

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

# THE ULTIMATE A- TO-Z STAIN REMOVAL GUIDE



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## Abstract

Stains happen—that's just a fact of wearing clothes, having a carpet, or using anything that drips, leaks, or smears. But, you don't have to tackle those stains in confusion. We've rounded up our library of content on stain removal to provide the best tips and tricks, the proper techniques and supplies to remove stains, and created a handy table encompassing all stains from A-Z.



## Getting Started

If you're ready to read on, check out our ultimate guide to banish any type of stain, from pizza sauce to paint splatters.

### I. Common Stains to Consider

- **Coffee stains**

If you drink coffee every day, spills are bound to happen. But don't worry—those brown spots can come out. Blot up as much of the coffee as you can right away. Then mix together warm water, dish soap, and white vinegar, and use a

clean white cloth to blot the stain with the solution. If you can't get to it right away, use a little warm water to loosen the dried coffee first.

- **Wine stains**

Some cleaning experts swear by Wine Away, a stain-removing product made for red spills including wine, fruit punch, tomato soup, and marinara. If you don't have it on hand, make your own stain remover by mixing equal parts hydrogen peroxide and a blue dish soap like Dawn.



- **Oil and grease stains**

Anyone who's dripped salad dressing on their favorite shirt knows how tough it can be to get oily spots out of clothes. The key to removing them is to first soak up as much of the grease as you can with a powder, such as baking soda, baby powder, or cornstarch.

- **Blood stains**

Skinned knees, bloody noses, shaving nicks. You can get unexpected blood stains out of your favorite fabrics, but the key is doing it as soon as possible—

dried blood can leave a permanent mark. In fact, blood is probably the hardest stain to remove from carpet. Luckily, you probably already own one of the best blood removers: white vinegar. Soak the stain for five to ten minutes in a mixture of one cup vinegar and two cups warm water, then dab the blood away.

- **Paint stains**

Act fast! Once water-based paint is dry, it won't come off. If you get to it while it's still wet, simply rinse the paint out under warm water, then wash as usual. For oil-based varnish and paints, dab the spot with paint thinner or turpentine, then rinse, treat with a stain remover, and launder.

- **Ink stains**

Whether your child "accidentally" wrote on your sleeve or a pen leaked in a pocket, we've got a few effective options for getting it out, from a homemade paste to good old rubbing alcohol. Start with this: Apply plain white toothpaste to the pen mark, then rub vigorously with fabric to lift the stain away.

### **STAIN REMOVAL TECHNIQUES**

There are two basic approaches to removing spots and stains. You can use a stain-removal agent that interacts with the stain chemically, or you can physically loosen or remove the stain from the surface. Many stubborn stains require both chemical and physical treatment. In this chapter, we discuss eight physical stain-removal techniques: brushing, flushing, freezing, presoaking, pretreating, scraping, sponging, and tamping.

Which technique to use in treating a particular spot or stain depends upon both the nature of the stain and the type of surface stained. For example, a stain may be wet or dry, semisolid or hardened. On a very delicate surface, you may not be able to use such techniques as scraping and tamping. A stain may be flushed more easily from a loosely woven fabric than from one that is tightly woven; but a tightly woven fabric can withstand a treatment such as tamping more successfully.

Follow these directions carefully to assure successful stain removal without harm to the stained article. Note that whenever you use absorbent pads

(when you flush or sponge a stain) you should check the pad frequently and change it as soon as any of the stain is deposited. This will prevent reapplication of the stain to the treated article. Remember, too, that to avoid fabric damage you should never apply heavy pressure when using techniques such as brushing, tamping, or scraping.



### ➤ **Brushing**

Brushing is used to remove dried stains and spots. Some spots, such as those formed of dried mud, may be completely removed by brushing. In treating other types of dry stains (for example, face powder), brushing is just the first step in treating the stain. In treating some stains, brushing may be one of the last steps, as when you want to remove an absorbent or a dried stain-removing paste from a surface.

