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Stain Out! washable fabrics

Michigan State University

Cooperative Extension Service

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January 1983

6 pages

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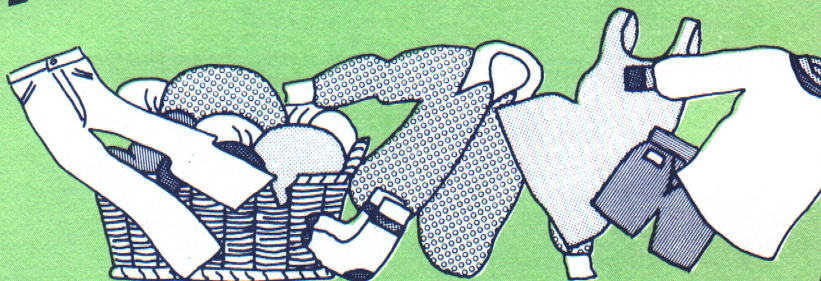
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# Stain Out!

## washable fabrics

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## Getting Ready

- 1—Identify stain, if possible.
- 2—Check to see if garment is washable.
- 3—If washable, can it be bleached? What kind of bleach is recommended for this particular fabric (example—chlorine or non-chlorine)?
- 4—Study the information in this chart for **materials** and tools to use.
- 5—Assemble tools and materials.
- 6—Test for color change of fabric on a hidden part of the garment.

## Stain-Out Procedures

- Protect working surfaces by covering counters or tables with aluminum foil; use a heavy glass pie plate or casserole as a stain removal work surface.
- Use clean, soft, white cloth or paper towels to absorb stains and apply stain-removal products.
- Blot excess stain immediately—do not rub into fabric.
- Treat stains as soon as possible; old stains are more difficult to remove than fresh stains.
- Use the bowl of a stainless steel spoon to loosen stains. Short, light strokes are less likely to damage the fabric.
- Work in a well-ventilated area, and do not leave containers open while using dry-cleaning solvents. Most stain-removing agents—especially dry-cleaning agents—are extremely harmful.
- Use dry-cleaning solvents before water treatments.
- Use cool water, as heat sets some stains.
- Work carefully and patiently. Use light, brushing motions on stained areas; work from the center of the stain to the edge; avoid circular motions as rings can develop.
- Follow procedures until stain is removed; stop treatment and launder. Take large or difficult stains to a professional dry cleaner. Inform them what the stain is and what you have done to remove it.



## **Ball point pens**

Apply a few drops of glycerine, and work with spoon. Blot to absorb stain; repeat as long as stain is absorbed. Rinse with water. Apply wet spotter or pre-wash soil and stain remover and a few drops of ammonia. Use spoon to gently work stain. Rinse or wash. Color stain can be removed by using chlorine bleach.

## **Grass**

Test for color change on a hidden part of the garment (seams) with alcohol and chlorine bleach solution, and—if there is no color change—proceed. Sponge the stain with alcohol and let dry. Sponge with cool water. Work with liquid detergent into the stained area. Rinse with water. Let dry. Soak in mixture of 1 quart warm water and 1 tablespoon enzyme product for 30 minutes. Rinse thoroughly. Launder in hot water with bleach if fiber will permit.

## **Coffee and tea**

### **Cough syrup**

### **Soft drink**

### **Whiskey, wine or beer**

Treat as soon as possible. Soak in mixture of 1 quart warm water, ½ teaspoon detergent and 1 tablespoon white vinegar for 15 minutes. Rinse sponge with alcohol. Wash. Soak in mixture of 1 quart warm water and 1 tablespoon enzyme product for 30 minutes. Wash. Remove color stain with chlorine bleach if fabric permits.

## **Asphalt**

### **Chewing gum**

### **Cod liver oil**

### **Vegetable oil**

Remove excess gummy matter with blunt knife. Sponge with dry cleaning solvent. Cover stain with cloth saturated with dry spotter or pre-wash soil and stain remover. Loosen stain with spoon. Flush with dry cleaning solvent. Dry. Launder as desired.

## **Fabric softener**

Rub stained area with hand soap, and launder as usual. Caution! Never pour undiluted fabric softener directly on fabric. Dilute softener with water before using.



## Antiperspirants

## Deodorants

## Mercurochrome

## Perspiration

## Urine

## Fruit (Juices, Preserves,

## Jelly, Jam)

## Suntan lotion

## Mud

## Rust

## Invisible stains

## Rings

Soak in mixture of 1 quart warm water,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon detergent and 1 tablespoon ammonia for 30 minutes. Rinse with water. Soak in 1 quart warm water and 1 tablespoon white vinegar for 1 hour. Rinse and dry. Moisten and keep moist with alcohol; use spoon or rub between thumbs to loosen stain. rinse with water. Remove color stain with chlorine bleach solution.

Soak in mixture of 1 quart warm water, 1 tablespoon white vinegar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dishwashing detergent for 15 minutes. Rinse with warm water. Sponge with alcohol. Wash. Soak in mixture of 1 quart warm water, 1 tablespoon enzyme product for 30 minutes. Wash. Remove color stain with bleach solution.

Approach with care. Rust removers are available in supermarkets and hardware centers. Use only on washable fabrics. **Launder immediately** after use so as to rinse out rust remover; if not removed, it can burn the skin. It may be better to send rust stains to the professional dry cleaners.

