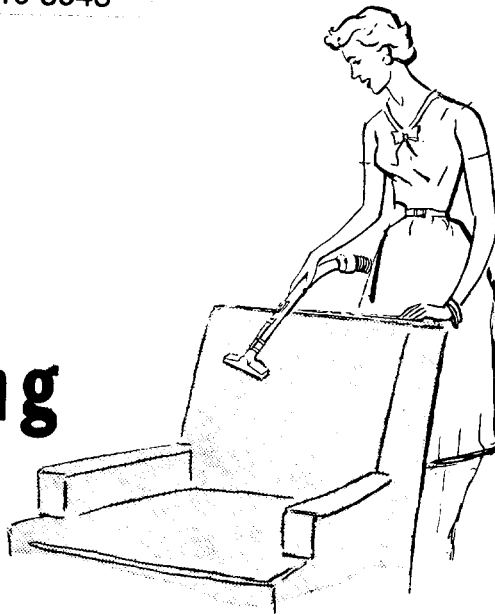




**care  
and  
cleaning  
of**



**UPHOLSTERED  
FURNITURE**

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## **CARE AND CLEANING OF UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE**

Upholstered furniture attracts as much dust as does your polished wood furniture and dust and dirt are just as injurious to it. When dust settles on upholstered furniture and is allowed to remain it dulls the colors and harms the upholstery.

Some upholstery fabrics have been treated to resist stains. Silicone treated fabrics will resist water-borne stains. Those treated with Scotchgard, a fluorocarbon finish, resist oil-borne stains. However, your furniture may have been purchased before these special finishes came along or were in general use. Your furniture will be new looking longer if you give it regular and special care.

### **FOR REGULAR CARE:**

Dust regularly with the upholstery attachment of your vacuum cleaner or with a stiff brush to keep surface soil from working down into the fabric. If a brush has been used, let the dust settle, then wipe the chair with a slightly damp cloth.

Remove loose cushions and dust them first. If cushions are filled with down use a brush instead of the vacuum cleaner. Now dust the rest of the chair thoroughly, getting into all of the crevices.

Remove stains before they have a chance to set. In removing stains, especially those of unknown origin, always test the fabric first where it won't show, to make certain that no damage will be done. Sponge oil and grease stains lightly with cleaning fluid. Work toward the center of the stain. Treat other stains promptly with plain, cool water.<sup>1/</sup>

When you buy new upholstered furniture or have a piece reupholstered get a piece of the upholstery fabric to cover the arms and the spot where the head rests.

These pieces will prolong the life of your furniture and help retain the new look. The pieces may be removed and washed or dry cleaned and will protect the permanent cover of your chair in the spots where soiling is usually most rapid.

### **HEAVY SOIL MAY REQUIRE SERVICES OF AN EXPERT**

Even with good regular care there comes a time when your chair or davenport needs a more thorough cleaning. Very soiled upholstered

<sup>1/</sup> **Stain Removal From Fabrics** — Home and Garden Bulletin No. 62, U.S.D.A.

furniture is not an easy proposition and a professional cleaner can handle it best. Many firms that specialize in cleaning rugs will clean chairs and sofas too. So check on commercial cleaners and ask about their prices before you decide to do the job yourself.

## **WHEN YOU CLEAN FABRIC UPHOLSTERY**

For best results upholstered furniture should be cleaned before it is badly soiled.

You have a choice of shampoos or dry cleaning. However, some fabrics are damaged by water — pile fabrics such as velvets and some friezes and some textured weaves may be damaged. On these you will need to use standard dry cleaning fluid.

On materials not harmed by water a shampoo is desirable. There are many shampoo products on the market. Check with your furniture dealer or with friends who have used the product in order to judge what you may expect in performance. Follow the manufacturer's directions for use.

Avoid getting the upholstery stuffing wet. You may get discoloration from the stuffing which you will never be able to remove.

### **For Dry Suds Shampooing**

Mild soaps may be used but mild household detergents are preferred because they leave less residue in rinsing.

#### **To Make Dry Suds**

From household detergents: Dissolve 1/4 cup of mild detergent in 1 cup hot water in a large mixing bowl. Whip to a dry suds with a rotary egg beater or electric beater. Detergent suds do not hold up, so you will have to beat them up at intervals in order to keep a dry suds.

