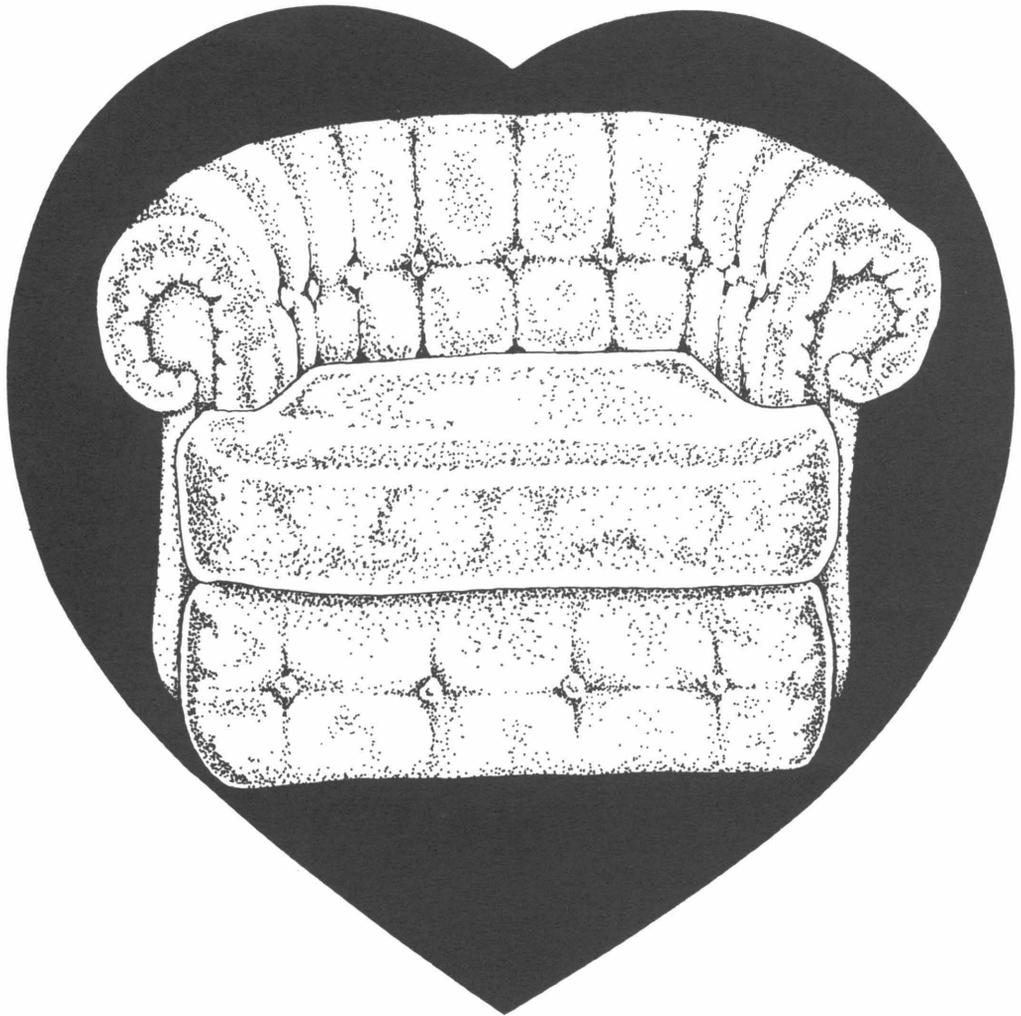

How To Care For Upholstered Furniture



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CONTENTS

Consider Care Before You Buy.....	3
Tips for General Maintenance.....	4
When Accidents Occur.....	5
Use the Right Cleaning Materials.....	6
Stain Removal Chart.....	8
Use the Right Cleaning Methods.....	9
Special Care for Leather and Vinyl.....	13
A Word About Haitian Cotton.....	14

Recommended by:

Sheila Baillie, *Graduate Assistant, Home Environment*

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How To Care For Upholstered Furniture

Upholstered furniture—it's a major expense when you're furnishing your home. Therefore, your investment should give you years of service and enjoyment. To make the most of upholstered furniture, you must care for it properly.

