get it fixed ASAP. You can do this yourself or have a professional (or your mum) to it for you. Just get it fixed!

#9 Starch your jeans

This keeps the denim crisp and stiff, which focuses the fades on your whisker, honeycombs, and other creases.

WARNING: Starching your jeans might be considered cheating in fading competitions.

#10 Join a competition

In itself, joining a competition to fade your jeans isn’t a guarantee for high contrast. But it’s highly motivational and a lot of fun.

One of the most inclusive and popular fading competitions is the Indigo Invitational.

Want more denim love?

One of the great things about raw denim is that it fades over time, creating a unique look that is specific to you and your wear patterns.

High contrast fades don't come quickly, though. There's no silver bullet. But if you follow the 10 tips above, you will achieve the fades you've always dreamt of (a little faster).

Looking for more information about denim? Or maybe you're in the market for a new pair?

Denimhunters is a knowledge hub for everything raw and denim. We help denim lovers like you make more conscious choices when you're buying denim (and other clothes for that matter).

Our online Denim Encyclopedia has answers to the most common questions about denim. Our Buying Guides help you find the best jeans, boots, shirts, and much more.

The site is also home to the consulting services that we offer. Want to learn more about how we can help you grow your business? Click on the button below to schedule an appointment with Thomas.

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