

MILDEW STAIN REMOVAL (55)

The recent hurricanes in Florida have created ideal conditions for the formation of mildew. Mildew is a fungus growth of vegetable like structure which forms in the presence of warmth, dampness and lack of fresh air. Mildew appears as a stain in many colors, most commonly brown, tan, yellow and black. The stain is characterized by an unpleasant and musty smell. Mildew can formulate any place if the conditions are present. The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Fashion Institute of Technology have sent fabrics to me with mildew that occurred when their climatic controls were not working. When caught in time mildew can usually be corrected. When left in a fabric however for a long period of time the fabric will eventually deteriorate.

WHAT TO DO

When mildew is noticed the garment should be packed in a plastic bag and sorted outside the house. Never shake garments inside the house or brush them because the mildew spores will spread and cause an unhealthy environment. Garments should be hung outside the house, allowed to dry and then brushed being careful not to be in contact with the mildew spores.

DRYCLEANING (PERCHLORETHYLENE)

The garments that are intended for drycleaning should be packed in a plastic bag and brought to a local drycleaner.

.....IMPORTANT-Make sure the cleaner uses the perchlorethylene solvent. This is the only solvent that effectively destroys the mildew spore. Petroleum or hydrocarbon solvents used by some drycleaners are not effective in destroying the mildew spore.

WASHING

When mildew has not penetrated the fiber a routine washing will usually remove the mildew. Use the hottest water temperature possible for the fabric. The use of safety bleach and ammonia is also effective. When drying, use the hottest drying temperature allowed.

BLEACHING

When mildew penetrates the fabric causing heavy staining the most effective bleach for removal is sodium hypochlorite or household bleach. Heavily stained areas should be spotted first with a diluted bleach (50% water). Use regular household bleach in a ratio of 2-3 cups in a regular wash.

CAUTION

Household bleach can never be used on wool or silk. It can not be used with ammonia. It is usually not safe to colored fabrics. Household bleach does not rinse out of a fabric. After using bleach add some white vinegar to the rinse water. Vinegar removes the last traces of bleach.