

STAIN REMOVAL CHART FOR WASHABLE CLOTHING

Becky Culp*

Damage created by spots and stains or their improper removal is one of the most common causes of discarded clothing. This chart is intended as a guide to extend the clothing dollar by minimizing replacements for damaged clothing.

Principles of Stain Removal

- Know as much about the stain and fabric as possible. Refer to the garment's permanent care label.
- Heat sets in stains. Do not press a stained fabric or dry in the dryer.
- Stains should be treated quickly. Old stains may be impossible to remove.
- Old remedies such as applying milk to ink stains are unreliable. The milk may produce an additional stain.
- Stain removers should be tested on an underside seam or facing to determine if harmful. Watch for any change in color, appearance or texture.
- Instructions for the use, storage and safety of all cleaning agents should be followed carefully. Always use in a well ventilated room.
- Excess stains should be carefully blotted or scraped from the surface.
- Large and difficult stains should be left to a professional drycleaner. Point out the location and type of stain, if known.
- Some stains, such as soft drink or fruit juices, may be invisible or difficult to see because of fabric design.
- Do not mix stain removers (especially ammonia and chlorine bleach). If more than one remover is needed, rinse thoroughly between the use of each.

How to Identify Unknown Stains

- Observe the color, appearance and location on the garment.
- Smell the odor.
- Feel the texture.

Removing Unknown Stains

Unknown stains in a drycleanable garment should be taken to a professional drycleaner. The following sequence, beginning with the mildest action, can be followed without damaging washable garments, as long as the procedure is stopped when it becomes harmful to the fabric. Manufacturers' directions should be followed carefully for all products used.

- ↓ Severity ↓
1. Soak in cold water for 30 minutes.
 2. Work detergent** into the stain and allow to remain 30 minutes and rinse.
 3. Launder using a bleach* safe for the fabric.
 4. Soak overnight in a presoaking agent. Those containing enzymes attack protein stains.
 5. Launder with detergent** in water temperature as hot as suitable for fabric.
 6. Sponge with grease solvent***. Repeat if necessary, rinse and launder.
 7. Launder using a commercial rust or color remover*.
 8. Mix equal parts bleach* (safe for the fabric) and water. Apply directly to the stain. If stain remains, it cannot be removed.

TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
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Common Stains and How to Remove Them

Most common spots and stains will be removed by prompt and correct washing practices. However, some stains do require special procedures. The complexity of today's dyes, fabrics and finishes makes it difficult to satisfactorily remove all stains without damaging the fabric. However, the following procedures will prove satisfactory in the majority of cases. Removal procedures may need to be repeated several times.

After following the recommended treatment, work in liquid detergent and rinse to remove any residue from stain solvents. Then, if a slight stain remains, launder in water as hot as suitable for the fabric along with an appropriate bleach*. Refer to the garment's permanent care label for warnings concerning water temperature, bleach and overall washability and the reverse side of this publication for additional stain removal information.

STAIN	REMOVAL
Adhesive tape Chewing gum	For gum, first harden by rubbing with ice. Remove remaining stain with a grease solvent***.
Asphalt Tar	Sponge immediately with a grease solvent***. Repeat. Stain may be impossible to remove.
Beverages (alcoholic and soft drinks) Perfumes	Sponge in cool water and glycerine. Soak 30 minutes. Sponge with alcohol*** if safe for fabric.
Blood Carbon paper (regular) Pencil, lead	Sponge with cool water. Soak 30 minutes. Rub liquid detergent** into area, rinse. If stain remains, apply a few drops of ammonia*** and repeat detergent treatment. Lead pencil may be removed from some fabrics with a soft eraser.
Butter, cream and milk Chocolate Cosmetics Gravy and sauces Grease, oil and wax Mayonnaise Vomit	Soak stain in cold water for 30 minutes. Work detergent** into stain. Rinse and dry. If stain remains, sponge with a grease solvent*** and dry. Repeat if necessary.
Candle wax Paraffin	Carefully scrape excess off surface. Place between several layers of paper tissue and press with warm iron. Remove remaining stain with a grease solvent***.
Candy (non-chocolate) Coffee and tea (no cream) Egg Vegetables and catsup	Sponge stain with cold water. Soak for 30 minutes.
Carbon paper (duplicating) Ink (ballpoint)	Sponge with alcohol***. If stain remains, sponge with grease solvent***.
Crayon	Carefully scrape off excess. Sponge detergent** onto stain. Rinse and dry. If stain remains, sponge with grease solvent***.
Deodorants Perspiration	Sponge with detergent**. Launder in water temperature and bleach suitable for fabric. Color may or may not be restored by sponging fresh stains with ammonia*** and old stains with vinegar***. Rinse. For oil stains, sponge with grease solvent***.
Fingernail polish	Sponge with nail polish remover***.
Fruits, berries and juices	Sponge immediately with cool water. If safe for fabric, pour boiling water through stain. Work detergent** into stain, rinse.

