

Dry Cleaning at Home

(Revision of Circular 312)

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Since there is risk in the use of all dry cleaning solutions, due to the fact that they are either inflammable, explosive, or both, it is recommended that the work be done out-of-doors away from buildings and fire, and preferably on a bright clear day. Garments should not be rubbed since friction may cause an electric spark, and a washing machine should not be used. If a fire does result, smother it with a blanket or rug; do not use water because it spreads the fire. Always dry and thoroughly air cleaned garments out-of-doors. Do not press garments until thoroughly dry. If the solution is spilled on the wearer's clothing, remove the garments and leave them out-of-doors.

Whether it pays to do one's own dry cleaning depends on the comparative cost of commercial cleaning and of cleaning fluids. Some materials absorb more fluid than others, and therefore, are more expensive to clean at home, while the dry cleaner's price may be the same for all garments. It is usually economical to have heavy coats and suits cleaned at the dry cleaners.

The skill of the homemaker in pressing and removing spots, and the care she will take in careful rinsing as well as in having sufficient equipment, are also points to consider in deciding whether or not to do dry cleaning at home. Garments as heavy coats, that are difficult to press or that require special pressing boards or pads for successful work, should be sent to the cleaner as should also those with spots that are difficult to remove. An experienced reliable dry cleaner can not only remove the spots more efficiently, but he can restore the color that the spot remover may have removed or changed.

Four Types of Dry Cleaning Fluids

1. *Fluids that are non-inflammable and non-explosive but that have toxic fumes.* Carbon tetrachloride is this kind of a cleaning fluid and when used in large amounts it should be handled out-of-doors. It is expensive for general dry cleaning but practical for emergency cleaning or spot removal when only a small quantity is needed.
2. *Fluids that are non-inflammable and non-explosive when fresh but which may become both explosive and inflammable when exposed to the air for a time.* This fluid is made of a mixture of carbon tetrachloride and a highly refined petroleum. The carbon tetrachloride evaporates more quickly than the petroleum product. Therefore, using the fluid repeatedly is unsafe.
3. *Fluids that are non-explosive under ordinary atmosphere conditions but are inflammable.* Cleaning solvent which conforms to Stoddard's specifications is non-explosive under ordinary atmospheric conditions and, therefore, is not as dangerous to use as is gasoline or cleaners' naphtha. However, the solvent is inflammable and should be kept away from the fire. This solvent is often sold under trade names, and may be purchased through local filling stations.
4. *Fluids that are always explosive and inflammable.* These are *never recommended* for dry cleaning purposes because the risk to life and property is too great. Gasoline, benzine, and cleaners' naphtha belong in this class.

Method of Cleaning Garments

The directions which follow are given only for dry cleaning fluids which are non-explosive when used as suggested.

1. Dust garment or hat well with a clothes brush.
2. Remove such spots as mud, paint, varnish, medicine, lacquer and paraffin. Fresh stains are more easily removed than old ones. The chemical compounds of certain stain removers react on the fiber, permanently damaging the cloth or color so that before applying any reagent to the spot, test it on a small piece of the cloth, removed from the hem, seam or belt. The effect of the reagent may be more disastrous than the spot.
3. Prepare solvent bath in a container which is large enough to hold the garment without packing. If the garment is very soiled, add dry cleaning soap, following directions given with soap.

Partly fill with boiling water a tub or dishpan large enough to hold the vessel containing the solvent. Set the vessel in the larger container a few minutes before beginning to work, in order that the solvent may be heated.

Dip garment up and down in solvent, using smooth sticks or glass rods rather than the hands. Tap the soiled parts with a brush. Squeeze out by hand. Do not rub as it may remove some of the color and friction may cause fire.

Rinse garment thoroughly in clean solvent bath, repeating if necessary. It is important to rinse in plenty of solvent.

Wring out by hand. Shake garment. Hang out-of-doors and in the sunshine unless the garment will fade.

4. Look for spots and remove with spotting fluids according to directions which follow. Some spots are located by looking through the garment toward the light while the garment is still damp. Others appear only when the garment is dry. Mark around the spots with thread of contrasting color. Spotting mixture is made of half water and half dry cleaning solvent and is useful for food spots containing sugar or starch and for perspiration stains, as it is less apt to remove color or leave water rings.

To Use Spotting Mixture

1. Dip garment in cleaning solvent which has been used for rinsing.
2. Put the garment, wet with the solvent, wrong side out and with the spot over a bath towel. Use a medicine dropper or spoon to apply the spotting mixture or other water solution. Tap the spot with a brush and absorb moisture with a cloth. Having the garment wet with the solvent helps to prevent water rings and fading of color.
3. Rinse garment in fresh solvent. Squeeze, shake and dry out-of-doors.
4. If water ring appears when completely dry, rub fabric gently. If this fails to remove water line, sponge fabric with either water or water and alcohol solution. Wring the cloth which is to be used in the sponging process until almost dry. Brush over with light motions, spreading moisture evenly.

