

UNDERSTANDING LUBRICATION (111)

Lubrication is the method of removing staining by placing on the surface of the fabric an oily substance which (1) softens and penetrates the staining substance (2) separates the staining substance from the fabric (3) keeps the staining substance suspended so it can be flushed away from the fabric. Lubrication also reduces friction so when you rub or brush the staining the fabric is protected and not damaged by the friction applied. Using the proper lubrication is necessary for effective stain removal. There are different lubricants to choose from which can be effective on different staining.

- (1) **Mild detergents**-Any mild detergent such as Tide is an effective lubricant. This can be mixed with water. This type of lubricant can also be mixed with other chemicals such as ammonia or vinegar and it will not break down. This can be used to soften and remove any wetside staining such as coffee, tea, egg, milk, blood, etc.
- (2) **Grease cutting detergents**-These detergents are formulated to break down greasy type staining. Examples of grease cutting detergents are Simple Green and 409 All Purpose Cleaner. These detergents are effective on oily and greasy type of staining such as chocolate, oil, grease, ink, etc. These detergents contain cleaning surfactants referred to as nonionic. When formulating these detergents manufacturers also extract citrus oils to aid in their stain removal properties. This is the reason why many of these detergents have a lemon odor. Chemicals can be mixed with these type of detergents without breaking down their formulations.
- (3) **Vaseline**-Petroleum Jelly is an effective lubricant and can be used for dryside staining such as paint, oil, grease, lipstick and inks. This is not a cleaning agent but simply a lubricant. It does not remove ground in soil and soot.
- (4) **Glycerine**-This can be purchased in a drug store. When purchasing glycerine make sure it is pure glycerine designed by the initials CP or USP. One aspect of glycerine is that it does not have cleaning properties. It is used primarily as a lubricant for removing many dyes and ink stains. It is also an effective lubricant because it does not tend to leave lighter or cleaner areas on fabrics such as wools and silks.

MECHANICAL ACTION

When lubricants are used you must employ what we refer to as mechanical action. This means that you can gently rub, brush or apply some form of friction to the stained area. Lubrication may penetrate, soften and break up the stain but the mechanical action applied is what removes the staining. You can apply mechanical action with the edge of a spoon, a towel, toothbrush, or your finger.