

# HOW TO REMOVE STAINS



## GENERAL RULES

**TREAT PROMPTLY.** A fresh stain comes out more easily than an old one.

**FIND OUT WHAT MADE THE STAIN.** Some stains are set by treatment that would remove others.

**CONSIDER THE MATERIAL.** White and colored goods, cotton, linen, silk, and wool should not always be treated in the same way.

**TRY SIMPLE METHODS.** They often do the work and are not likely to harm the material.

**WORK CAREFULLY.** Experiment on a sample. Rub gently. Haste makes waste in taking out spots.

**KEEP ALL STAIN REMOVERS TOGETHER** in a special place and properly labeled. Mark "Poison" on poisonous ones.



*Thrift Leaflet No. 6*

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & TREASURY DEPARTMENT



## STAIN REMOVERS AND HOW TO USE THEM

Some stains may be removed by brushing or rubbing, others must be treated with special stain removers. Some are made by a combination of substances, and it may take a combination of methods to remove them.

**ABSORBENTS.** These are the simplest and safest cleaning agents. Common ones are blotting paper, unglazed paper, talcum, French chalk, fuller's earth, starch, meals, and sawdust. They are used chiefly for grease stains, blood and ink stains, and freshly spilled liquids.

**To use absorbents.** Cover grease spots with a powdered absorber, let stand several hours, then brush. Or lay the material on white blotting or unglazed paper and cover with powder or more paper; apply a warm iron; repeat, using fresh powder or paper until the stain is entirely removed. Cover dry blood and ink stains with starch paste; when the paste dries and discolors, brush off and repeat until the stain disappears. Cover freshly spilled liquids with powder, meal, or bits of blotting paper; this prevents the liquid from spreading and sinking into the material.

**SOLVENTS.** These dissolve grease, sugar, and some other substances that hold stains in fabrics. The most common solvent is water; others are alcohol, benzine, carbon, tetrachloride, chloroform, ether, gasoline, kerosene and turpentine.

**To use water.** Soak washable goods in cold water and wash with cold or tepid water and white soap. Use hot water in the same way or by spreading the stained goods over a bowl and pouring boiling water from a height. *Caution:* Hot water sets some stains, such as blood, meat juice, milk and egg.

Place non-washable materials over a pad of white cloth or absorbent paper. Sponge, using very little water at a time. Change the pad as it becomes soiled or wet. Rub gently till dry. *Caution:* Water should not be used on some materials because it spots them.

**To use other solvents.** Place the stained goods over a pad of cloth or paper and apply the solvent, using a glass rod or a stick with a rounded end. Work from the edge of the stain toward the center. Surrounding the spot with powder keeps the liquid from spreading and helps to prevent a ring forming. Change the pad as it becomes soiled or wet.

**NEUTRALIZERS.** If the stain is made by an acid, treat it with an alkaline substance. If it is made by an alkali, weak acid may restore the color. Acids and alkalies have an opposite effect and are said to "neutralize" each other.

**To use neutralizers.** Common acid stains are made by sour fruit juices and vinegar. Neutralize these by using a solution made of about  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ammonia, baking soda, or borax to 1 cup water. Spread the stained material over a pad and sponge it; or stretch it over a bowl of

water and apply the solution, a drop at a time; a medicine dropper is convenient. Rinse with clear water.

Alkaline stains are usually caused by ammonia, strong soda, potash, or strong soap. Neutralize these with vinegar, lemon juice, or weak hydrochloric or oxalic acid. Work as for acid stains. Rinse with clear water.

*Caution:* Never use hydrochloric acid on silk.

**BLEACHING AGENTS.** These are used only when simpler means fail, and chiefly for white goods. When boiling water, or sunshine with water or frost, will not remove stains made by fruit, clear tea, and coffee, or ink, bleach with oxalic acid, hydrogen peroxide, potassium permanganate, or Javelle water.