This booklet will tell you how to regularly care for your upholstered furniture and also what to do when accidental spills and stains occur. By following these recommended procedures, the life of your upholstered furniture can be extended, and so can your furnishings dollar.

Consider Care Before You Buy

If you are thinking about buying upholstered furniture, replacing your old with new or recovering what you presently have, you should consider several points which will make upkeep much easier **before** you make a decision.

In general, fabrics with a tight weave and yarns that are tightly twisted will be more durable than those with decorative slubs or knitted fabrics. Pile fabrics, such as velvet or corduroy, keep everyday dust and soil on the surface of the fabric; but when a spill occurs, the substance is absorbed into the base of the fabric if not treated promptly, and may be difficult to remove.

Some fibers are more durable and easier to care for than others. Consider resistance to sunlight, heat and abrasion when choosing a fabric.

Soil-resistant finishes will keep upholstery fabrics looking good longer. If the fabric you select doesn't already have a finish that resists both water and oil-based stains, you can pay to have it treated or do it yourself. Remember, however, that these finishes are applied to keep the substance on the surface of the fabric long enough for you to wipe the spill off. The finish does not shield the fabric indefinitely and, if allowed to stand, a stain can become even harder to remove if a finish is on the fabric.

Many furniture manufacturers have voluntarily labeled the fabric on upholstery with a letter code, indicating the proper method of caring for the fabric. The four categories of care instructions are as follows:

- “W” - Spot clean, using the foam only from a water-base cleaning agent such as a mild detergent or non-solvent upholstery shampoo product. Apply foam with a soft brush in a circular motion. Vacuum when dry. Pre-test a small area before proceeding. Use a professional furniture cleaning service when an overall soiled condition has been reached.
- “S” - Spot clean, using a mild water-free solvent or dry-cleaning product. Clean only in a well ventilated room and avoid any product con-

taining Carbon Tetrachloride or other toxic materials. Pre-test a small area before proceeding. Cleaning by a professional furniture cleaning service only is recommended.

- “S-W” - Spot clean with a mild solvent, an upholstery shampoo, or the foam from a mild detergent. When using a solvent or dry-cleaning product, follow instructions carefully and clean only in a well ventilated room. Avoid any product which contains Carbon Tetrachloride or other toxic materials. With either method, pre-test a small area before proceeding. Use a professional furniture cleaning service when an overall soiled condition has been reached.
- “X” - Clean this fabric only by vacuuming or light brushing to prevent accumulation of dust or grime. Water-based foam or solvent-based cleaning agents of any kind may cause excessive shrinking, fading or possible pile distortion.

Leathers and vinyls are generally long wearing and resist most stains. However, they still need special treatment in order to maintain their beauty. Some specific instructions for care of leather and vinyl are given elsewhere in this booklet.

Tips for General Maintenance

To keep upholstered furniture looking its best and wearing longer, “spruce” it up on a regular basis. Follow these suggestions:

- Vacuum cushions once a week using an upholstery attachment. **Never** use a stiff brush for dusting; it will harm the fibers.
- Cushions and pillows which contain down, feathers or fiberfill should be hand-fluffed and reversed regularly to help maintain resiliency.
- **Never** place furniture in direct sunlight; the sun’s ultra-violet rays can fade the fabric and reduce its strength.
- **Never** remove zippered cushion covers. Zippers are installed by the manufacturer for a better fit, and the covers are not to be removed for cleaning.
- Treat spills when they happen, following recommended procedures given in this booklet. Even fabrics with stain-resistant finishes need prompt attention.
- For general overall cleaning, consult a reliable, professional upholstery cleaner.

**When
Accidents
Occur**

Occasionally, a spill or stain is bound to occur on your upholstered furniture. When it happens, you can usually treat the stain yourself by using the following guidelines:

