

SHINING A LIGHT ON STAINS AND FABRICS (98)

When I worked as a garment analyst in New York City I felt that drycleaners should have an easy method to examine stains and fabrics for their customers. I researched, developed and patented a method to examine fabrics and stains using a series of lights in a small box. This device is called Spectralight and is currently used by drycleaners throughout the US and internationally. (Patent #5,572,219). Consumers can learn to properly examine fabrics and stains by following simple principles of light reflection, absorption and transparency.

PROCEDURE I

Routine examination is when a fabric is either hanging up or lying on a flat surface. This routine examination can not distinguish all characteristics of staining, color loss, weak areas or damage to a fabric. For example oil stains and coffee stains will appear similar under this examination.

PROCEDURE II

This procedure will give you a different view of fabrics and stains. Hold the fabric above your head so you are looking through the front of the fabric while above you is a ceiling light. This view will give you a different aspect of the fabric and staining. Stains will take on a new dimension. For example oil stains will be translucent while coffee stains will show a vivid appearance of brown rings. Egg stains will also be transparent but irregular in nature. You will also readily observe weak areas that you could not ordinarily see. This is important for inspecting fragile fabrics before buying or fabrics that you would want to attempt stain removal on.

PROCEDURE III

This procedure is done by holding the fabric against your chest while looking down on the fabric while changing the angle of the fabric. This will give you a view of chafing or color loss on silks, satins and other fabrics that can not be seen by directly looking at the fabric. It will give you a view of any distortion in the pile of velvet or velour fabrics. This method is also important for observing staining and color loss on bright and vivid colors.

PROCEDURE IV

You will see more discolorations and staining when examining fabrics outside your home in daylight rather than inside your home. Outside light contains ultra-violet light and reflects more color variations than inside light.