Use a small, stiff-bristled brush for this technique. A toothbrush works well on small stains. When working on a fabric, stretch the piece on a firm, clean working surface. Hold a clean sheet of paper next to the stain (on walls, hold the paper beneath the stain) so that you can brush the staining material onto

the paper. Use a gentle motion to brush the stain up off the surface and onto the paper. It may help to blow softly on the spot as you brush.

### ➤ **Flushing**

Flushing is used to remove loosened staining materials and any residue from the stain-removal agent. This is an important step in the process, for if any chemicals are left in the material, they may cause additional staining or they may damage the treated article.

When flushing a stain, especially one on a nonwashable fabric, you need to control the flow of water carefully. To apply a measured amount of flushing liquid, use a device such as an eyedropper or plant mister, or a plastic trigger spray bottle that can be adjusted to spray a fine stream. Before you begin the treatment, place a clean absorbent pad beneath the spot, then slowly and carefully apply the recommended stain remover to the stain. If you decide to use a mister, place the tip against the stained area and depress the plunger or pump the trigger slowly. In this way, you can force out a thin stream of fluid without wetting a large area. You must work slowly; do not apply the liquid faster than the pad beneath can absorb it and do not spread the stain. Replace the absorbent pad frequently so that the deposited staining material does not restain the fabric.

Stains on area rugs may be flushed following the directions above. In fact, any rug under which you can place an absorbent pad can be treated by flushing. If, however, your rug is too large to lift or if the stain is on tacked-down rugs or carpeting, you may have to sponge the stain-removal agent onto the spot instead. Then sponge with clear water to remove chemical residues. Remember, the pad or cloth used for sponging must be changed frequently.

If you are treating a washable fabric and directions call for flushing with water, you may rinse the stained article. To rinse out a stain, dip the article up and down repeatedly in a container of warm water. Change the rinse water frequently.

### ➤ **Pretreating**

Pretreating is used to ease the removal of small stains, especially those that are oily or greasy. Stubborn soil, such as the ground-in dirt on collars, cuffs, and socks, is easier to remove after it's been pretreated. When you are

pretreating a stain, you apply the stain-removing agent directly to the stained area. To pretreat a stain, you may use a liquid detergent, a soil-and-stain-removing pretreat spray, bar soap, or a pretreating paste made of powdered detergent (do not use one that contains bleach) and water.

Liquid detergent and pretreating sprays should be applied directly onto the dry stain. If you are using bar soap or have prepared a paste of powdered or granular detergent and water, dampen the fabric slightly before applying the pretreating agent. After its application, rub the pretreater into the stain gently, then wash the item as you normally do.

To use pretreating sprays successfully, you should keep a few points in mind. Pretest the spray by applying it to an inconspicuous part of the garment before using it on the stain. Most of these sprays are perfectly safe on all washable fabrics, but some contain an oxygen-type bleach ingredient that could harm some dyes. Apply the product according to package directions, wait 5 minutes, and then rinse the pretest area carefully. If no color change is apparent, you can safely treat the stain. After using one of these sprays, it is essential that you wash the treated article thoroughly to remove both the rest of the stain and any residue from the pretreat spray. Allowing the residue to set may cause a new stain.

### ***MORE STAIN REMOVAL TECHNIQUES***

Learn the stain removal techniques for presoaking, scraping, freezing, sponging, and tamping.

#### **➤ 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; noncolorfast items should be soaked separately or with similar colors 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. Noncolorfast 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 semisolid 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 semisolid. 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 remover 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 2 or 3 inches 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 have a different purpose but the same desired outcome. Use one or a combination of these as directions specify.

## **II. Removing Stains from A-Z**

Each link takes you to a step-by-step description of the products you'll need and how to remove that specific stain from washable fabrics, dry-clean-only fabrics, as well as carpet and upholstery. While many stains are treated the same way, others require special steps, or they can become permanent. Treating stains on upholstery and carpet takes a bit more skill than just tossing a shirt in the washer.

