

# TEXTILE CARE...

## SOME PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



By BERNETTA KAHARKA

*Extension Clothing Specialist*

### WHEN

Before shopping in determining whether CARE is an important performance factor in relation to the item you have in mind.

### DOES

### TEXTILE

Before shopping in considering the energy, time, space, and equipment resources for CARE that you have.

### CARE

By looking for performance (what you can expect it to do) indications on the labels.

### BEGIN?

In using any textile product as it was intended to be used and caring for it as suggested.

MANY OF TODAY'S clothing and textile products, if completely washable, can be successfully laundered in automatic washers and dryers, thanks to the variety of controls which provide soak cycles, slow agitation, and temperature selection. Manufacturer's instructions of both the equipment and the fabric or article must be carefully followed to insure best results. Save and use the operation manuals with your equipment and the labels and tags found on apparel and other textile products.

This folder includes some other methods suggested for special care if no specific instructions are available. However, your best resource will always be the care information given on labels and tags attached to textile products.

**Remember:** Best results will always be obtained if textile products are cleaned before they become too soiled. Remove spots and stains as soon as possible.

### How can I remove grease stains from wash-and-wear finished fabrics and synthetic fabrics?

By pretreatment. Work a full strength liquid detergent or a paste of detergent or soap and water into the stain. Then rinse well with hot water. More than one treatment may be needed. Launder as usual.

If a grease stain still remains, follow up with a grease solvent, placing the stained area face down over absorbent paper, and working from the outside of the spot to the center and "feathering" out the solvent around the stain to avoid leaving a ring.

### Can I restore a white shirt which has been yellowed by chlorine bleach?

It may be possible to reduce the yellowing—not always completely eliminate it—by using a commercial color remover on white clothes or using a stripping agent on colored clothes. *These treatments must be done before the garment is ironed.* (Follow directions on package of a commercial remover.)

For "stripping," soak colored fabrics for ½ hour or more in a solution of one teaspoon of sodium thiosulfate (available at drugstores) to a quart of water and then rinse thoroughly.

Yellowing of a fabric that has been treated with chlorine type bleach is one indication of the presence of a chlorine retaining resin finish. Sometimes the damage doesn't show up until the garment is ironed.

Your insurance against such loss in the future is to look for labeling information regarding the use of bleaches or to look for garments with labels stating that the fabric is not affected by chlorine type bleaches. Or use a bleach which is guaranteed safe

for all fabrics. (Check information on the box or bottle of bleach.)

### ***Should I wash elasticized fabrics with synthetic detergent or a soap?***

Frequent washing of such garments (after each wearing if possible) is most important because body oils and perspiration cause deterioration of elastic. Unless otherwise definitely specified on the label with the garment, either a soap or synthetic detergent can satisfactorily be used with elastic fabrics. Rinse thoroughly.

Do not use chlorine bleach on Spandex elastic.

### ***How can one prevent clinging in washable garments?***

Clinging caused by static electricity can be reduced by using fabric softeners, or anti-static agents in the final rinse water.

### ***What can I do about the pilling on fabrics?***

Pilling results from loose fiber ends which escape from the yarn and work their way to the surface of the fabric. The fiber ends become entangled with lint to form unsightly balls especially in areas where the sleeve rubs against the body. Textile processes involving fiber length, yarn twist, and finishing methods are being developed to make fabrics more resistant to pilling. Removal measures are still somewhat unsatisfactory.

There are temporary measures which you might try:

Use mechanical means of a rough surface such as a dry sponge, sandpaper, or roller type abrasive to remove the pills from the surface. Successive treatments will be necessary.

Wash garments inside out to avoid excessive abrasion during laundering.

Use a fabric softener in the final rinse when laundering.

### ***How shall I wash a cotton dress labeled "Guaranteed To Bleed Or Fade"?***

You probably have a Madras cotton fabric from India's state of Madras. The appeal of this fabric is in the interesting colors achieved by yarns dipped in natural vegetable dyes. When the fabric is washed, these dyes fade or run together giving a muted effect which you may or may not like.

Wash your Indian Madras fabric separately. Dry

cleaning is often recommended for lined Madras garments.

American manufacturers are making "Madras-style" fabrics which are guaranteed to be color-fast.

### ***How can articles like curtains and nylon petticoats be re-stiffened?***

There are many types of starch on the market to add stiffness—some that can be sprayed on during ironing—others that are durable through several washings and are used in a rinse after washing. Follow directions carefully to achieve an even stiffness.

Drycleaners also give the service of restoring body and lustre to a fabric.

### ***How can I remove spilled cold wave solution?***

Both wave solution and neutralizer of most cold wave solutions can affect the dyestuffs in the coloration of fabrics. Color change may be slow and sometimes the damage doesn't show up until after the garment is drycleaned and stored.

Flush the stained area with cold water prior to washing or drycleaning. The drycleaner is not responsible for this damage.

### ***If I have a legitimate complaint about a textile product, how can I figure its worth?***

A "National Fair Claims Adjustment Guide for Consumer Textile Products" has been introduced by the National Institute of Drycleaning. It provides a workable means of arriving at a fair value by figuring in the age of the article, its normal life expectancy, its condition, and the cost of replacing it.

Check with any local drycleaners who are members of the National Institute of Drycleaning.

### ***How is the "Wetcleaning" process used by drycleaners?***

Wetcleaning is not merely washing in water. It is a special process used to clean garments containing moisture borne soil (for example, soiling caused by perspiration or beverage) or when drycleaning or local spotting can't remove deeply imbedded soil or large stained areas.