Many stains don't show until garments have been in contact with heat through washing, drying or ironing. Usually these are fruit and beverage stains. Try recommendation for fruit and juice stains or send to professional dry cleaners.

When getting stains out at home, rings often form. These are accumulations of fabric finishes or residue from the stain which the solvent spreads out to the far edges of the area. When getting stains out, blot frequently with paper towels, rinse and launder and bleach according to recommendation for each stain.



# Stain-Out Products

You may have stain removal products right in your own household. You can buy others in supermarkets, drug stores and hardware centers.

**ALCOHOL** (Rubbing alcohol) can dissolve some stains and remove color in other stains. When working with acetate, dilute the alcohol with two parts water to one part alcohol.

**AMMONIA** restores color in some stained areas. On wool and silk, dilute with an equal part of water.

**BLEACH** removes color in some stains. Test by mixing 1 teaspoon **chlorine** bleach and 3 teaspoons water, and apply to a hidden area of the garment. Wait 3 minutes. If the color has changed, discard the chlorine bleach solution. Try the oxygen bleach (**Snow or Chlorox 2**) which is safe for most fabrics. Use 1 or 2 tablespoons to 2 cups water. If color changes, do not use the oxygen bleach. See Hydrogen Peroxide.

**DETERGENTS** effectively get stains out, especially the concentrated liquid, hand-dishwashing form. The clear or white types work best. Examples include *Joy* and *Lux*.

**DRY CLEANING SOLVENTS** are effective grease solvents, but they can be harmful to the user. Use with extreme care in a well-ventilated room. Don't smoke while using. Place cap on container when finished. Avoid contact with hands. Brand names include *Energine* and *Carbona*.

**ENZYME PRODUCTS** break down food compounds into a more soluble form. Commercial brands include *Axion* and *Biz*. Do not mix these products with water until ready to use.

**FINGERNAIL POLISH REMOVER** can be used on some stains. Do not use on acetate, triacetate fibers, modacrylics, plastic film or furniture finish. Follow with a dry-cleaning solvent.

**GLYCERINE** is an effective lubricant. Use it to remove ballpoint ink and in preparation of a wet spotter.

**MINERAL OIL** is used in preparing dry spotter.

**SPOTTERS** contain the appropriate solvent, lubricant and, in some cases, detergent to facilitate stain removal.

**WHITE VINEGAR** restores chemical balance and/or color after using ammonia. Do not use colored vinegar.

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## DRY SPOTTER

**MIX:**  
1 teaspoon mineral oil with  
8 teaspoons dry cleaning solvent.  
Label and store in tightly capped  
glass or metal container.  
Use on greasy stains.  
It compares with commercial aerosol  
pre-wash soil and stain remover.

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## WET SPOTTER

**MIX:**  
1 tablespoon glycerine  
1 tablespoon liquid detergent  
½ cup water  
Label.  
Shake well before each use. Use on  
non-greasy stains.  
It compares with the pump variety of  
commercial pre-wash soil and stain  
removal.

**Keep all of these materials out of the reach of children!**



# Stain

# How to Stain-Out

**Crayon, wax or grease**  
**Make-up**  
**Paint — solvent or water**  
emulsion types  
**Smoke**

**Catsup**  
**Chocolate**  
**Gravy**  
**Salad Dressing**

**Blood**  
**Mouthwash**  
**Fish slime**  
**Vomit**

**Contact cement**  
**Fingernail polish**  
**Mimeograph correction**  
fluid  
**Varnish**

Scrape off gummy matter. Sponge with dry cleaning solvent. Apply dry spotter or pre-wash soil and stain remover. Work with spoon. Flush with dry cleaning solvent. Dry, and apply wet spotter and a few drops of ammonia. Work with spoon. Bleach if fabric will permit.

Sponge with dry cleaning solvent. Apply wet spotter or pre-wash soil and stain remover. Work with spoon. Blot. Flush with dry cleaning solvent. Dry. Rinse with water, add a few drops of detergent and ammonia. Work with a spoon. Rinse. Soak in mixture of 1 quart warm water, 1 tablespoon enzyme product for 30 minutes. Rinse. If stain remains, use a few drops of hydrogen peroxide and ammonia. Use this solution no longer than 15 minutes. Rinse.

Treat as soon as possible. Soak in mixture of 1 quart warm water, ½ teaspoon detergent and 1 tablespoon white vinegar for 15 minutes. Rinse. If stain remains, soak in a solution of 1 quart warm water and 1 tablespoon enzyme product for 30 minutes. For a blood stain that is not completely removed, wet the stain with hydrogen peroxide and add a drop of ammonia for another 15 minutes. Rinse very well.

Sponge with dry cleaning solvent. Apply dry spotter. Let stand 15 minutes. Flush with dry cleaning solvent. Repeat. Allow to dry. Apply amyl acetate and cover with absorbent material dampened with amyl acetate. Keep moist for 15 minutes. Flush with dry cleaning solvent. Bleaching may remove final traces of stain.



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### References:

Stain Removal from Washable Fabrics. MP 37 by Betty Feather. University of Missouri, Extension Division.  
Removing Stains from Fabrics. HG 62. U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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O-14062