- Prompt action is **most important**. If allowed to set, a stain can become permanent. **Note:** Large and unusual stains should be treated by a reliable, professional upholstery cleaning service.
- If the substance is a **liquid**, blot up as much as possible by barely touching it with a clean, absorbent cloth dampened in cool or lukewarm water. (**Never** use hot water, as it may set the stain.) Do not apply any pressure to the stained area or saturate the fabric with water, as it could reach the filling materials. Proceed with the appropriate method recommended for that particular stain.
- If the substance is **solid**, scrape up as much as possible with the blade of a table knife or spatula. Then proceed with the appropriate method recommended. (Chart and cleaning methods start on page 8. If the staining substance is not listed in the booklet, contact your county Extension agent for specific instructions, or contact a professional cleaner.)
- Before trying any method, **pre-test** the cleaning product on a hidden area of fabric. If the dyes in the fabric bleed or the fabric shrinks, consult a professional for assistance.
- When sponging a stain, always work from the **outside** of the stain in toward the center to prevent the stain from spreading.
- Rotate the pad of absorbent material as it picks up the stain to prevent transferring the staining substance back onto the upholstery.
- Unless directions say to let the area dry, proceed immediately with each step while the area is still moist.
- You may not have to go through all the steps given to remove a stain. When all of the stain is gone, be sure all of the chemicals are thoroughly removed.
- When using the wet spotter solution or detergent, use only a **foam** of the solution rather than the liquid. This helps prevent shrinkage and/or color bleeding which could be caused by wetting the fabric. **Never** saturate the fabric with water or a detergent solution.
- You can speed drying by using a fan or hair dryer set at *cool*. Fast drying helps prevent ring formation.
- If water rings do occur, moisten the entire stained area with white vinegar. Let it stand a few minutes, then sponge the area with water. Dry the spots thoroughly. If it is a pile fabric, brush with the pile when damp and against the pile when dry.

Use the Right Cleaning Materials

Listed below are descriptions of the various cleaning materials used in the stain removal methods. For best results, use the appropriate products and follow all precautions given.

Absorbent Materials - cotton fabric, white paper towels, white facial tissues, soft white cloths. Sponges may be used, but test first for damage that may occur to them from the cleaning agent.

Alcohol - rubbing alcohol or denatured alcohol (70% or 90% concentration).

Ammonia - non-sudsy household ammonia. Do not use ammonia with added color or fragrances. (CAUTION: Poisonous. Avoid inhaling ammonia fumes. Ammonia will cause burns or irritations if it comes in contact with the skin or eyes. Observe all precautions on the label.)

Amyl Acetate (acetone, banana oil) - sold in drug stores. Chemically pure amyl acetate. **Non-oily** fingernail polish remover may be substituted. (CAUTION: amyl acetate is poisonous and flammable. Do not breathe the vapors. Avoid contact with the skin. Amyl acetate is a strong solvent for plastics. Do not allow it to come in contact with plastics or furniture finishes. Do not use on fabrics containing acetate or triacetate.)

Coconut Oil - sold in drug and health food stores. Mineral oil may be substituted (sold in drug stores) and is almost as effective.

Detergent - liquid hand dishwashing detergent. Do not use detergents for automatic dishwashers, heavy-duty household detergents, or laundry detergents; they may contain alkalies that could set some stains.

Dry-cleaning Solvent - sold in drug, grocery, variety and hardware stores. May contain any or all of the following ingredients: petroleum solvents; petroleum hydrocarbon; petroleum distillate; 1,1,1, trichloroethane; perchloroethylene. (CAUTION: Poisonous. May be flammable. Store dry-cleaning solvent in tightly capped unbreakable containers. Store it out of the reach of children and where it cannot be ignited by flames or sparks.)

Some dry-cleaning solvents give off poisonous fumes and can be harmful on contact with the skin. When using dry-cleaning solvents, work outside or in a well ventilated room, and arrange work so fumes are blown away from you. Avoid breathing the fumes. Use only a small amount at a time. Do not pour solvent into a bowl. Do not allow children or pets into the room.

If you spill dry-cleaning solvent on your skin, wash it off immediately. If you spill it on your clothes, change immediately and hang garments outdoors until all solvent has evaporated.

Neither flammable nor non-flammable solvent should be used in a room with an open flame or gas pilot light, or where there is a chance of electrical sparks from space heaters, refrigerators, fans, vacuum cleaners or static. Do not smoke while using solvents. Although non-flammable solvents do not ignite in con-

tact with a flame or spark, they decompose and produce extremely toxic vapors. These vapors are especially toxic to persons who have consumed even a small amount of alcohol.

Never use dry-cleaning solvents in a washing machine. Do not put articles still damp with solvent in a dryer, as the solvent is highly flammable.

Observe all precautions on the label.