First, your garment is drycleaned and then carefully measured for size. It is checked for colorfastness and then gently handbrushed with soft water and mild detergents at controlled temperatures and dried quickly. It is measured and shaped to its original proportions and finished in the normal drycleaning procedure.



### **How should I hand wash knitted sweaters of synthetic fibers?**

Gently squeeze sweater in warm water (around 100° F) with synthetic detergent or a soap and water conditioner if necessary. Avoid wringing or twisting the sweater. Rinse thoroughly in *same temperature* of water until *all soap* is removed, again using water conditioner if necessary. This may take several rinses. Roll in a towel to remove excess moisture and lay flat to dry on a towel.

**EXCEPTION:**—You may have purchased a sweater of which the yarns have been engineered to insure “automatic blocking” or a return to their original shape if they are allowed to dry thoroughly after washing on a flat surface. The label will indicate complete directions on washing and drying. If by some chance, your sweater becomes stretched during wearing or washing, it can be reshaped by wetting thoroughly and then tumble drying. It’s very important that these sweaters not be overhandled or stretched when wet, in fact, after rinsing they can be just sort of bunched into shape and then allowed to dry thoroughly before handling or wearing.

### **What is the best way to hand wash a knitted woolen article such as a sweater?**

Before washing a knitted garment make a pattern out of plain paper for future use. To wash,\* turn knitted garment inside out. Dissolve two tablespoons of mild liquid soap or detergent in three or four gallons of warm water (around 100° F). Submerge garment completely. Let soak from three to five minutes. Squeeze suds gently into garment to remove all soil. Avoid wringing, twisting, any excessive agitation. When garment is clean, squeeze suds out gently. Rinse in two or three clear waters\* of same temperature to remove all suds completely. To retain lofty soft hand of wool (the light soft feeling) all soap must be removed. Compress garment against the side of bowl to remove excess moisture. Roll knitted garment between two bath towels and pat to absorb moisture and shorten drying period. Next shape knitwear on paper pattern and dry. Steam press and fold to store. Follow same procedure for any hand washable woven fabric such as a wool flannel shirt except dry by placing on well-shaped hanger at room temperature.

### **What is the best way to hand launder nylon or dacron glass curtains?**

Again, wash frequently and handle each panel separately. Fold each panel for easy handling and

wash by dipping up and down in warm water (100° F.) and a detergent plus a water conditioner if desired. Don’t wring or twist. Undiluted detergent may be gently rubbed on badly soiled areas. Rinse thoroughly in clear medium temperature water. Let drip dry. If pressing is desired use iron on a low setting.

### **What is the best way to launder fiberglass curtains?**

Both curtains and draperies last longer and look better when cleaned or laundered regularly. Curtains and drapery fabrics are subject to more severe wear conditions than we suspect.

Hand wash fiberglass curtains—one panel at a time. Fold each panel up for washing rather than gathering it into a bunch.

Use a mild soap or detergent and a medium water temperature. Water conditioner may be added. Dip up and down without rubbing, wringing or twisting. Rinse thoroughly in clear clean water. Roll gently in a towel or hang over a rod to allow excess water to run off. The curtains may be rehung while still slightly damp. Don’t iron. Smooth out hems with flat of fingers. You may want to use rubber gloves to avoid irritation to the skin.

### **How should I store winter clothes?**

When storing winter clothing the most important thing is to be sure they’re clean or all summer long you’ll be providing good munching for the moths who feed on dirt and food stains. Also make any repairs so that the clothes are “ready-to-go” the following fall.

Follow directions given with any reliable moth preventive, and be sure to use enough to supply a heavy concentration of vapor. It’s usually best to place moth balls or crystals between thin sheets of paper in the folds of garments to avoid any possible discoloration. Then, to be *completely* safe, seal garments tightly (hang in garment bags or lay flat in large boxes) and store them away for the summer in a cool dry place, leaving plenty of air space in each bag or container.

Storing in cedar chests or cedar lined closets will be satisfactory only when there are no moth eggs present in the garments.

Sweaters and knits should be stored flat so they won’t stretch out of shape. Fold marks can be eliminated by carefully lining the garment with tissue paper before folding.

Articles like mittens, gloves and scarves can be cleaned and sealed into boxes with gummed paper. Moths won’t eat through paper—but make certain there aren’t any holes or tears in boxes or paper bags

\* Use of a water conditioner is needed in many areas.

you use for storage. You might mark each box used with a label of contents. You can also safely store felt hats at home in airtight containers with moth crystals.

When home storage is limited you'll find that dry-cleaners provide specialized storage services.

### *What about storing summer clothes?*

Putting away CLEAN clothes is the first and major thing to keep in mind. Cotton fabrics are not immune

to moths by any means although wool seems to be their favorite diet.

Storing soiled cottons and linens invites destruction from the continued chemical reaction of perspiration stains and other spots.

Storage in a cool, dry place is recommended no matter what the season. Damp basements are an invitation to mildew.

Your motto for clothing storage is:

**Store Clean Clothes in a Clean Dry Place**

### ADDITIONAL READING

Other Extension bulletins which will be of help to you in your care of clothing are:

400 *Using Modern Laundry Aids*

402 *Easy Care—Do I Select It at the Store?*

403 *Give Labels a Try Before You Buy*

404 *Keeping Clothes in Service*

*U.S.D.A. Home and Garden Bulletin No. 62  
Removing Stains From Fabrics*

*U.S.D.A. Home and Garden Bulletin No. 8 How  
to Prevent & Remove Mildew*

Single copies may be obtained free by writing to:

Michigan State University  
Bulletin Office  
P.O. Box 231  
East Lansing, Michigan