


**C**LEANLINESS FACTS

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

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ALLERGIES**'Tis the Season for Sneezin'**

When an allergy attack hits, the culprit may be closer at hand than one realizes, warns The Soap and Detergent Association. The dust mites that lurk in the likes of carpeting, bedding and upholstered furniture, plus the mold that grows in places, such as mattresses, damp basements and humidifiers, produces air-borne allergens that stir up allergies. It is estimated that approximately one half of all allergy sufferers have dust-related allergies. To help keep their sneezing and wheezing under control, some small measures can make a big difference.

Improving the ventilation should be the first step. Ways to do this include opening the windows, installing exhaust fans in the kitchen and bathroom, keeping the fireplace chimney flue open on all but the coldest days, and venting the dryer to the outdoors.

Vacuuming should be done on a regular basis. Dust mites generally live at the base of carpet fibers and tend to rise with moisture. For more effective removal, call in a professional to do extraction cleaning or invest in a deep cleaning machine designed for home use.

Mattresses should be vacuumed and turned every few months. Washable pillows should be washed. Those that are not washable should be thrown in the dryer and tumbled on the air cycle. Consider investing in special mattress and pillow covers that reduce or eliminate the mite problem.

For dusting, use a cloth or mop with a furniture cleaning product designed to pick up dust and dirt. Brooms, dry rags and feather dusters simply scatter the dust. Consider washable curtains. Heavy draperies collect dust, so make sure they are cleaned twice a year and vacuumed frequently in between. Because they are easy to vacuum, roller shades are a better choice than

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slatted blinds with multi surfaces that attract dust.

Other methods for controlling dust mites include routine cleaning of furnace air ducts, using a vacuum cleaner with an enclosed bay, and reducing the number of dust-catching items in a room. To survive, mites require moisture. Lowering the relative humidity to below 50% will help reduce their numbers. Using a double-filtered ventilator or an air-conditioner, particularly in pollen season, may help. ■





WOMEN'S FASHIONS

Putting the Fun into Fashion

Pleated skirts, twin sweater sets, fake fur bombers and pastel jacket dresses . . . these are a few of the fashion trends spotted by The Soap and Detergent Association for Fall '94.

Colors are bright and exciting . . . or subtle and serene. Think pepto pink, shocking coral and neon orange. Think lavender, pale pink, mint green and the softest of blues. Fabric news is all about surface - slick vinyls, furry fake furs, cuddle-up angoras, touch-me-please mohairs, crisp taffetas and sensuous satins.

Fake furs roar through the fashion kingdom, substituting for the real thing as outerwear, as a luxury lining for cloth jackets and coats, as a trim detail on dresses and tops, including sweaters and jackets, in au naturel colorations or brilliantly dyed. Hats, muffs and handbags all get the fake fur touch. Leathers, both real and faux, also shine in car coats, peacoats and belted trenches.

More shine comes from garments fashioned from molded plastic, rubber, vinyl and a spongy scuba fabric called neoprene. Short drapey dresses, belted trench coats, classic blazers and second-skin tops and dresses are all part of this industrial revolution.

Short, form-fitting Lycra spandex skirts or flippy skating skirts, worn over a full body stocking or a bodysuit and leggings, are great for those that are young at heart and young in figure. A-lines flip out, too, in mini interpretations with cropped cardigans and turtlenecks finishing the look.

While short lengths garnered the most attention from the fashion press, the majority of this fall's fashionable hemlines hover at the knee - right where most of America has been wearing them for years! Kilts come in all lengths, with all manner of edge finishes, from fringe to blanket stitching to plain and fastened with toggles, buttons or kilt pins. The perfect mate is the pristine white blouse or Donna Reed-style sweater sets. The newest suit in town is a simple A-line dress with matching jacket in a trans-seasonal pastel and worn with natural colored hose. ■

CHILDREN'S FASHIONS

The Many Layers of Fall

From tots to teens, layering is the fashion message for fall. The fashionable toddler miss dresses up in short, smock-style dresses with matching bloomers and leggings or cable-stitch tights. Her gentleman counterpart might top his t-shirt with a sweatshirt and a sleeveless vest. As kids get older, the number of layers increases: two t-shirts, plus sweatshirt, lightweight vest and thermal vest . . . or sweater plus blouse under jumper and overskirt, mated to knit leggings and chunky socks.