Dry Spotter - prepare by mixing one part coconut oil and eight parts dry-cleaning solvent. Keep in tightly capped container to prevent evaporation. Mineral oil may be substituted for coconut oil.

Enzyme Product - use either an enzyme presoak or an enzyme-containing laundry detergent. (An enzyme solution loses its strength when stored.)

Glycerine - sold in drug stores.

Hydrogen Peroxide - 3% solution sold as a mild antiseptic. (Do not use stronger solution available for bleaching hair.)

Vinegar - white vinegar.

Wet Spotter - prepare wet spotter by mixing one part glycerine, one part liquid hand dishwashing detergent, and eight parts water. Shake well before each use.

STAIN REMOVAL CHART

DIRECTIONS: Find the stain to be removed, then follow the steps given for the recommended method.

STAIN	METHOD	STAIN	METHOD
Ballpoint Pen Ink	*	Oil, Vegetable	8
Blood	3	Margarine	1
Candle Wax	*	Mayonnaise	2
Catsup	2	Mildew	*
Cheese	2	Milk	2
Chewing Gum (harden with ice before treating)	8	Mud	5
Chocolate	2	Mustard	*
Cocoa	2	Paint, Oil Base or Water Base	1
Coffee	5	Pencil	*
Contact Cement	4	Rubber Cement	8
Cosmetics	1	Salad Dressing	2
Crayon	1	Smoke	1
Cream	2	Softdrinks	5
Fingernail Polish	4	Soot	1
Fruit Juices	5	Suntan Lotion	5
Furniture Polish & Wax	1	Tar	1
Grass	*	Tea	5
Grease	1	Tobacco	5
Hair Spray	1	Toothpaste	5
Hand Lotion	1	Urine	6
Ice Cream	2	Varnish	4
Insecticides	1	Vomit	3
Lipstick	*	Wine	5
Liquor	5	UNKNOWN STAIN	*
Oil, Lubricating	1		

*SEE METHOD GIVEN FOR THIS PARTICULAR STAIN

**Use the Right
Cleaning
Methods**

METHOD 1

1. Sponge stain with **dry-cleaning solvent**, using a pad of clean, **absorbent material**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
2. Sponge with **dry spotter**.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until no more stain is removed. Allow to dry completely.
4. Sponge with **water**.
5. Sponge with foam of **wet spotter** which has been mixed with a few drops of **ammonia**.
6. Sponge with **water**.
7. Repeat steps 5 and 6 until no more stain is removed. Let dry.

METHOD 2

1. Sponge stain with dry-cleaning solvent, using a pad of clean, **absorbent material**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
2. Sponge with **dry spotter**.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until no more stain is removed. Allow to dry completely.
4. Sponge with **water**.
5. Sponge with foam of a **liquid hand dishwashing detergent** which has been mixed with a few drops of **ammonia**.
6. Sponge with **water**.
7. Moisten the stain with a solution of ½ teaspoon **enzyme product** and ½ cup **warm water**. Cover with a clean pad that has been dipped in the warm enzyme solution and squeezed nearly dry. Let stand 30 minutes. Add more warm enzyme solution if needed to keep stain warm and moist but do not let the wet area spread.
8. Sponge with water and let dry.

METHOD 3

1. Sponge stain with **water**, using a pad of clean, **absorbent material**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
2. Sponge with foam of **wet spotter** which has been mixed with a few drops of **ammonia**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
3. Sponge with **water**.
4. Moisten the stain with a solution of ½ teaspoon **enzyme product** and ½ cup **warm water**. Cover with a clean pad that has been dipped in the warm enzyme solution and squeezed nearly dry. Let stand 30 minutes. Add more warm enzyme solution if needed to keep stain warm and moist but do not let wet area spread.
5. Sponge with **water**.
6. If any stain is left, except a blood stain, repeat steps 2 to 5; then dry.

7. For a blood stain that is not completely removed, sponge the stain with **hydrogen peroxide** and add a drop of **ammonia**. (Pre-test fabric for colorfastness first.) Do not bleach longer than 15 minutes. Sponge thoroughly and let dry.