To help you take care of stains, here's a comprehensive list of stain makers from A to Z.

### ***How to get stains out of...***

- **Carpet**

The basic stain removal guidelines—act quickly, blot, use cold water—apply for carpet but the most effective method will depend on the material and the stain itself. “As soon as the spill happens, get to work treating it,” says Hodges. “Sometimes water is enough but, if not, you might need a commercially available cleaner, which is tested for effectiveness and safety on most materials. For tougher stains like red wine carpet stains, you might get better results with a purpose-made stain remover like Wine Away.”



- **Clothes**

We've shown you how to tackle spills on clothes right away but how do you remove old stains that have already been washed and dried? And how do you remove stains that you can't even identify? "When you don't know what the stain is, just spray it with Branch Basics All-Purpose Cleaner, let it sit 5 to 10 minutes, then soak it in cold water with Oxygen Boost added," says Nelson. "Older stains typically benefit from that, too. The tougher the stain, the longer the soak. You may have to repeat the process a few times so don't get discouraged." Carbona Pro Care laundry stain scrubber isn't a bad choice either, with its ability to get anything from blood to chocolate stains out of any t-shirt.

- **Couches**

For big-ticket items like couches, it's best to contact the manufacturer for their advice before taking any chances. Leather, in particular, can be easily damaged if not cleaned properly. For most couches, though, Tran says gentle sponging with detergent and water should suffice.

- **Rugs and upholstery**

Again, check with the manufacturer before trying to treat expensive, hard-to-replace items. Test small, discreet areas first and consider having them professionally cleaned if you're worried about ruining them.

- **Surfaces**

Cream cleansers, such as Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day Cream Cleaner, work wonders on countertops, according to Tran, who also recommends a sprinkling of oxi-action powder to help lift soaked-in stains. She warns against leaving any cleanser on countertop stains for too long, though, as it may also lift the color. For removing hard water stains, Tran has an easy tip. "For hard water stains in your kettle, simply boil a wedge of lemon and marvel at how squeaky clean your kettle becomes."

### **III. Tips for Stain Removal**

No matter what kind of stain you're trying to remove, experts recommend the following:




- Act quickly. “Without a doubt, the easiest way to remove stains is to address them as soon as possible,” says Angie Tran, co-founder of Kind Laundry. “Even the most miraculous stain removers will have a harder time removing a stain that has been left to dry out before being treated.”
- Blot—don’t rub!—with a paper towel or clean white cloth. “Blotting is key to removing stains,” according to Hodges. “You never want to rub because the stain could spread into the fibers of the fabric and become more difficult to remove.”
- Use cold water. “Always start with cold water because it’s least likely to set a stain,” advises Marilee Nelson, co-founder of Branch Basics. “Hot water can set protein stains like milk, egg, or blood, and should never be used on stains of unknown origin.”
- Don’t let stains dry. “Keep the stain away from direct heat, including lamps,” says Alicia Sokolowski, president and co-CEO of AspenClean. “Never put stained garments into the dryer. The heat will set the stain.”
- Check labels or test before treating. All the experts stress the importance of following instructions on garment labels since certain fabrics may require dry cleaning only. If you’re trying to remove a carpet stain, do a test on a small, inconspicuous area first.

- Persist! You may have to repeat treatments a few times or even try different ones but don't give up. "Even years-old stains have been annihilated with persistence," says Nelson.