Strictly juvenile prints and baby pastels have been replaced by grown-up fabrics in sophisticated colors. Buffalo checks, water color abstracts, tartans, denim, black/white gingham, thermal knits, polar fleece, canvas and cotton twill are at the top of the list. A-plus colors include deep warm reds, greens and navies, and a neutral story based on gray, brown and oatmeal.

Plaids are everywhere, but especially in flannel, reports The Soap and Detergent Association. In '90s terminology, a twin set is a plaid flannel vest over a matching soft flannel shirt or a quilted nylon vest with applique to match the shirt underneath. Favored embellishments for vests and jackets include fringe, beading, patchwork, toggles and blanket stitch edgings.

The inside is on the outside for knitwear. Overlocked and whipstitched seams show up on the outside as a design detail on everything from dresses to sweatsuits.

Streetwise fashions range from tie-dye to motorcycle boots. Short, snappy skating skirts are paired to bodysuits and tights, then topped with short, cropped sweaters. Gleaming silver zippers highlight black stretch pants, jackets and skirts. Metallic outerwear, especially silver, adds shine.

Cartoons add character to sportswear. Bugs Bunny, the Tasmanian Devil, Daffy Duck, Mickey Mouse, Goofy, Donald Duck and Spiderman keep company with The Flintstones and X-Men.

Footwear goes funky. Earth shoes, chukka boots and chunky Mary Jane's are the footwear of choice, along with hiking boots, work boots, loafer-style clogs, beaded sneakers and silver moccasins. ■

MEN'S FASHIONS

Every Day Is Friday

Two hallmarks of the '90s - a laid-back lifestyle and preoccupation with comfort - are having a strong influence on menswear fashions. This attitude inspired dress-down Fridays, which spawned the need for tailored clothes with a sportier edge. Now, as this casual look is winning acceptance in the office, it is spilling over into the Monday to Thursday wardrobe.

Sporty dress shirts have expanded far beyond the classic chambray, button-down version to include vintage touches, such as rounded Edwardian and banded collars, soft point, schoolboy and classic English spread collars. Fabrics include twill, oxford cloth, denim and poplin. The color palette, which incorporates mid-tones such as taupe, khaki and olive, is designed to complement brown suits and sportswear. Patterns tend to be small and neat - tattersall checks, mini tartans, pinstripes overprinted with a small diamond or foulard design.

The resurgence of corduroy is due, too, to the all-week popularity of FridayWear. Prized for its texture and plush hand, corduroy shows up in sport coats, suits, sporty vests and casual pants with trouser styling. The wales prevail in shades of taupe, tobacco, olive and forest.

The fuzz is out in full force, notes The Soap and Detergent Association. Mohair knits up every conceivable type of sweater, including turtlenecks, cable knits, t-shirts, cardigans and henleys. Crewnecks with matching cardigans are the masculine version of the sweater set. More sweater dressing comes into play with the sweater coat, a softly styled new-age sport coat executed in woven fabric but with the feel and comfort of a sweater. The very lightest of this genre looks like a blazer but is constructed like a shirt with not a lining or a shoulder pad in sight. Others mate more traditional tailoring to light, drapery fabrics.

When it comes to strictly casual clothes, the hip hop of city streets has been replaced by a blast of country air. Outdoors is in. Leather, rubberized cotton, quilted nylon are among the rugged outdoor looks. Flannel shirts look their freshest with accents of denim or fleece. ■

MISCELLANY

The Soft Touch

Fabric softeners impart softness and/or fluffiness to washable fabrics. But, The Soap and Detergent Association reminds consumers that they offer other benefits, too. They can make fabrics feel smooth, decrease static cling, add a pleasing fragrance, decrease drying time, reduce wrinkling and make ironing easier.

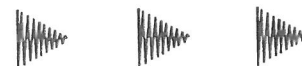
Rinse-added fabric softeners are very effective in making clothes feel soft. They should be diluted with at least an equal amount of water, then added directly to the rinse water. Do not pour the softener directly on the clothes as staining may occur. And do not put any other product, such as bluing or water softener, in the rinse as they may react or interfere with the softener.

Dryer-added fabric softeners are especially effective in reducing static cling. They are formulated to be compatible with the heat of the clothes dryer. As sheet-type softeners tumble freely with the clothes, the heat of the dryer helps transfer the softener from the sheet to the fabrics. Packet-type softeners are attached to the dryer drum. During the tumbling process, the heat of the dryer activates and dispenses the product.