From soap: Dissolve 1 cup mild soap flakes in 3 cups hot water. Allow to stand several hours until mixture forms a jelly. After the jelly is formed, beat about 1/2 cup of the jelly in a mixing bowl with a rotary beater or electric beater until a stiff standing suds is formed. Rebeat suds as necessary.

Proceed with these steps if you are sure the fabric is not harmed by water.

1. Clean thoroughly with vacuum cleaner attachments or brush.
2. Apply dry suds (from household detergent or soap jelly) liberally to a small area of the upholstery surface with a soft brush, using a circular motion. Excess suds may be lifted from the surface with a spatula to avoid soaking in.
3. Wring a sponge or soft cloth out of clear warm water and rinse the shampooed area. Repeat until suds are removed, but avoid getting upholstery damp below the surfaces.
4. Finish off by rubbing with a clean dry cloth, or brushing with a clean brush if surface is napped. Be sure to overlap adjoining area slightly to prevent rings, or light and dark spots.
5. Use a fan to speed drying. Do not use the furniture until thoroughly dry – at least 24 hours. Do not dry in the sun because of possible fading.

### **For Home Dry Cleaning**

Remember the dangers –

1. Many products are flammable.
2. There is danger of poisonous fumes from the non-flammable dry cleaners available at retail. Fumes from carbon tetrachloride are toxic. It takes less vapor from this solvent than others to poison the user and the poisoning from it is cumulative. Because of the toxicity and flammability of dry cleaners it is best to use these products in small amounts, as in spot removal.
3. Is the filling foam rubber? If so, dry cleaning solvents will not be satisfactory because they cause rubber to deteriorate.
4. If you use dry cleaning solvent, work out of doors or in a well-ventilated room.
5. Flammable cleaners, as petroleum naphthas, are the most widely used. Use only a naphtha with a high flashpoint (the higher the flashpoint, the less easily the naphtha ignites). Never use near an open flame or near an electrical outlet. Breathing large amounts of these vapors can be dangerous, though they are not as poisonous as those of the nonflammable solvents.
6. In cleaning use long, even strokes and overlap the strokes.

### **WHEN YOU CLEAN LEATHER UPHOLSTERY**

Use saddle soap or a commercial leather cleaner for leather upholstery. The saddle soap can be bought at shoe repair shops and hardware stores. Garages have leather cleaners for automobiles upholstered in leather. Follow directions on the container.

If one of these products is used it is doubtful that a leather conditioner will be necessary. Do not expose leather to high heat, excessive dryness or dampness. High heat dries out the natural oils and causes it to crack.

### **WHEN YOU CLEAN PLASTIC UPHOLSTERY**

Sponge with warm suds. Lather thoroughly, using a sponge or cloth. Rinse with a clean cloth wrung out of clear water. Dry thoroughly.

### **WHEN YOU CLEAN REED, CANE OR WICKER FURNITURE**

Reed, cane and wicker furniture can be dusted with a stiff brush or a vacuum cleaner attachment. If this type of furniture becomes badly soiled, it can be washed with a cloth or sponge wrung out of warm suds, then wiped promptly with a cloth wrung out of clear water. Avoid soaking the furniture.

#### **References:**

1. The Betty Bissell Book of Home Cleaning — A Bantam Book
2. How to Clean Everything by Alma Chesnut Moore — Simon and Schuster
3. Care and Cleaning of Furniture and Rugs by Lucile Ketchum, Extension Specialist in Home Management — Michigan State University.

## **OTHER HOMEMAKER CIRCULARS**

1. CIRCULAR A-334 – HOW TO CARE FOR CARPETS AND RUGS.
2. CIRCULAR A-337 – WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN BUYING SMOOTH FLOOR COVERING – (CONTAINS SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE OF SMOOTH FLOOR COVERING).
3. CIRCULAR A-255 – CARE OF WOOD FURNITURE.
4. CIRCULAR A-335 – WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN BUYING CARPETS AND RUGS.
5. UNNUMBERED – MANAGEMENT OF HOUSECLEANING.

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