**Stain removal chart**

**HOW TO REMOVE THE MOST Common Types of Stains**

		
<p><b>RED WINE</b> Cover with salt or baking soda, then blot.</p>	<p><b>COFFEE</b> Blot, then dab with with a mix of warm water, dish soap, and white vinegar.</p>	<p><b>OIL/GREASE</b> Cover with baking soda, baby powder, or cornstarch to soak up the grease.</p>
		
<p><b>INK</b> Apply white toothpaste, then rub vigorously with fabric.</p>	<p><b>PAINT</b> Dab with paint thinner, rinse, treat with a stain remover, then launder.</p>	<p><b>BLOOD</b> Soak the stain in a mixture of vinegar and warm water, then dab.</p>
		
<p><b>GRASS</b> Mix baking soda with hydrogen peroxide and a few drops of dish soap. Soak for a few hours.</p>	<p><b>DEODORANT</b> Soak in white vinegar for up to an hour, scrub, then launder.</p>	<p><b>CHOCOLATE</b> Cover with laundry detergent for 10 minutes, then soak in cold water before laundering.</p>



**STAIN REMOVAL METHODS AND SOLVENTS**

Removing stains takes a bit of elbow grease, plus one or more of the following best stain removers:

- **Water**

Your first go-to should always be water as it dilutes stains and helps them fade. “Water is often overlooked as a great cleaner and spot remover,” says Sokolowski. Water dilutes stains and helps them fade. It may actually be all you need. “You should always start with plain, cold water and add other cleaners only if necessary.” The only caveat: don’t use water on fabrics that are dry clean only.

- **Vinegar**

According to Sokolowski, vinegar is a powerful cleaner and stain remover because of its acidity and low pH. “A paste of vinegar and baking soda can remove even the toughest stains,” she says. There’s a misconception that vinegar will remove color from clothes but in fact, it’s gentle enough to use on most fabrics, vinegar can actually restore and brighten color in fabric and can also prevent fading. It should be used with caution, however, on natural materials like wood.

- **Hydrogen peroxide**

Because it’s a natural bleach alternative and can sometimes cause discoloration, hydrogen peroxide works best on white fabrics. To remove grease and oil, Tran recommends gently mixing three parts hydrogen peroxide with one part dishwashing liquid. Apply it to the stain and let it sit for 20 minutes to an hour. Once the stain has been lifted, rinse it and throw the garment into your regular wash.

- **Detergent**

Detergent can be used before you do your laundry in addition to during it. Simply apply a little bit of liquid detergent to the stain and use your fingers to rub it in. Then wash the garment as usual. This is a safe method for any item you can machine wash.

- **Rubbing alcohol**

Rubbing alcohol can help clean and disinfect hard surfaces, plus it dries quickly and kills bacteria. Because it's a solvent, it's good for dissolving dirt and oil. While not suitable for use on rayon, silk, wool, acetate, or acrylic, it works well at lifting stains like wine and pen ink from other fabrics. Tran suggests gently sponging rubbing alcohol into the stain, then rinsing thoroughly, and washing as you normally would.

- **Ammonia**

A tablespoon of ammonia mixed with half a cup of water can work as a great pre-wash treatment for stains, according to Tran. Simply apply and let soak for 10 minutes before washing. Ammonia can be irritating to the skin, eyes, and respiratory tract, though, so use it cautiously. And never mix ammonia with chlorine bleach. The combination produces a highly toxic gas that can cause headaches, seizures, and even death.

- **Dish soap**

Because it's designed to get out tough food stains on plates and bowls, dish soap—some brands of which have been safely and effectively used on marine animals after major oil spills—can be a good choice for garments stained by greasy foods. You can apply it to the stain or let the garment soak in it for a few hours. Then rinse out the soap and wash as usual.

- **Bleach**

Across the board, experts try to avoid bleach because it can cause discoloration and damage—not just to fabrics but to the human body. “In the case of a permanent ink stain, bleach is likely the only option,” says Tran. “But even then, it may not fully lift, and should only be tried on white clothing.”

- **Baking soda**

Baking soda is perfect for stains on clothing, rugs, or couch upholstery. It helps to absorb spills, especially in a paste made from one cup of baking soda and half a cup of water. As the paste dries, it removes the stains and can then be vacuumed or laundered.