Relaxing the Rules

The picture of the American businessman in an uptight suit and tie is slowly fading, suggests The Soap and Detergent Association.

While employees in sales positions, top executives and those dealing with foreign associates tend to stick to traditional business attire, others favor a more relaxed approach. Jeans, chinos and khaki pants may be mated to a tie and sport jacket or casual sport shirt. Dress-down Fridays is a summer month tradition that some companies have extended to all year. Even the suit-and-tie crowd is relaxing a bit with suits reserved for client meetings, and sport jackets as acceptable office attire.





Carpet Care Comes Home

Thanks to new entries in the carpet care market, consumers can deep clean their carpeting without calling in carpet care experts or renting heavy commercial equipment.

Developments, such as increased portability, rotating scrub brushes that lift carpet fibers to allow the shampoo to penetrate and deep clean, motorized power scrubber heads, and lightweight, easy-to-store designs, make these machines more attractive for home ownership. At least one manufacturer has developed a kit to convert its wet/dry vac into a carpet cleaning machine.

Many models have cleaning products specially formulated to go with the machine, notes The Soap and Detergent Association. Some of these products are marketed as allergen controls, which give the deep-cleaning capabilities an added dimension.

Although men are still the biggest users of wet/dry vacuums, many manufacturers are broadening their message to attract women buyers.

A Bright Future for Men's Toiletries

According to information gathered by The Soap and Detergent Association, men are becoming more aware of fragrances and skin care products and are more active in the purchasing decision than ever before.

Some products are specifically targeted to those who are interested both physical fitness and good hygiene. All-over body shampoo products in hangable, unbreakable containers are easy to use in the shower and easy to transport between home and gym. Many products, such as skin conditioners and anti-aging items, have been reformulated with SPFs to help protect male skin from the damaging and aging effects of the sun.

Product sampling, which has long been a mainstay of women's cosmetics, is becoming an important part of men's toiletries marketing. These smaller, point-of-purchase packages encourage impulse buying and allow customers to try products with minimal investment.

Another important trend is the elimination of secondary packaging, with an emphasis on environmentally responsible containers.

Tastes in Kitchens

According to a survey spotted by The Soap and Detergent Association, last year's average kitchen remodeling project cost \$17,630. Of that amount, 43 percent went for cabinets, 21 percent for labor, 12 percent for countertops, 8 percent for appliances, 5 percent for fixtures and fittings, 4 percent for flooring, 3 percent for lighting and 4 percent for other items.

The kitchen that best reflects these expenditures has new cabinets and some built-in appliances. Dishwashers, free-standing side-by-side refrigerators, single ovens, electric coil ranges, built-in microwaves, disposals and recycling considerations all ranked high on the importance scale. White was the color of choice, with green as the most popular accent.

Many kitchens involve special considerations. Thirty-five percent were designed to accommodate more than one cook; 23 percent included a laundry room; 31 percent involved room enlargements or additions; 55 percent were open to adjacent spaces; and 23 percent included accommodations for child safety.

Wallcoverings Mirror the Times

Today's consumers aren't decorating to create a showcase for entertaining. Instead, they want homes that are casual, flexible, functional and comfortable. And their taste in wallcoverings is a reflection of these attitudes.

Softer tones, textural grounds and more neutral colors have high appeal because they are enduring and easy to match to the rest of the room. And, these basic sidewalls can act as a foil for a beautiful border. Fruits and flowers, in a softer, more abstract style, are bridging the gap between contemporary and traditional. Although country looks are still strong, calicos and gingham are relinquishing their popularity to more sophisticated interpretations. Many of these new papers are washable. The Soap and Detergent Association suggests checking with the wallpaper manufacturer for specific cleaning recommendations. ■

Q & A

SDA Answers Your Questions

Q: Recently, we had a small fire. There was no damage, but our clothes smell like smoke. How can I eliminate this smell?

A: Washing can be fairly effective in restoring smoke damaged fabrics. First, hang the garments outdoors to air them. Then, separate washable garments into groups according to soil levels: light, medium and heavy. Lightly soiled fabrics can pick up soot from the heavily soiled ones.

