

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

3 H h
HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

TUESDAY, July 11, 1933

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "More Facts on Saving Fabrics." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

-----oOo-----

If your good towels come back from laundering every now and then showing small holes or tears in otherwise sturdy fabric, you may have something to charge up to the man of the house. Better do a little detective work on his shaving habits and find out whether he wipes his razor blades on the towel. Razor blades do a lot of costly damage this way. In fact, this kind of damage has become such a problem that many hotels now furnish special cloths to their patrons to use in wiping blades. No matter how careful a man may be when wiping a razor blade on a towel, he is likely to sever or cut into a thread or two. This is just as bad as a clean cut, for the weakened thread soon goes through and forms a small hole. No sign of trouble may show when the towel goes to the wash. But afterward the damage usually comes to light.

This is just one good example of the way fabrics are injured and so wasted in many homes. Carelessness often brings needless expense. We hear a lot about economizing on food these days. Every thrifty housekeeper needs to consider also ways to save household fabrics and clothing.

Sometimes a careless member of the family may cut a loaf of bread directly on the tablecloth. That often spells the end of the cloth, even though the damage may not be apparent at first. After laundering, a series of small holes usually appear right where the knife struck the cloth. Sheets, pillow cases and blankets frequently suffer from sharp uncovered bed springs and protruding nails. Wind the sharp bed springs with adhesive plaster and pound in the nails wherever they appear. Don't take a chance on damaging your good bedding.

You'll save money if you take time to look clothes and other articles over carefully before they go out to the laundry or into your washtubs at home. Examine each article to be washed. If you see a slight hole or weak place, stop and mend it then and there. Holes grow larger, tears tear more, weak places wear through during the process of washing, wringing, ironing, and so on. A stitch in time means a stitch before the washtub. When you go over the laundry in advance, watch out for any pins left in garments. And watch out for any odds and ends left in pockets. These may cause serious holes as well as stains on the material. Those nails in little Johnny's pocket that got in the washing machine along with Johnny's trousers, not only made holes but also caused a big rust stain. Speaking of spots and stains, removing them is another pre-laundry job. Soap sets many stains, you know. So get out the stain before the soap gets on.

We mentioned last week that dirt and dust may "rot" materials. Sharp particles of dirt may actually cut the threads of the fabric. Stains are another form of soil that may weaken otherwise good material. One stain that does injury to many of our most expensive clothes, especially at this season, is perspiration. Perspiration may attack both the color and the fiber of the cloth. It is hardest on silk. The action of perspiration often weakens silk undergarments and stockings so that they go to pieces long before their time. Probably you have noticed how often silk dresses and waists give way first at the lower armhole. Even cotton garments suffer damage from perspiration. Commercial laundries report that men's shirts or cotton undergarments are very likely to wear out first at the armhole or across the shoulders where they have suffered from perspiration.

To cut down the damage from this kind of soil as well as from everyday dust and grime, frequent laundering is a great help. Save your silk stockings and undergarments by washing after every wearing. Don't let them stand and give perspiration a chance to attack them. And when your silk dresses have been soiled this way, the sooner you wash them the better.

While we're on this subject we might suggest that many preparations against perspiration are as hard on fabrics as the perspiration itself. Aluminum chloride, which is often used as a deodorant, will attack silk appreciably. When you use such preparations, better use them at night to save your daytime dresses. But be careful not to let them get on your best silk nighties either.

When I suggested frequent laundering to save fabrics, of course, I meant the right kind of laundering. The wrong kind is as hard on your clothes and your household textiles as many of these other enemies. Mild neutral soapsuds, lukewarm soft water, gentle handling,-- no rubbing, wringing or pulling, thorough washing and thorough rinsing, using a warm not hot iron--these are high points in safe laundering. Heat is harmful to silk especially. And as we've said before, that means heat from the stove, heat from the washing water, heat from the iron or direct sunshine in drying. Heavy white linens and cottons can stand hot water and bright sunshine. But colored fabrics and silks live longer if they keep away from severe heat.

If you are going to the seashore this summer, here's another fabric-saving point worth knowing. Sea water will attack most fabrics. Experiments have shown that most fibers are completely rotted after a three to five-week immersion in sea water. So be sure to rinse your bathing suits thoroughly in fresh water after every swim before you hang it to dry. And if your stockings or other clothes get a dose of salt water when you're out sailing, be sure to rinse them well when you get home.

Tomorrow: We'll Talk about Making Jelly from Early Summer Fruits. Special Attention to Currants and Berries.

