

# CLEANLINESS FACTS

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

475 Park Avenue South New York, New York 10016

## CLEANING ON THE RUN The '90s Approach

Must a clean home be a casualty of the busy lifestyles of the '90s? Not if one heeds tips offered by The Soap and Detergent Association.

In the '90s, staying home has become more important than going out. And, staying home in a clean house is more pleasant and more relaxing than spending time in a dirty one. It's healthier, too. Regular cleaning removes dirt and food particles on which germs can grow. Regular cleaning also removes clutter underfoot and on stairways, which helps eliminate accidental falls.

A fast, effective cleaning routine depends on three things: knowing the surfaces that need to be cleaned; understanding the soils that need to be removed; and reading the product labels to match the right product with the right job.

For effective and safe cleaning, follow three general guidelines. First, read the product label. It will give you instructions on how to use the product. Second, never mix cleaning products. Mixing a product containing chlorine with one that contains ammonia or an acid can create dangerous gases. The label will usually tell you if a product should not be mixed with other products. Finally, store all household cleaning products in their original containers, with original labels intact, and store them well out of the reach of young children.

A clean bathroom and kitchen are of primary importance. In the bathroom, heavy daily use, plus hard water deposits, soap scum, rust stains and discolorations due to mold growth all present some cleaning challenges. Tub/tile/sink and all-purpose cleaners are effective on most bathroom surfaces, except glass. For heavily soiled areas on porcelain or ceramic fixtures, powdered or liquid cleansers work well. For surfaces that are

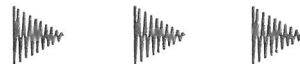
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easily scratched, such as fiberglass, acrylic or plastic, use a nonabrasive cleaner or a paste made from baking soda or borax and water. For mirrors and glass shower doors, use a glass cleaner or a glass and multi-surface cleaner.

Mildew is a frequent unwanted bathroom visitor. To remove it, use a product formulated to clean mold and mildew. For hard water stains, prevention is the best cure. To keep these deposits from forming, when water is splashed on the faucets dry them off with a soft cloth. If stains do occur, read labels to choose a cleaning product that is formulated to remove hard water stains. If the water contains iron, rust may also be



a problem, in this case use a rust remover.

In the kitchen, grease and food soils are the main culprits, but smudges and fingerprints trail closely behind. All-purpose cleaners, nonabrasive cleaners and tile cleaners will all work effectively on most surfaces. For porcelain or ceramic surfaces, use a powdered or liquid cleanser. A paste made from water and borax or baking soda is also effective on many surfaces, including the interiors of refrigerators and freezers.

For marble and wood, use products that are especially formulated for these surfaces. For resilient flooring, including linoleum and vinyl, use a floor or all-purpose cleaner. For no-wax vinyl floors, use a product that does not require rinsing, or rinse the floor well to prevent a cloudy residue from forming. Note that some floor care products clean, some clean and add shine, and others just shine. Be sure the product you choose does the job you want.

A dirty oven is a tough cleaning job and oven cleaners are strong products formulated for this job. Carefully read and follow the label directions for using these products properly. For self-cleaning ovens, read and follow the oven manufacturer's directions.

Carpeting, whether wall-to-wall or area rugs, should be vacuumed regularly. Because ground-in dirt and grit can abrade and weaken carpet fibers, vacuuming is the most important component of basic carpet care. Spills and stains should be blotted up using a clean white cloth, then treated with a carpet cleaning product. Never rub a stain. Rubbing can spread the stain and push it deeper into the fibers.

Upholstery should receive the same care as carpets: regular vacuuming and immediate treatment for spots and spills. For the latter, blot, don't rub, and clean with a product that has been developed specifically for upholstered furniture. Do not use other household cleaning products as they may contain bleach or abrasive materials that can damage the fabric.

Regular dusting keeps wood furniture looking better longer. It removes dust and dirt particles that can scratch the finish. A furniture cleaner or furniture polish can remove dust and stains while providing shine and protection. ■

## FUTURE SHOCK Things Are Looking Fuzzy

Fuzzy logic is a mathematical system that instructs computers to work with relative conditions. This allows the computer to control tasks that require interpretation or adaptation. In essence, the computer controls the process and fuzzy logic allows it to do so with maximum efficiency.

As an example, an automatic dishwasher that utilizes fuzzy logic selects a wash cycle based on a certain number of previous washes, when the machine last ran and how many times the door was opened since the last washing. Once the cycle begins, sensors determine how much food, soil and detergent are present in the water. Throughout the cycle, other sensors constantly readjust the amount of wash arm rotation and the water temperature. As a result, the appliance operates more efficiently. Benefits include a decrease in water usage and an increase in energy conservation.

While many manufacturers express excitement over the possibilities that fuzzy logic and other high tech innovations present, they are also concerned that the benefits are not readily evident to consumers. Consumers often equate single control systems with entry level models. They may be uneasy about relinquishing control over parts of the operation and, notes The Soap and Detergent Association, they may fear that repairing an electronic control panel will be costly.

But fuzzy logic could impart a whole range of benefits. It would allow washers, dryers and dishwashers to operate on one-touch, fully automated cycles. Room environment machines that, in addition to cooling, supply heat, control humidity and remove dust and pollen, could replace today's air conditioners. Many appliance industry experts are predicting that stringent water conservation requirements will soon be as important as the energy efficiency ratings. The better an appliance's control system can adapt to a consumer's widely variable needs, the more efficiently the appliance can operate. ■

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## THE CHANGING AMERICAN HOME A Place for Working, Living and Playing

Consider the following statistics. Nearly 60% of American women now work outside the home. Forty-two percent of all families are dual-career families and 14% are single-parent families. About 30% of the work force does at least some work from home. Approximately 60% of working mothers have children under the age of six, and nearly 70% have kids 18 or younger. All of this adds up to a home life in the '90s that is very different from previous generations.