Wash garments, being careful not to overload the machine. A liquid laundry detergent may be more effective in removing soot than a powder. If you have hard water, use extra detergent or add a water softener to the wash water. Use warm or hot wash water, following care label directions. Do not dry the garments in a dryer because the heat will lock the smoke into the fabric; line dry.

Smoke odor may return after a single washing because the detergent fragrance will temporarily mask the odor. Consequently, you may have to repeat the washing procedure two to five times to completely remove the smell. Smoke odor is more difficult to remove in heavily soiled garments and cotton and cotton/blend fabrics.

Q: My son is going to camp and I know he will get stains on his clothes. How can I remove these stains when he gets home?

A: Pack a stain stick or gel with his camping supplies and ask him to rub any stains with the stick/gel before he puts his garments in the laundry bag. The stick/gel is effective for up to a week and will help keep stains from setting.

Q: I have a new fiberglass shower stall and need advice for cleaning it without scratching the surface.

A: Liquid cleaners are best. Avoid abrasive cleaners because they may scratch, discolor or dull the finish. Follow the cleaning instructions that came with the shower stall. In general, all-purpose cleaners, baking soda or borax are effective for routine cleaning of fiberglass fixtures. For hard water deposits, rust scale or mildew, use a tub/tile/sink cleaner that states on the label that it is effective on the specific soil. ■

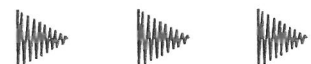
WHAT'S NEW?

Easy cooking and easy cleaning features give the Premier Griddle high consumer appeal. Its enclosed heating system can be set at a temperature high enough to sizzle a steak or low enough to keep just-cooked foods warm. An extra-large drip tray collects grease for easy one-step disposal. The removable electronic probe makes the griddle submersible for cleaning. (Vitantonio Mfg. Co.; 34355 Vokes Drive; Eastlake, OH 44095-4033)

The popularity of home-baked bread has inspired two new products - a breadbox with an airtight seal that holds a 1.5 pound loaf and a microwaveable and freezer-safe slicing tray/slicing guide that fits inside the box. As the bread is cut, the tray/guide slides along the loaf, making it easier to cut uniform slices with fewer crumbs. (Frye International; P.O. Box 4059; Longview, TX 75606)

Americans now use more than 1,500 different kinds of aerosol products at home and at work. "Aerosols Work For You" is an easy-to-read brochure developed to enlighten consumers about aerosol containers. It explains how an aerosol works, addresses issues, such as safety, disposal and environmental concerns, and discusses misperceptions about this type of packaging. (Consumer Aerosol Products Council; 1201 Connecticut Avenue N.W.; Suite 300; Washington, DC 20036)

With increasing concern about indoor air pollution, vacuum bags with micro-filtration characteristics are gaining in popularity. The Micro-Clean vacuum bag is constructed with a two-ply design and a liner that traps common indoor irritants and pollutants as small as 0.1 micron. The bags are also treated with Bacrastat, an anti-bacterial agent said to destroy germs and bacteria. (Home Care Industries, Incorporated; One Lisbon Street; Clifton, NJ 07013) ■





“KEEP IT CLEAN” BRIEFS

If dishes washed in an automatic dishwasher are not getting dry, try using a rinse agent. A rinse agent causes water to sheet off the dishes during the final rinse, which aids in the drying process.

Ballpoint ink stains may be impossible to remove, however, try saving washable garments by using the following method. Remove as much color as possible by running cold water through the stain. Pretreat using a prewash stain remover. Launder.

Placing hot dishes, utensils or cooking appliances directly on a wooden surface can cause a chemical change in the finish, resulting in a white spot. Always use protective pads under hot items.

Spills on fabrics from beverages containing sugar such as wine or ginger ale, may seem to disappear. But don't be fooled — they may still be there! Once the stain is exposed to air, the sugar oxidizes and leaves an invisible stain, which ultimately turns yellow or brown. The stain never left ... it was there all along. To correct the problem, immediately treat even light stains you can't see, before they dry. For washable fabrics, sponge or soak the spill in cool water. Pretreat with a stain stick or gel, prewash stain remover, or laundry detergent. Launder as soon as possible.

For best washing action, mix large items, like sheets, with a few smaller items, like blouses or hand towels, in the same color range. Put large items along side of the agitator; avoid wrapping them around the agitator post. They need to be free to move easily. ■

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