#### **IV. Supplies to Keep on Hand**



- Water: And plenty of it. Water is the first line of defense in treating stains, fresh or dried.
- Oxygen bleach: Oxygen-based or all-fabric bleach is a gentle bleaching agent that removes stains, whitens and brightens laundry, and is safe for use on almost all washable whites and colored fabrics. Because of its chemical ingredients, it works more slowly than chlorine bleach, is less corrosive and damaging to fibers, and is more environmentally friendly.



- Enzyme-based stain remover: Natural or processed chemically, different enzymes target specific soils and break the soil into smaller molecules to be washed away. For most stains, choose a well-rounded stain remover.
- Hydrogen peroxide or white vinegar: Hydrogen peroxide is a great laundry agent that can be used to remove stains. Distilled white vinegar is another option, a powerhouse cleaner and stain remover. You can use it mixed with other products or by itself to remove many types of stains.
- Dish soap: Surprisingly, dish soap is great for fighting oil-based stains. Plus, it is mild enough to use even on fine fabrics, such as silk and wool.
- Laundry soap bar: Fels Naptha, Zote or Ivory are pure soaps that work very well in cutting through body soil on collars and cuffs.
- Rubbing alcohol: Removes ink from fabrics and leather.

- Chlorine bleach or laundry disinfectant: Chlorine bleach is a harsh stain remover and should only be used as a last resort. A disinfectant could also be useful in stain removal. It is required to kill most types of bacteria, viruses, and mold/mildew spores.
- Soft-bristled brush: Use to work stain remover into fabrics.
- White cotton cloths: Always use a white cloth or paper towel to blot away and treat stains to avoid accidental dye transfer during cleaning.
- Steam Cleaner: Invest in the best quality steam cleaner if you want to clean the stubborn stains from your home or delicate floor coverings without using chemicals.

But before that, learn more about steam cleaning, how it works, and its key benefits:

### **What Is Steam Cleaning?**



This is one of the most versatile cleaning methods, which is also known as steam vapour cleaning or steam mopping. It uses steam to remove grime, stains and germs from different surfaces. With a proper technique and a

cutting-edge steam cleaner, you can effectively tackle stubborn stains and sanitise surfaces without using harmful chemicals. Steam cleaning method can be used in home and office settings and is ideal for cleaning delicate floor coverings, upholstered furniture, kitchen appliances and hard surfaces. Make sure you invest in the right type of steam cleaner that can save you time and energy while delivering exceptional results.

## **Types Of Steam Cleaners**

There are three types of steam cleaners available in the market, including:

- **Canister Steam Cleaners:** These are the most powerful types of tools that come with a large water tank, multiple attachments and a long hose to clean a variety of surfaces.
- **Steam Mops:** These are perfect for sprucing up hard floors as they come with more than 4 mop pads to clean different floorings.
- **Handheld Steam Machines:** These are the portable tools that are ideal for cleaning nooks and crannies and hard-to-reach areas.

## **How Does A Steam Cleaner Work?**

This exceptional cleaning tool uses hot steam to restore the shine of your carpets, rugs and hard surfaces. A steam cleaner comes with a water tank that heats water to produce high-temperature steam. This makes cleaning super easy and effective. Steam produces tiny vapour molecules that penetrate deep inside the surface's pores and eliminate embedded dust particles, dirt, built-up grease, stubborn stains and germs using a cleaning pad. The best part is that the high temperature produced by a steam cleaner works wonders in killing lethal germs and bacteria- leaving your surfaces clean, shiny and disinfected and creating an allergy-free home. It can be used to remove the toughest grime, mould and mildew from hard surfaces when moving out of your rental property. If you want a meticulous end of lease cleaning Canberra for the entire premises, book a company that has at least 5 years of experience in the industry and can help you get your full bond back. Caution: Steam cleaning can cause damage to unsealed surfaces and laminate floors, and excessive moisture can melt plastic-based surfaces. Also, do not clean unglazed tiles, water-based paint and extremely delicate surfaces.

