

## Care of Furnishings Guide: Stain Removal

### I have a stain on my fabric / product - What is the best way to remove it?

It is inevitable that at some point your fabric or product might get stained. Following this guide will assist in either removing some of the more common stains completely or at the very least reducing the stains to a more acceptable level.

#### Step One

Don't panic – this will only result in the risk of trying to remove the stain in the wrong way and make the situation worse.

#### Step Two

Always, wherever possible, try to remove the stain when it has just happened before the stain has had time to fully penetrate the fibres and possibly also had the time to dry. Once absorbed into the fabric and dried many stains will be much more difficult to remove.

#### Step Three

It is important to try not to rub hard at the stain. This can result in the stain to be pushed deeper into the fibres. Note also that rubbing the stain can also result in the fabric being abraded, particularly with sensitive fibres, and so the problem will become compounded further. Never use an abrasive cloth.

#### Step Four

If the stain is liquid then place an absorbent cleaning cloth / tissue over the stain to remove excess liquor. If possible, do the same beneath or on the reverse side of the fabric also.

In fact, wherever possible it should be noted that cleaning from the reverse side can assist in the removal of stains as this will prevent the stain being pushed deeper into the fibres.

#### Step Five

Identify which stain removal method to use from the list below or alternatively use a commercially available spot / stain removal cleaner (read and follow makers instructions). Spray cleaners can be very effective.

Use of a wet vacuum machine is NOT recommended as any residual shampoo on the cover fabric may have a negative effect on the flammability.

Note also that in many cases, an absorbent cleaning cloth or sponge may be enough to remove the stain.

#### Step Six

Never just apply the chosen stain remover over the stain. It is very important to always test out the stain remover on a small inconspicuous area of the fabric. This is to ensure that the stain remover itself has no adverse effect on the fabric, for example, colour loss.

Additionally, never use a coloured cloth / tissue to absorb or remove stains. It is possible for the colour in the cloth to run out and cause an additional stain on your fabric.

#### Step Seven

Avoid ring marks by **gently** rubbing the stain with an absorbent cloth from the outside of the stain moving slowly inwards. This will also avoid spread of the stain.

#### Step Eight

It may be possible to remove food related hard stains with a vacuum cleaner but take care not to rub / abrade the fabric, particularly if a delicate or sensitive fabric.

## Step Nine

Refer to the list below for suggestions on stain removal methods.

Some of these stain removal chemicals listed below may only be available as commercial spot cleaning products specific to the type of stain. Refer to the container of the stain removal product – this should give you some idea of the basic constituents. As with all chemicals, check that they can be used safely in the environment where they are intended before using them. Always follow any warnings or instructions on the container:

## Stain Removal Methods

- 1 Use a damp cloth or sponge, finishing off with a dry spray in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Then dry the area and repeat with just water, and dry again – to remove any residual surfactants from the cleaning chemicals.
- 2 As 1. In the case of solid stains, loosen them first by lightly beating and vacuuming. Then as 1.
- 3 Remove the dry stain carefully with solvent, working from the edge of the area towards the middle so as not to spread the stain. Dry off with a hair dryer if necessary.
- 4 Carefully scrape off the solidified stain. Then treat with solvent as 3.
- 5 Dab with turpentine (NB Inflammable!!). Then continue as for 3. With solvent – P = Perchloroethylene.
- 6 Dab with acetone (NB Inflammable!!), working from the edge towards the middle of the stain area.
- 7 Dab with Alcohol, then solvent (P) as under 3.
- 8 Scrape off carefully. Dab with alcohol, then with solvent (P) working in towards the centre. If necessary then proceed as for 1. With dry spray.
- 9 Use a fat-soluble soap, (not detergent), to soften the stain, then use a solvent (P) as under 3.
- 10 As 6, but with acetic ester (Inflammable!).
- 11 Treat the area with an enzyme softening agent and leave to soak in for a while. Then rinse / sponge off with water. If necessary finish off with a dry spray. (Some people recommend sour milk as an enzyme-softening agent for blood, if a commercial one is not available. Note however that this must be well rinsed off or it will smell!!)
- 12 Dab with dilute non-chlorine based bleach (cold) and then rinse / sponge off with water. Dry with hair dryer.
- 13 Remove the stain with synthetic resin thinners (Inflammable!!) and then treat with a dry spray as for 1.
- 14 Dab with commercial rust remover (based on potassium difluoride). Then rinse off with water and repeat as necessary. DO NOT BLEACH! As this may cause damage to the cotton due to the iron in the rust acting as a catalyst.
- 15 Loosen the stain as 2. above, then soak with a saturated (i.e. with as much as will go into the solution) solution of barium chloride. Leave this to soak in for a while, then rinse / sponge off with water.
- 16 Dab with warm ammonium sulphate solution (about 1 teaspoon per litre (2 pints)), then rinse / sponge off with water.
- 17 Cut out the damaged area. Then patch from behind with the same fabric. If the item has already been cleaned then the patch should first be treated in the same way so it looks more like the used fabric and won't shrink and pull the surrounding fabric. If no fabric is available see if there is some spare on the item that is out of sight and so can be cut out.
- 18 Soften with ether / xylene 1:1 mix (NB Inflammable!!) and soak up with a dry cloth. Repeat as necessary.

