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MISCONCEPTIONS AND MISNOMERS ON STAIN REMOVAL (56)

As a garment analyst I have examined and tested thousands of garments a year. I am astounded at the millions of dollars worth of fashion ruined by home stain remedies and amateurish attempts at stain removal. The consumer is taught to remove stains using household products without regard to the delicate nature of some fabrics, trimmings and color. High fashion fabrics are designed for fit, fine detail, beauty, feel, drape and texture. High fashion demands the best and professional care in order to maintain the look of the fabric and provide the consumer with long term use. This is the reason why America's Best Cleaners are chosen to care for the best in high fashion.

My experience as a drycleaner and garment analyst has given me many opportunities to observe and encounter various home remedies that people used which not only failed to remove the stain but caused problems to the fabric as well.

Milk-has been used by many people as a spot removal for such stains as ink and blood. As a drycleaner there is one incident that stands out in my mind which explains the danger of this substance as a spot remover. A customer brought in an expensive antique satin set of drapes which had been stained by ink. The customer had attempted to remove the ink by using milk. We treated the stained area and were successful in removing the ink. The milk had set however and could not be removed. Milk is an albuminous substance that can set in fabrics and become impossible to treat. It should never be used as a stain remover.

Club Soda-is a popular stain remover used by restaurant personnel and airline hostesses. By popular belief, the bubbles in club soda provide some mystical properties capable of removing stains. Club soda has the same properties as water and nothing more. The bubbles do not act as a stain remover whatsoever.

Alcohol-does provide some good stain removal properties. However it is also an agent that will alter dyes and discolor fabrics. Many deodorants contain alcohol and most of us are familiar with the discoloring properties of this toiletry.

Lemon Juice-is advocated by some for removal of rust. It can sometimes be effective but it should be pointed out that this agent can cause a stain on fabrics that may go unnoticed at first. After a period of time the lemon juice will oxidize and cause a resulting stain that may not be removable.

Ice-has been advocated as a remedy for chewing gum stains. The ice stiffens the gum and allows it to be picked from the fabric. This may work in limited cases but it should be pointed out that the gum dissolves easily in drycleaning solvent with complete safety to the fabric.

Soap and Water-has been advocated for the removal of all stains. Dry based stains however such as glue, paint, oil and nail polish cannot be removed using soap and water. On countless occasions I have encountered situations in which people have literally rubbed holes in fabrics in an effort to remove a stain. In some instances soap and water can actually set or prevent the stain from being

removed. This is due to the alkali content which will oxidize many stains such as coffee, tea, soft drinks, liquor and fruit juice.

Hot Iron for Wax-I am astounded when I hear of someone touting the use of a hot iron for removing wax. It is suggested that a cloth be placed over the stain and that a hot iron is then applied so that the wax is melted onto the cloth. With many synthetics this is a sure way to fuse, melt and damage the fabric. Wax can be readily and easily removed since it dissolves in the drycleaning solvent and can be handled by any cleaner easily.

Hair Spray-can be an effective agent in removing ink stains. However hair spray contains alcohol and other ingredients with properties that can be dangerous to many dyes and fabrics.

Nail Polish Remover-Some people use nail polish remover to remove make-up and other stains. Nail polish remover often contains acetone which can dissolve certain fabrics such as acetate.

Color safe bleach-No such thing. Any bleach can remove color and damage dyes on fabrics.