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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Clothes Cleaning Problems." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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A neighbor of mine dropped in the other day in a very gloomy state of mind and announced that she would never, never again try to take out spots from her clothes. She held up a light silk skirt to show me why. And she exclaimed, "Just look at this skirt, Aunt Sammy. I've been working for hours trying to get a black spot of automobile grease out of it. Yes, the spot came out after a fasion. But the cleaning fluid left this big ring around the place I cleaned. And the ring looks just as bad as the original spot did."

No wonder my neighbor was discouraged. Those rings left after cleaning spots or stains cause lots of people trouble. In fact, they're a very common home cleaning problem. Yet a few simple, common-sense ways of doing your cleaning will prevent them.

Shall I tell you the three little tricks for success in taking out spots without leaving rings? Well, here they are. First, always clean with an absorbent pad underneath the stain to take up the fluid and the dirt dissolved in it. Second, use very little cleaning fluid--scarcely dampen your cleaning rag, never wet it. And third, work lightly but rapidly so the spot will dry quickly.

There are those three simple devices for preventing rings in cleaning. Now about this absorbent pad to go underneath the stain. You can use several folds of soft clean linen or muslin for this pad. Or you can use a piece of clean white blotter. You can even use a thick piece of absorbent cotton. Any clean material that will take up liquid quickly will do. This pad absorbs both the fluid and the soil together and prevents the liquid from spreading. It is one of the biggest helps in preventing rings from cleaning.

Before you start cleaning, turn your garment wrong side out. Put the soiled spot directly against the pad. Then apply the cleaning fluid from the back and drive the soil directly into the pad.

Here's the way the experts say to go after that spot. First, turn the dress wrong side out and lay the pad directly under the spot. Use a soft, clean piece of material for sponging. Soft material won't be hard on delicate silks. Then, moisten your sponging rag very lightly with your cleaning fluid. Now start sponging the soiled place gently but quickly. Use straight, rapid, but very light strokes. Just brush over the spot and work from the outside in. Spread the liquid quickly but lightly into the surrounding material to keep a ring from forming. The secret is to "feather" or "shade" the liquid out into the fabric so you'll leave no distinct line where the moisture ends. Now the faster the fluid dries, the better success you'll have in cleaning. So, after you have applied the fluid, change to a dry rag and brush the dampened section back and forth until it is dry. Any way that you can speed up the drying will help, but be careful not to rub too vigorously.

That may roughen or pull fabric. And such a rough place may show permanently. One more point. Be sure to change the pad underneath often. As soon as it becomes slightly soiled, move it and put clean material under the spot. This is especially important when you are taking out grease stains. If the spot doesn't come out entirely the first treatment, go over it again as many times as necessary.

So now, if anyone asks you how to clean spots without leaving a ring, you can suggest six helpful hints. First, use an absorbent cloth or blotter underneath the stain. Second, apply the fluid with a soft cloth on the wrong side of the garment. Third, use straight, light quick strokes beginning in the area around the stain and working in toward the stain. Fourth, use very little solvent at a time, just barely dampen your rag. But apply it over and over as many times as necessary. Several small applications are far safer than too much at one time. Fifth, dry the fluid as quickly as possible. Use a soft dry cloth and rub the spot until it is thoroughly dry. Sixth, work rapidly.

As you see, this job, if done successfully, takes care and patience. For example, you have to be patient about repeating the sponging with very little fluid. All this may sound like a lot of work. But once you try it, you'll find it simple after all. A good cleaning job may save the cost of a dress. Care and patience often pay in dollars and cents.

But suppose that after you finish sponging and drying you find that you have a ring left on your dress. Can you remove it in any way? Yes, sometimes you can take it out just as you make water spots disappear--by rubbing the material together with the hands. That may "fade out" the distinct line of the ring. This is especially successful if the fabric has a crepe weave. Rings never show as plainly on rough or figured fabrics as they do on smooth and plain-colored materials. Sometimes you may be able to get rid of that ring just by rubbing the edge with your fingernail or with a little stiff brush. If neither of these methods work, you'd better go back and do the stain removing all over with the cleaning fluid. Use just the very least possible amount of fluid on your rag and sponge quickly, this time going back and forth over the edge of the ring. Here again, "feathering" the liquid out into the surrounding fabric will usually do the trick.

Many different chemicals will remove grease spots from garments. Gasoline, benzine, naphtha and so on are grease solvents. But they are far too dangerous to use for any home cleaning. Many horrible accidents have resulted from little home cleaning jobs using inflammable material like this. You can get just as good results and be perfectly safe with a cleaning fluid like carbon tetrachloride. By the way, carbon tetrachloride has a good record for cleaning successfully without leaving rings.

Tomorrow: "New Ideas for Home-Made Ice Cream."