METHOD 4

1. Sponge stain with **dry-cleaning solvent**, using a pad of clean, **absorbent material**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
2. Sponge with **dry spotter**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until no more stain is removed.
4. Sponge with **amyl acetate**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
5. Sponge with **dry-cleaning solvent** until no more stain is removed.
6. Let dry.

METHOD 5

1. Sponge with **water**, using a pad of clean, **absorbent material**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
2. Sponge with **dry spotter**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until no more stain is removed.
4. Sponge with **amyl acetate**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
5. Sponge with **dry-cleaning solvent** until no more stain is removed.
6. Let dry.

METHOD 6

1. Sponge stain with **water** using a pad of clean, **absorbent material**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
2. Sponge with foam of **wet spotter** which has been mixed with a few drops of **ammonia**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
3. Sponge with **water**.
4. Sponge with foam of **wet spotter** which has been mixed with a few drops of **vinegar**.
5. Sponge with **water**.
6. Sponge with **hydrogen peroxide**. (Pre-test fabric for colorfastness.) Change pad as it picks up stain.
7. Sponge with **water** and let dry.

METHOD 7

1. Sponge stain with **dry-cleaning solvent**, using a pad of clean, **absorbent material**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
2. Sponge with **dry spotter**.
3. Sponge with **dry-cleaning solvent**. Allow to dry.

METHOD 8

1. Sponge the stain with **dry-cleaning solvent**, using a pad of clean, **absorbent material**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
2. Sponge with **dry spotter**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until no more stain is removed. Let dry.

*OTHER STAINS

Ballpoint Pen Ink:

1. Sponge with **dry-cleaning solvent** until no more ink is removed (may take 30 minutes or longer).
2. Apply a few drops of lukewarm **glycerine** to stain.
3. Sponge with **water**.
4. Sponge with **wet spotter**.
5. Sponge with **ammonia**.
6. Sponge with **water**.
7. Apply a few drops of **alcohol**. (Pre-test fabric for colorfastness.)
8. Sponge with **hydrogen peroxide** until no more stain is removed. (Pre-test fabric for colorfastness.)

Candle Wax:

1. Scrape excess wax off surface with blade of a table knife.
2. Sponge with **dry-cleaning solvent** until all wax has been removed.
3. If any stain is left, sponge with foam of **wet spotter** which has been mixed with a few drops of **ammonia**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
4. Sponge with **water**.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until no more stain is removed.

Grass:

1. Sponge stain with **dry-cleaning solvent**. Change pad as it picks up stain. Allow to dry.
2. Sponge with **amyl acetate**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
3. Sponge with **dry-cleaning solvent**. Allow to dry.
4. Sponge with **water**.
5. Sponge with foam of **wet spotter** which has been mixed with several drops of **white vinegar**. Change pad as it picks up stain.
6. Sponge with **water**. Allow to dry.
7. Sponge with **alcohol**.

Lipstick:

1. Sponge with **dry-cleaning solvent**.
2. Sponge with **dry spotter** until no more stain is removed.
3. If stain begins to spread, sponge immediately with **dry-cleaning solvent**; then continue with **dry spotter**.
4. Let all **dry-cleaning solvent** evaporate.

5. Sponge with **water**.
6. Apply foam of **wet spotter** which has been mixed with a few drops of **white vinegar**.
7. Sponge with **alcohol**. Allow to dry.

Mildew:

1. Gently brush off excess stain.
2. Sponge with **dry-cleaning solvent**.
3. Sponge with **water**.
4. Apply foam from **wet spotter** to which a few drops of **ammonia** have been added. Pat stain with a pad of absorbent material.
5. Sponge with **water**.
6. Sponge with **alcohol**. Allow to dry.

Mustard:

1. Carefully scrape off excess mustard.
2. Sponge stain with **dry-cleaning solvent**.
3. Allow to dry.
4. Sponge with **water**.
5. Apply foam of **wet spotter** to which a few drops of **white vinegar** have been added.
6. Sponge with **water**.
7. Repeat steps 5 and 6 until no more stain is removed.
8. If any stain is left, sponge stain with **hydrogen peroxide** to which a drop of **ammonia** has been added. (Pre-test fabric for colorfastness.)
9. Sponge with water.