5. Cleaning fluid may be used more than once provided it is *clarified*. This may be done by adding a solution made by dissolving two heaping tablespoons of sal soda in one pint of warm water to each gallon of used solvent. Stir vigorously, cover tightly and allow to stand 24 hours. Dirt and water will sink to the bottom. Remove scum from top. Pour clear solvent into a clean container. Use clarified solvent for darker colors in future cleaning, not for white or light colored garments.
6. When the cleaning is completed, wash the hands with water, and then rub them with oil, grease, hand lotion, or cold cream.

Pressing Cleaned Garments

Do not press garments until all cleaning solution has evaporated. Press on right side of garment, using heavy pressing cloth, such as canvas or ticking. Should the material require dampening, sponge over the pressing cloth rather than the garment. Place a piece of paper under pleats, coat lapels, or collars to prevent marking when ironing the edges against the body of the garment.

Emergency Cleaning

The cleaning of a soiled coat collar or hat lining freshens the appearance of the garment temporarily, but is not a substitute for dry cleaning the whole article.

If a garment becomes spotted it is better to clean the entire garment unless it is perfectly clean except for the spots. Most spots disappear in the dry cleaning operations. Removing an occasional spot from silk fabrics is more difficult to accomplish than from woolen.

To Clean A Soiled Coat Collar:—1. Place collar over a folded towel. 2. Tap and wipe soiled part with a brush dipped in solvent or rub more vigorously with carbon tetrachloride. 3. Rub over with dry absorbent towel to take up dirt freed by solvent. 4. Sponge over with a piece of turkish toweling dipped in clean solvent. Increase saturated area to the edge of collar. 5. Rub until dry. In case a ring surrounds the part cleaned, repeat the process. If results remain unsatisfactory, the whole garment should be dry cleaned.

To Clean Leather Gloves:—1. Dissolve $\frac{2}{3}$ ounce (about 2 tablespoons) of finely shaved paraffin in one quart of warm solvent. 2. Put gloves in jar. Pour in the paraffin solvent and cover and soak 30 minutes. 3. Remove gloves, and scrub seams and soiled parts with a small dry brush dipped in paraffin bath. 4. Rinse

gloves in a clean bath of the paraffin solvent. Squeeze out by hand, and rub dry with a soft cotton cloth. 5. Polish gloves with a flannel or flannelette cloth.

To Clean Furs:—Brush furs with a stiff, coarse brush, shake and sun frequently. Better furs should be cleaned by an experienced furrier rather than by a dry cleaning establishment or by the person owning the fur. For old or inexpensive furs, use the paraffin methods as follows:

1. Dry-clean fur by dipping and squeezing in a solvent bath for five minutes.
2. Remove as much solvent as possible by wiping with a soft cotton cloth.
3. Soak for 5 minutes in a paraffin bath made by dissolving 3 level tablespoonfuls of finely shaved paraffin in one quart of warm solvent.
4. Remove. Shake out and dry in the air.

To Clean Hats:—The following method can be used for felt and straw hats and for silk, fabric or velvet ones which are not glued to a frame.

1. Immerse hat in solvent bath without crowding or crushing. Soak thirty minutes if very soiled.
2. Scrub soiled places with a brush. Scrub leather sweat band on men's hats. If there are spots of oil, kerosene may be applied half an hour before hat is put in first solvent bath.
3. Pour clean solvent over hat for rinsing.
4. If lining is stained with perspiration return hat to last rinse, then apply spotting mixture in the same way as used in cleaning garments.
5. Blot out as much of the solvent as possible with a soft cotton cloth.
6. Hang in the air to dry thoroughly. Pin to line with safety pins through sweat band or lining.
7. If crown needs reblocking, when hat is dry dampen inside slightly with steam. Stretch over block, resteam and allow to dry on the block. The blocking may be done more quickly by placing a heavy cloth over the hat; dampening the cloth and pressing with a warm iron. The brim can also be pressed with a warm iron.
8. For velvet or fabric hats which have the fabric glued to the frame—clean by brushing over lightly with a little solvent. Absorb this immediately with soft cotton cloth.

Methods and Reagents for Removing Specific Spots

Most stains may be removed easily at home, if reliable methods are known and a few simple precautions taken. The following points should be considered:

- (a) Prompt treatment is one of the most important rules since changes in the character of the stains occur by drying, washing, ironing, or in other ways such as exposure to sunlight.
- (b) The nature of the stain should be known, if possible, before its removal is attempted, because this determines the treatment. If an unsuitable remover is used, the stain may be "set" so that its removal becomes difficult or even impossible.
- (c) The kind of fabric upon which the stain occurs should be considered and the method of treatment chosen which will affect that particular fabric the least. (Removing spots from washable materials is always a simpler process than from materials which may be injured by water.)
- (d) The kind of stain remover used should be selected according to the kind and color of fabric to be cleaned. Remember to avoid using strong alkalis on wool and silk and strong acids on cotton, linens and many rayons.
- (e) Select the best method of application according to the fabric to be treated and the reagent used.
- (f) Before using first test the reagent to be used on a piece cut from a seam or scrap of the goods.