- 19 Dab with toluene (Inflammable) and then treat as under 9. above.
- 20 Dab with 3% solution of Hydrogen Peroxide and then rinse / sponge off with water.
- 21 As 7 above but use isopropyl alcohol (isopropanol) instead.
- 22 Soak up with a dry cloth and then treat as under 3. above.
- 23 If possible, place overnight in freezer to harden the gum, and then break it to remove bulk of the gum. Don't rub it when still soft!!

*NB. Some of these agents will come under COSHH regulations and must be handled with care.*

**STAIN REFERENCE CODES**

<b><u>STAINING AGENT</u></b>	<b><u>METHOD</u></b>
ALL-PURPOSE ADHESIVE	10
ASPHALT	9
BABY FOOD	2/11
BALLPOINT PEN	7
BEER	1
BIRD DROPPINGS	2
BLOOD	11+2
BLUE CARBON PAPER	7
BRANDY	1
BURNED IN HOLES	17
BUTTER	3
CANDLE WAX	4
CARBON PAPER	7
CELLULOSE PAINT	6 / 13
CHALK	2
CHEWING GUM	23/18/3
CHOCOLATE	2/3
COAL	2/3
COCA-COLA	1
COCOA	2/3+20+12
COFFEE	1/20+12
COLOURED PENCILS	3
CONDENSED MILK	2/11
CONTACT ADHESIVE	18
CRAYON	7
CREAM	2+3 /11
DUPLICATING INK	7/18
DUST	2

EDIBLE OILS	3
EGG WHITE	2+11
EGG YOLK	2+11
ENGINE OIL	3
FACE POWDER	2
FAT	3
FLOOR POLISH	3
FLOWER STAINS	7
FLYBLOW	1 /2
FRUIT STIANS	2/20+12
FRUIT JUICE	2/20+12
FURNITURE POLISH	5
FUSED / MELTED FIBRES	17
GLUE	2
GRASS STAINS	1/20+12
GYPSUM	15
HAIR DYE	1/7+12
HAIR SETTING LOTION	7/21
HAIR TONIC	7
HONEY	2
ICE CREAM	1
INK	1+20+12
KETCHUP	2
LAQUER - COLOURLESS	3/6/13
LAUNDRY INK	19/12
LEATHER DYE	4/8
LEAMONADE	1
LIPSTICK	3/20+12
LUBRICATION OILS	2+3
MACHINE OILS	3
MAKE - UP	2/3
MARGARINE	3
MARMALADE	2
MAYONNAISE	3
MILK	1/11
MOTORCAR OIL	3
MOULD STAINS	1/12
MUD	2

MUSTARD	2
NAIL VARNISH	6
NICOTINE	1
OIL	3
OIL PAINT	5/13
OINTMENT	22+3
PARAFFIN	4
PERFUME	7
PRINTER'S INK	19/12
PUSS	2+11
RED OR YELLOW LEAD	15
RED WINE – NB AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!!!!	20+12
RUST	14
SALAD DRESSING	2+3/11
SAUCES	2+3/11
SOOT	2/3
SEALING WAX	8
SHOE DYE	3
SHOE POLISH	3
SINGED	17
SKIN CREAM	3
SOIL	1
SPARKLING WINE	1
SYNTHETIC RESIN PAINT	13
STARCH	2
STREET DIRT	2
SWEET WINES	1/20+12
SYRUP	2
TAR	5/9
TEA	1/20+12
IODINE TINCTURE	16
TOBACCO	2
TOMATO JUICE	2
TYPWRITER RIBBON	7
UNPLEASNT SMELL	12
URINE	1+12
VARNISH	3
VEGETABLE FAT	3

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VOMIT	2/11
WATER COLOURS	1/12
WATER DYES	19/12
ZAPON VARNISH	7
ZINC OINTMENT	4

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