Pencil:

1. Erase excess stain with a soft eraser. Be careful not to distort the weave.
2. Sponge with **dry-cleaning solvent**.
3. Sponge with **dry-spotter**.
4. Cover with a pad dampened with **dry spotter**. Let stand 30 minutes.
5. Sponge with **dry-cleaning solvent**. Allow to dry.
6. Sponge with **water**.
7. Apply foam from **wet spotter** to which a few drops of **ammonia** have been added.
8. Sponge with water. Allow to dry.

UNKNOWN STAINS

1. Sponge with **dry-cleaning solvent**.
2. Sponge with **dry spotter**.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until no more stain is removed.
4. Sponge with **amyl acetate**.
5. Sponge with **dry-cleaning solvent**. Allow to dry.
6. Sponge with **water**.

7. Sponge with foam of **wet spotter** to which a few drops of **white vinegar** have been added.
8. Sponge with **water**.
9. Sponge with foam of **wet spotter** to which a few drops of **ammonia** have been added.
10. Sponge with **water**.
11. Allow to dry.
12. Sponge with alcohol and pat with a pad of absorbent material dampened with **alcohol**.
13. Allow to dry.

**Special Care
for Leather
and Vinyl**

Most leather produced in the past few years has been specially treated to prevent drying and cracking. Treated leather simply needs to be dusted with a dry cloth regularly and occasionally cleaned with a solution of mild soap and warm water. Be sure to wipe the suds away thoroughly with a clean, damp cloth, then lightly buff the leather with a dry cloth. **Never** use leather creams, saddle soaps or oil treatments on treated leather. They can actually harm the finish. Stains can usually be wiped away with a damp sponge. However, ballpoint pen marks may be permanent unless sponged away immediately.

Antique or untreated leather needs special care. It, too, should be dusted regularly, but with a **damp** cloth. Occasionally, lubricate the leather with a leather cream, saddle soap or an oil treatment.

If heavily soiled, antique leather may be washed if it passes this test: rub an inconspicuous spot with a wet finger. If the water is not absorbed and the leather doesn't turn dark, it can be washed with a cloth dipped in warm soapy water and wrung dry. Rinse with a clean, damp cloth.

If the leather does **not** pass the test for washing, dust with a soft cloth then polish with another cloth. Nonwashable old leather also can be cleaned and preserved by rubbing with a mixture of 6 parts lanolin to 4 parts neat's-foot oil, or with 3 parts of white liquid beeswax to 1 part castor oil.

NOTE: Never cover leather furniture with plastic covers. The leather needs an air supply to stay supple. Keep the room temperature between 70 and 80 degrees and never expose the leather to direct sunlight.

Vinyl is cared for in much the same way as treated leather. However, vinyls sometimes do pick up dye from colored objects with which they come in contact. These stains usually are impossible to remove. Vinyls also can be damaged by solvents in some household cleaners, shoe polishes, or nail polish removers. Prevention is the best cure.

Remember:

- Prompt action is most important in treating spills and stains.
- Pre-test a hidden area before using any type of cleaning agent.

- Use the appropriate cleaning method for the particular stains.
- For large or unusual stains, consult a reliable, professional upholstery cleaner.
- For general overall cleaning, the professional should be consulted as well.

**A Word About
Haitian
Cotton**

Many people today are purchasing furniture covered with Haitian cotton, a 100 percent cotton fabric characterized by thick and thin yarns. It looks like handwoven fabric and comes in earth colors—cream, beige, white, tan and brown.

This type of fabric absorbs dirt, stains and dyes (such as from blue jeans) very easily. The stains are difficult, if not impossible, to remove. Haitian cotton also shrinks, has very low abrasion resistance, and may catch or snag because of the longer floating yarns.

Dry cleaning and wet cleaning are not recommended for Haitian cotton. Dry cleaning dissolves the latex backing of the fabric and changes the feel and appearance. Wet cleaning causes excessive shrinkage.

The recommended method of cleaning Haitian cotton by manufacturers and the International Fabricare Institute is cleanability code “W.” This code specifies spot cleaning only, using the **foam** from a water-based cleaning agent such as a mild detergent or non-solvent upholstery shampoo product.

For overall cleaning or for a large or difficult stain, contact a professional furniture cleaner.

For more information on selecting upholstered furniture, ask your county Extension agent for a copy of the bulletin, “How to Buy Upholstered Furniture.”

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