Choose the stain remover which will be used after the above points are noted.

Blood:—1. Sponge with cold or lukewarm water except for silks which will spot. 2. Apply hydrogen peroxide to which a few drops of ammonia have been added. 3. Apply corn starch paste which is brushed out when dry. Repeat.

Coffee or Tea:—Sponge with clear water, then use hydrogen peroxide solution containing a small amount of ammonia.

Food Spots:—Food spots are usually of three types: (1) Fat, which is removed by solvents; (2) sugar and starch which are removed by water solution; and (3) protein, such as meat, egg and milk, which may require both dry cleaning fluid and water solutions.

If caused by foods containing large amounts of fat, sprinkle the spot with talcum powder or Fuller's Earth. Rub gently to permit

powder to work through fabric. Sprinkle more talcum and let stand for a half hour. Brush powder out. If spot is not removed, use carbon tetrachloride or a similar commercial product as follows:

1. Place garment over folded dry towel with wrong side up.
2. Sponge spot with solvent in a wider area than the spot, working toward center with a soft absorbent cloth until dry. If spot or ring remains, repeat. If unsuccessful, the entire garment may require dipping in a solvent bath.

For sugar spots test a piece cut from a seam of the garment or a scrap of material with water solution. If color runs, the results will mean a lighter place after spot has been removed. Pursue the same method as for fatty spots, using the spotting mixture instead of solvent.

For spots caused by meat, egg, or milk, use solvent first, followed by spotting mixture.

Fruit Stains:—1. Sponge, if fabric permits, with warm water when the stain is fresh. Do not use soap. 2. Sponge with 10 per cent solution of acetic acid, (a mild bleach). Neutralize with baking soda solution after stain is removed. Sponge with clear water.

Grass Stain:—1. Use hot water and soap if material is washable, rubbing the stain vigorously. 2. Try ether or wood or denatured alcohol.

Ink:—In families where there are children or others who are careless with ink, a wise precaution is to buy ink labeled "water soluble" rather than "permanent."

1. Apply starch to a fresh stain while still moist to absorb ink before spreading. When dry, brush it out completely.
2. Apply soapy water if fabric will permit.
3. Use commercial ink removers, following directions explicitly. These are apt to remove color and to injure wool and silk.

Lacquer:—1. Sponge freely with lacquer thinner. Rinse several times in solvent.

Medicine:—Many medicines are soluble in alcohol. To remove entirely it is well to know what is in them.

1. Sponge with water and alcohol mixture.
2. Sponge with alcohol.
3. For iodine, apply sodaphene.

Mud:—Allow to dry. Brush thoroughly before trying to remove. 1. Sponge with soapy water if fabric permits. 2. Sponge with a solution of alcohol and water. 3. Sponge with alcohol.

Oil Paints and Varnish:—Scrape off whatever fresh paint is free before starting to remove the stains. 1. Apply solvent to both sides. 2. Sponge with pure turpentine. Rinse several times with clear solvent. 3. Apply a mixture of glacial acetic acid with chloroform. 4. Apply a solution made from equal parts of benzol, acetone, and alcohol.

Oranges, Grapefruit, and Lemons:—Sponge with water and neutralize with a weak solution of baking soda. When the acid is neutralized, the bubbles cease. Sponge with clear water.

Paraffin:—Scrape off the surplus before trying to remove. Press between two thicknesses of blotting paper, using a warm iron. Apply solvent. If colored as in colored candles, remove paraffin as directed above, then dissolve the remaining dye with wood alcohol.

Perspiration Stains:—1. Sponge with soapy water if the fabric permits. 2. Apply hydrogen peroxide to which a few drops of ammonia have been added. Discoloration from perspiration will not be removed.

Salad Dressing, Gravy, Egg, Milk, Cream, Sugar, Chewing Gum, Chocolate, Fly Paper, and Adhesive Tape:—Apply dry cleaning solvent. Dry cleaning usually removes these. If it does not, apply the spotting mixture.

Scorch:—Scorch on cotton and linen sometimes can be removed, if the fibers are not actually burned. Wool and silk can not be restored to their original condition after being scorched, but wool may be improved by brushing with emery paper.

Shellac and Alcohol Paints:—Sponge freely with alcohol. Rinse several times with solvent.

Tar, Road Oil, Axle Grease:—1. Apply kerosene to stains. Dry clean. 2. Rub lard through stains, if fabric is washable and wash in hot water and soap. 3. Sponge stains with carbon tetrachloride or turpentine. Wash thoroughly in soap and water.

Water Spots:—1. Rub spot gently between fingers. 2. Sponge the garment evenly with water and press while it is still damp. 3. Press over a damp pressing cloth. 4. Steam garment by hanging it in a bath room over a tub full of very hot water.

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