

# Eco-Friendly Stain Fighters

Coming clean is easy when what you need is already on your shelves. Linda Mason Hunter, cofounder of greenhome.com, offers eco-friendly, homemade solutions.

By Laura Serino

## Stain Masters

Smart tactics to clean by:

- Treat stain as soon as you can, ideally within an hour, to prevent it from becoming a permanent mark.
- Test stain remover on an inconspicuous area of the fabric first to make sure the color won't be affected.
- Avoid rubbing or scrubbing, which may set the stain or fray the fibers.
- Keep a white towel on hand that's designated for using on stains.
- Seek help from your dry cleaner for stains on silk, suede, and leather.
- Read the care label on your garment before attempting to treat a stain.

Pull these stain removers right from your shelves:

- Baking soda
- Club soda
- Distilled white vinegar
- Borax
- Rubbing alcohol
- Talcum powder
- Liquid dish detergent
- Liquid laundry detergent

## Grass

**Clothing & Linens:** Flush the area with rubbing alcohol, then rinse with water. Apply liquid dish soap and rinse.

**Upholstery & Carpet:** Dab liquid laundry detergent directly on spot and let it sit for two hours. Remove detergent with a damp towel.

## Red Wine

**Clothing & Linens:** Gently dab stain with a white towel soaked in club soda, saturating the area. Launder as usual.

**Upholstery & Carpet:** Apply club soda, towel dry, then treat with a natural carpet cleaner. For furniture, sponge with warm water, cover spot with talcum powder and let sit for several minutes. Gently brush with a soft cloth.

## Fruit Juice

**Clothing & Linens:** Pour boiling water on stain (use warm water for delicate fabrics).

**Upholstery & Carpet:** Gently blot with one part liquid detergent and two parts warm water. Next, apply a one-to-one mixture of distilled white vinegar and water. Dab again with detergent and water; sponge clean with cold water.

## Pet Pee

**Clothing & Linens:** Soak in a solution of distilled white vinegar and hot water (cold water for delicate fabric) for 30 minutes. Rinse garment, then launder.

**Upholstery & Carpet:** Use paper towels to absorb as much of the liquid as possible. With a sponge, apply a solution of 1/4 vinegar, several drops of eucalyptus oil, and 1 teaspoon of liquid dish soap. Let stand for 30 minutes, then blot using a damp towel.

## Chocolate

**Clothing & Linens:** Soak fabric in cold water. If stain remains, dab with detergent.

**Upholstery & Carpet:** Let chocolate harden, then scrape off excess with a dull knife. Blot with one part liquid laundry detergent and two parts tepid water.

## Ink

**Clothing & Linens:** Place a white towel underneath the garment to absorb excess ink. Saturate stain with rubbing alcohol, then rinse thoroughly with tepid water.

**Upholstery & Carpet:** Blot excess ink with a paper towel. Apply rubbing alcohol; dab until gone.

## Ketchup

**Clothing & Linens:** Rinse with cold water, then soak garment in a detergent and cold water solution. If stain remains, pour on distilled white vinegar to saturate stain.

**Upholstery & Carpet:** Mix together borax and water until you have a thick paste. Place directly on the spot and let sit for a half hour. Remove paste with a damp towel.

## Cooking Oil

**Clothing & Linens:** Remove excess grease with paper towel. Sprinkle with talcum powder to absorb remaining grease and treat with a stain remover.

**Upholstery & Carpet:** Apply liquid laundry detergent and let stand for a few hours. Scrub clean with a small brush. Wipe away residue with a damp white towel.

## Lipstick

**Clothing & Linens:** Place stain face down on a white towel and soak with rubbing alcohol. Blot on clean area of towel until no lipstick appears on the towel. Launder.

**Upholstery & Carpet:** Wet with rubbing alcohol, then blot with a white towel until no lipstick remains.

## **Coffee**

**Clothing & Linens:** Rinse with warm water, then soak garment in a one-to-one solution of borax and hot water. Continue to treat with the solution until the stain is gone.

**Upholstery & Carpet:** Soak up with paper towels, then spray with a one-to-three mixture of water and white vinegar. Blot with one part dish soap and two parts tepid water, then rinse.

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