## **Key Benefits Of Steam Cleaning**

Let's unveil the key advantages of the steam cleaning method, especially when it comes to maintaining a healthy indoor environment:

### **1. It Ensures Chemical-Free Cleaning**

A steam cleaner uses hot water to produce steam and sometimes a mild or natural cleaner to kill germs. So, you don't need any harmful chemicals, such as ammonia, bleach, etc, to remove stains and grime. Using these chemicals on a regular basis can cause respiratory problems, skin infections, and even trigger a chronic condition like asthma. Fortunately, a steam cleaner can help you spruce up almost all surfaces without leaving toxic fumes and carbon footprints behind. The best part is that they can effectively eliminate chemical residue from carpets and rugs.

### **2. It Promotes Effective And Thorough Cleaning**

The combination of high pressure and high temperature of a machine allows you to tackle even the toughest stains and grime with ease. It can help you clean upholstery, carpets, tiles, blinds, etc with ease. Most of these machines generate steam at a temperature of minimum 212 degree Fahrenheit which can remove dust mites, mould stains without causing any damage to the surface.

### **3. It Can Effectively Kill Germs & Bacteria**

The high temperature steam can kill embedded and invisible germs, bacteria, and other microbes, such as Escherichia coli, without using harmful chemicals. You just need to use the pressure of a steam cleaner and let it effectively kill germs from your carpets, upholstery furniture, rugs, blinds, and hard floors. Tip: Cleaning with hot steam and vacuuming with a HEPA-filtered machine can improve the indoor air quality and keep your family healthy.

### **4. Cost-Effective**

Buying a steam cleaner is a one-time investment, and it can do multiple cleaning tasks with perfection. Instead of spending money on different cleaning supplies, fancy cleaning products and abrasive sponges, just get a steam cleaner and spruce up your abode like a pro. If you are concerned about your bond money at the end of your tenancy, book trained end of lease cleaners in Canberra because they follow a proper checklist and are well-versed with the latest tools to give you exceptional service and peace of mind.

Read on the article to know your rights as a tenant when it comes to bond cleaning and avoid unwanted rental disputes.

Steam cleaning can do wonders in maintaining a clean, shiny and germ-free home. It is good to invest in a quality machine that can help you achieve sparkling results without exposure to harmful chemicals.

## **WARNING**

*When fighting stains, keep in mind that the following stain fighters should never be mixed. Be sure to rinse the fabric or carpet thoroughly between each product, so residue from the previous step doesn't cause a toxic chemical reaction.*

## **V. FAQ**

- **What are the basic rules for stain removal?**

To remove almost any stain, first begin by scraping solids with a dull butter knife. Next, treat the stain with a commercial stain remover, dish soap, or a heavy duty laundry detergent. Allow this to penetrate the stain for five to ten minutes. Check to see if the stain has lifted, and if necessary, add more stain remover to the garment. Then, launder the garment as usual.

- **What stains cannot be removed?**

The longer a stain is left untreated, the most difficult it is to remove. So yes, there may be set-in stains that will not totally be removed. Some difficult stains to remove after they've set in include chocolate, permanent marker, red wine, oil or grease, and yellowing from smoke.

- **How do you remove old stains from clothes?**

Saturate a stain with white vinegar and allow that to penetrate the stain. Sprinkle the stain with baking soda and allow that to work its magic. Rub this into the fabric gently and allow it to settle in for 20-30 minutes. Rinse the garment, and if the stain persists, treat with a heavy commercial stain remover or bring it to a professional dry cleaner.

## **Bottom line**

With any case, a little effort and some time will go a long way to making your clothes look brand new. Just remember to refrain from putting the garment in

the dryer until the stain is completely gone (so the stain doesn't set) and feel free to repeat any of the above processes as needed to get the stains out.

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