



# stain removal

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# Stain removing tips

## Techniques

### Presoaking

Presoaking is a useful and effective treatment for washable articles that are grayed, yellowed, or heavily stained. You can presoak laundry in the washer or in a sink or tub. Use warm water. Sort the soiled items before presoaking; non-colourfast items should be soaked separately or with similar colours and for only a short time.

How long you should presoak stained articles depends upon the stain and the fiber. For most stains, 30 minutes should be adequate.

Non-colourfast items should be soaked only briefly. Heavily stained items or stains that have set for a long time may require overnight soaking.

You may want to add bleach, laundry detergent, or an enzyme presoak product to the soaking water.

However, avoid using enzyme products on silk or wool, and do not use chlorine bleach and an enzyme product at the same time.

Whenever you add anything to the water used for presoaking, make sure that the item is then thoroughly rinsed before you launder it.

There should not be any residue from the presoak product left in the item when it is washed.

### Scraping

Scraping can be used to lift off excess semi-solid staining material and to loosen caked-on stains.

Removal of as much of such material as possible makes it easier for the stain-removing agent to reach the surface, and although scraping may not remove a stain completely, it is often a necessary step before applying a stain remover.

Do not use an absorbent pad beneath an item you are going to scrape. For your scraping tool use a dull knife, spoon, or spatula. Don't press hard, but move the edge of your scraping tool back and forth across the stain in short strokes. Be gentle to avoid damaging the stained surface. To remove some stains you must add liquid as you scrape, working the liquid into the stain as you remove excess material.

### Freezing

Some staining substances, such as candle wax and gum, can be hardened by the application of cold so that they are easier to remove. Work fast when treating a spill that is still semi-solid.

You may be able to limit the area stained by quickly hardening the staining material. To freeze a stain, hold one or more ice cubes against it. If the stained item is not washable, place the ice in a plastic bag.

If the stained item is portable and the stain is large, you may put the article into a plastic bag and place it in the freezer. Take the item out when the staining material solidifies.

After the stain has solidified, it can usually be gently lifted or scraped from the surface.

Any residue may require further stain-removal treatment.

### Sponging

Sponging is one of the most frequently used methods of applying many stain-removing agents, including water. Sponging is another technique in which clean absorbent pads are used.

The stained item should be laid on a pad, stain side down, if possible. You may have to sponge stains on carpets without any absorbent pad beneath, in which case you must be especially careful to wet the carpet as little as possible.

Use another clean pad or a clean sponge to apply the stain-removing agent. Dampen this pad with the agent specified in the stain-removal directions and sponge the stain gently. Use light strokes and work outward from the center of the stain. Try to keep your sponging strokes as close to the stain as possible. Use only enough stain removers to dampen the sponge and move in an irregular pattern. By following these directions, you are less likely to cause rings to form. Check the pad beneath the stain at frequent intervals and examine

the sponging pad as well. Change the pad as soon as any stain is deposited on it. In this way, the staining agent will not be reapplied to the fabric.

Certain fabrics, including acetate, triacetate, and rayon, are more likely than others to develop rings when treated with this technique. So, when sponging stains on these fabrics, you must be even more careful. Barely wet the sponge with stain remover and touch the fabric lightly so that the stain remover is absorbed as slowly as possible.

Limit your strokes to the immediate stained area to keep the moistened area as small as possible and avoid spreading the stain.

After the stain is removed, dry the fabric as quickly as possible. Blot the treated area gently between clean, dry absorbent pads; then allow it to dry.

Unless you have used only water as the stain-removal agent, do not use heat in drying.

### Tamping

Tamping is a stain-removal technique that is effective on durable, tightly woven fabrics, but it may damage more delicate materials. When stain-removal directions call for tamping, the only tool you need is a small brush (a soft-bristled toothbrush is usually fine).

Place the stained article on the work surface; there's no need for an absorbent pad. Hold the brush about 5 cm above the stain and bring it down directly on the stain repeatedly in light strokes. You are using too much pressure if the bristles bend.

Try to hit the stained area squarely with the tips of the bristles. You are more likely to damage the fabric if you hit it with the side of the brush. To avoid harming the fabric, stop tamping as soon as the spot is removed. Tightly woven fabrics of high-twist yarn are able to withstand more tamping than loosely woven fabrics of slight-or moderate-twist yarn.

Each of these various methods has a different purpose but the same desired outcome. Use one or a combination of these as directions specify.

## Products

Soil and stain removers come in many forms, each having its own benefits.

### Select the form that best suits your needs.

- Spray: easily controls the amount of product that's applied directly on stains.
- Stick: easy and convenient for on-the-go stains.
- Gel: thick formula that stays where you put it, so ingredients can penetrate stain.
- Foam: penetrates deep into fabrics to break up stains on contact.
- Wipes: designed to treat stains on contact. They can be applied while wearing garments and are safe for all dry-cleanable fabrics.
- Aerosol: quickly penetrates stains with the press of a button.
- Liquid: quick and easy to add to wash or apply directly to stain.
- Powder: easily added to wash cycle or used for soaking.
- Tablets: portable, lightweight, and dissolves quickly in any water temperature.
- Bar: portable, lightweight; pre-treat stains on contact.



**Remember that products come in two forms:**

- Prewash stain removers: A full-strength stain treatment that's applied directly to stains before the wash cycle.
- In-wash stain removers: Add along with detergent in wash cycle. They work as a complement or booster to your regular detergent. Some in-wash stain removers can also be applied directly to stains before the wash cycle.

## Read the label

Product labels tell you how to properly use the product and what type of fabric and surfaces the product can and can't be used on. Garment care labels provide the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning the garment.

For the best cleaning performance, read and follow both product label directions and garment care labels.

## Directions for use

Every product and garment label has its own directions for use. The directions tell how to use the product for satisfactory results. For example:

- How much should be used.
- What soils and stains it removes.
- What fabrics it should and shouldn't be used on.
- Appropriate water temperature and wash cycles.

## Colourfast test

Before using a stain remover on a washable fabric, always test for colourfastness.

Colourfast means the fabric colour won't fade or run when it's washed.

- Apply the stain remover directly to an unnoticeable part of the garment, such as an inside seam.
- Wait 5-10 minutes.
- Rinse with water.
- The stain remover is safe for the garment if the fabric colour doesn't fade or bleed.

Most stain removers can be used on most colourfast washables, such as cotton, polyester, polyester blends, and other synthetic fabrics.