STAIN	REMOVAL
Grass	Work detergent** into the stain and rinse. If safe for dye, moisten with alcohol***.
Mildew	If safe for fabric, moisten with lemon juice* and salt to dry in the sun or sponge with hydrogen peroxide*.
Mimeograph fluid	Depending upon the type of fluid and fabric, sponge with alcohol***, turpentine or nail polish remover***.
Mud	Let dry and brush. Soak in cold water. For iron clay soils remove same as rust. If stain remains, sponge with alcohol***.
Mustard	Work glycerine into stain. Rinse. Launder. Prolonged soaking may be necessary. If stain remains, sponge with alcohol***.
Paint and varnish	Treat if possible before the stain dries. Sponge with thinner solvent recommended on the label or turpentine. While still wet with solvent, apply detergent** and soak. Launder. Repeat if necessary. Stain may be impossible to remove.
Ring-around-the-collar	Apply detergent** and let set 30 minutes. Launder.
Rust	Sprinkle salt on the stain and moisten with lemon juice* if safe for fabric. Dry in sun and rinse. Repeat, if necessary. Commercial rust and/or color removers* may be used as directed.
Scorch	Work detergent** into stain immediately. Rinse. If stain remains, apply hydrogen peroxide*. Rinse. Severe scorch damages fabrics and cannot be removed.
Shoe polish	Due to various kinds, several methods may need to be used. First, work detergent** into stain and rinse. Sponge with alcohol** and rinse. Apply grease solvent*** or turpentine.
Urine	Soak 30 minutes in cool water. Work in detergent** and rinse. Launder in bleach* safe for fabric. If fabric color has changed, sponge with ammonia**. If stain remains, sponge with white vinegar***.
Yellowing, age	Wash in hot water and as strong a bleach* as safe for fabric. Prolonged soaking may be necessary. Use a color remover* on white fabrics.

Stain Removers

Manufacturers' directions should be carefully followed for maximum results.

*BLEACHES

Chlorine bleaches are identified by "hypochlorite." Usually liquid, they should not be used on wool, silk, polyurethane foam, spandex or blends of these fibers; on finishes such as embossed, durable press or flame retardant; and on certain dyes. If in doubt about bleachability of dyes, apply one drop of mixture containing 1 tablespoon bleach to ¼ cup water. Let stand one minute and examine for color change. Never apply bleach directly to clothing. Always bleach the entire garment.

Color removers are safe for all fabrics but will remove most dyes. Use when bleaches are not effective.

Commercial rust removers (oxalic acid) may change the color of some dyes. Do not let come in contact with the skin.

Hydrogen peroxide (3% solution) may change the color of some dyes. Strength is lost during storage.

Lemon juice may damage fabric or color.

Oxygen bleaches are usually dry and safe for all fabrics and colors. Do not use on fabrics with flame retardant finishes. Oxygen bleaches are more effective in warm and hot water and for an extended wash or soak time.

**DETERGENTS

Enzyme detergents aid in removing protein stains such as food and blood, ground-in dirt, grass stains, perspiration, and in restoring whiteness. They are most effective when allowed to soak with warm water. Chlorine bleach inactivates enzymes.

Granular detergents should be made into a paste with water to be worked into stains.

Liquid detergents can be applied directly.

***SOLVENTS

For Non-greasy Stains—

Ammonia. Use nonsudsy household ammonia. May change the color of some dyes. Moistening with vinegar may or may not restore color.

Fingernail polish remover (acetone) is not safe for acetate, triacetate and modacrylic fabrics. Use amyl acetate.

Isopropyl (rubbing alcohol). Dilute to two parts water for one part alcohol on acetate. May remove color.

White household vinegar may change the color of some dyes. Moistening with ammonia may or may not restore color.

For Greasy Stains—

Buy those containing perchloroethylene or trichloroethylene. Note: Do not use carbon tetra-

chloride, gasoline or lighter fluid due to extreme dangers involved.

Procedures for Using Solvents:

—Place stain face down on clean white paper towels or a cloth. Replace towels or cloth frequently to prevent stain transfer.

—Test for color or fabric change on underside seam or facing.

—Apply stain remover sparingly to the underside with a clean, soft and lintless cloth. This forces the stain off the surface and out of the fabric.

—Do not rub. A light or worn look may result.

—Avoid circling and spreading the stain by using small amounts of solvent, working from the outside of the stain toward the center. Use light brushing strokes.

—Repeat procedure if necessary.

—Allow solvent to dry, then launder.

Solvents are also available in aerosol sprays and tubes. Carefully follow manufacturers' directions for use of each. These products are especially effective on ring-around-the collar, food stains and oily stains on durable press and synthetics.

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