**To use a bleaching agent.** Place the stain over a bowl of hot water and apply the bleaching agent, a drop at a time. When the stain changes color, dip into the water. Repeat until the stain is removed. Neutralize with ammonia and rinse well. If the stain is obstinate, immerse it in oxalic acid or Javelle water diluted with an equal quantity of hot water. Neutralize with ammonia and rinse. *Caution:* Use Javelle water only on white cotton and linen. If the potassium permanganate leaves a stain, remove with a little dilute oxalic acid and then rinse.

**STAINS MADE BY IRON.** Iron rust, some bluing and some ink stains can be removed by dilute oxalic or hydrochloric acid applied as for bleaching. Salts of lemon or lemon juice and salt may also be used. Spread upon the stain, place in the sun if possible and keep moist; when the stain is removed, rinse well.

### DIRECTIONS FOR PREPARING STAIN REMOVERS

**Javelle Water.**  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound chloride of lime dissolved in 2 quarts cold water. 1 pound washing soda dissolved in 1 quart boiling water.

Pour the clear liquid from the chloride of lime into the soda solution. Let the mixture settle and then strain the liquid through a cloth into bottles. Cork and keep in a dark place.

**Potassium Permanganate.** Dissolve 1 teaspoon crystals in 1 pint water.

**Oxalic Acid (Mark Poison).** Dissolve 1 ounce crystals in  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup hot water.

**Hydrogen Peroxide.** Add a few drops of ammonia to the hydrogen peroxide just before using. This makes it work more quickly.

### COMMON STAINS AND HOW TO REMOVE THEM

**Blood and meat juice.** Use cold water; soap and cold water; or starch paste.

**Bluing.** Use boiling water.

**Chocolate and cocoa.** Use borax and cold water; bleach if necessary.

SPEND WISELY



SAVE SANELY

COMMON STAINS AND HOW TO REMOVE THEM (Continued)

- Coffee and tea.** (Clear.) Use boiling water; bleach if necessary.  
(With Cream.) Use cold water, then boiling water, bleach if necessary.
- Cream and milk.** Use cold water, then soap and cold water.
- Egg.** Use cold water.
- Fruit and fruit juices.** Use boiling water; bleach if necessary.
- Grass.** Use cold water; soap and cold water; alcohol; or a bleaching agent.
- Grease and oils.** Use French chalk, blotting paper or other absorbent; or warm water and soap; or gasoline, benzine, or carbon tetrachloride.
- Iodine.** Use warm water and soap; alcohol; or ammonia.
- Ink.** Try cold water; then use an acid or bleach if necessary.
- Iron.** Use oxalic acid; hydrochloric acid; salts of lemon; or lemon juice and salt.
- Kerosene.** Use warm water and soap.
- Lampblack and soot.** Use kerosene, benzine, chloroform, ether, gasoline, or carbon tetrachloride.
- Medicine.** Use alcohol.
- Mildew.** If fresh, use cold water; otherwise try to bleach with Javelle water or potassium permanganate.
- Paint and varnish.** Use alcohol, carbon tetrachloride, chloroform, or turpentine.
- Perspiration.** Use soap and warm water; bleach in the sun or with Javelle water or potassium permanganate.
- Pitch, tar, and wheel grease.** Rub with fat; then use soap and warm water; or benzine, gasoline, or carbon tetrachloride.
- Scorch.** Bleach in the sunshine or with Javelle water.
- Shoe polish.** (Black.) Use soap and water; or turpentine.  
(Tan.) Use alcohol.
- Sirup.** Use water.
- Stove polish.** Use cold water and soap; or kerosene, benzine, or gasoline.
- Vaseline.** Use kerosene or turpentine.
- Water.** Steam or sponge the entire surface of water-spotted materials.
- Wax.** Scrape off as much as possible. Use French chalk, blotting paper or other absorbent with a warm iron; or use benzine or gasoline. If color remains, use alcohol or bleach.

Send to the U. S. Department of Agriculture for Farmers' Bulletin  
861, Removal of Stains from Clothing and Other Textiles

THEN BUY WAR



SAVINGS STAMPS