

PROFESSIONAL TIPS FOR SPOT BLEACHING USING HOUSEHOLD BLEACH (79)

In a former article that I wrote I explained how household bleach can be used in the washing machine. Spot bleaching uses the same principles but requires localized application. Household bleach is sodium hypochlorite and is alkaline in nature. Sodium hypochlorite works on a stain by adding oxygen to the staining substance and converts it to a new and invisible substance. Most store bought products of household bleach range in concentration from 5.25% to 6%. This concentration must be diluted to 1% before use. Buy small quantities since the bleach goes bad after a period of time.

USES

Sodium hypochlorite is used on the last traces of many wetside stains including dye, ink, protein and tannin. Such staining includes coffee, tea, ink, mustard, soft drinks, liquor, chocolate, lipstick, perspiration and urine. Household bleach will not work on soil and dryside staining such as paint, nail polish, grease, oil and glue. Remember-last traces of staining means that other spotting methods must be used before application of the household bleach.

CAUTION

Chlorine bleach or sodium hypochlorite must never be used on wool and silk since fabric deterioration can occur. All colors including white fabrics should be tested. Some white fabrics in contact with chlorine bleach could yellow or cause a white bright area. Most colors are sensitive but testing may show some colors to be color fast.

CONCENTRATION

You can use Clorox Beach Pen for application. This is a strong concentration of bleach. If you wanted to make up your own spotting formulation you should dilute 6% bleach concentration to 1%. Take an eye dropper and mix in a glass or cup 5 drops of water to one drop of bleach. Then take one drop of the 1% solution and mix in another cup with 10 drops of water. You will now have a fairly strong and effective concentration for spot bleaching. A weaker concentration can be made by adding a few more drops of water.

APPLICATION AND ACCELERATION

Test on an unexposed seam for color safety. Place garment or fabric on a towel to avoid spreading of the bleach. You should use a q-tip for applying the bleach.

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This will keep the bleach localized. When applying the bleach to the stained area you need just enough bleach to cover the stain. After applying the bleach wait a few seconds, Do a second application if necessary. If you wanted to accelerate the chemical reaction dip the q-tip in hot water and then touch the bleach on the stained area. This will increase the chemical reaction. Every 18 degrees rise in temperature doubles the chemical reaction. Rinse area with water and apply a few drops of white distilled vinegar. This will accelerate any last traces of the bleach causing it to be removed from the fabric. Wash garment in a routine matter.

PROTECTING COLOR TRIM ON WHITE FABRICS

If you are bleaching a white portion of the fabric near a colored portion you can protect the color by applying Vaseline along the border of the color. This will prevent the bleach from migrating to the color portion.