Convenience features, such as one-stop shopping, extended retail hours, good service and easy-to-use products, are important to today's consumers. Often, it is the solution the product offers, rather than the product itself, that attracts the consumer.

Within the family, traditional roles are now interchangeable. More women are taking up woodworking, more men are cooking and children influence the purchasing of many products, including electronics, furniture and housewares.

The homes these families live in is undergoing as many changes as the family itself. These changes have greatly affected the consumer marketplace. The increasing number of home offices has had a major impact. Utilitarian home office furniture is being replaced with furnishings and accessories in brushed metals, granite looks and fashion colors, such as forest green, red and cobalt blue. Compact versions of standard office equipment, including fax machines, copiers and telephone products, fit neatly into limited home office space. Because a large percentage of home office workers are also mobile workers, portability is an important attribute for accessories and storage containers.

Current entertainment trends tend to center around the home. In the last decade, the average consumer's free time has shrunk by more than 36%. Dual-career families are looking for ways to simultaneously entertain and spend time together, and the home is the logical place to do this. In many families a meal together is not a daily occurrence. Instead, it is an occasion for a social gathering and some creative cooking. Open kitchens and great rooms that combine the living

room and kitchen are increasingly common. As a result, tools and equipment that used to be kept hidden away in the kitchen are now on display. Style is an important component of even the most mundane kitchen utensils.

With the increase in two-income and single-parent families, kids are taking more responsibility at home and influencing purchases that were previously considered adult territory. Children's preferences in cookware, cleaning supplies and laundry equipment become important when the tasks at hand are at least partially their responsibility. And, when it comes to anything involving electronics, these young technocrats are often more savvy than the adults in the household. Children's knowledge and preferences can have major impact on the final purchasing decision.

Although leisure time has diminished, interest in crafts and do-it-yourself home improvement has burgeoned and the profile of this customer has also changed. According to statistics spotted by The Soap and Detergent Association, 60% of all tool boxes are purchased by women and more than 40% of the time, the family member most involved in do-it-yourself home improvement activities is female. Products and instructions emphasize creativity, convenience and ease of use. Interest in home improvement has spilled over into the craft market. Ninety percent of American households have at least one person involved in crafts. Fabric painting and decorating, cake decorating, candy making, stenciling and potpourri are the most popular activities for women ages 18 to 49. Children under 18 usually prefer art, drawing, paper crafts, beading and jewelry making (girls) and leather crafts (boys). Traditional needlecrafts, such as knitting and crocheting, are popular with older adults. ■





## MISCELLANY

### Care Labels

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) requires manufacturers and importers to attach a permanent label to textile garments that provides directions for their care. It must be attached in an easy-to-find place where it will not separate from the garment. In addition, it must remain legible during the garment's useful life.

Only one method of safe care must be listed, even if there are more alternatives. "Machine Wash" indicates the use of either a commercial or home washing machine. Other information, such as specific washing temperatures, size of load or drying procedures, may be included. Although a garment only labeled "washable" may also be drycleanable, there is no way of telling from the care label, explains The Soap and Detergent Association. However, the label must warn about any part of the recommended care procedure that would harm the garment or other garments being laundered or drycleaned with it.

### Wrinkle-free Cotton

Wrinkle-free cotton has had a major impact on the menswear market, particularly in the men's slacks business. Buoyed by this success, manufacturers are bringing wrinkle-free cotton to the home furnishings arena. Unlike permanent press, which is a finish, wrinkle-free cotton is the result of improved technology in many areas, including fiber selection, dyeing, finishing and the application of resin technology, explains The Soap and Detergent Association.

One major manufacturer is offering wrinkle-free, 100% cotton flat and fitted sheets in 11 colors. The sheets have a 200 thread count and are machine wash, tumble dry. The company expects that consumers who are fans of all-cotton sheets will prefer these because they get a better product; consumers who currently purchase blended sheets, but don't like wrinkles, will find these an attractive alternative.

### Bathroom Safety

Bathrooms should be beautiful, functional and safe. According to The Soap and Detergent Association, making the bathroom safe is a combination of common sense and careful planning.

Steps leading to a tub may be glamorous, but they are dangerous. For safety, one step is the maximum but none is best. For flooring, choose small ceramic tiles, textured tiles or a less slippery flooring material, such as rubber. Avoid slippery scatter rugs. Be sure all rugs, including bath mats, have a nonslip backing.

The shower door should be made of tempered glass or plastic and should open out. Otherwise, if someone falls against it and can't move, they will be trapped. Seating is important every place in the bathroom, but especially in the shower. And grab bars are a safe, practical addition, regardless of the age of family members.

Other precautions include clothes hooks installed above eye level, rounded edges on countertops and doors, and good lighting, especially lighted switches and a night light.

### Houseware Trends

Trends in housewares reflect — both literally and figuratively — the changing tastes of the consumer, observes The Soap and Detergent Association.

Fat-free food preparation is a major concern. New cookware products have nonstick, textured interiors that channel grease away from the meat. Steamer inserts fit several pots from the same manufacturer. Presentation is also important. To help keep foods such as fish from sticking to the grill, new wood-handle barbecue tools have a nonstick coating. One company has modernized and restyled its traditional line of oven-to-tableware. Decorative bottles suitable for storing and serving oils and vinegars are available in an assortment of shapes and colors.

Other trends include ergonomically shaped coffee pots and meal-in-one pans that can cook a chicken or roast on a vertical rack, potatoes and vegetables in the side pocket. ■

**Q & A**

**SDA Answers Your Questions**

**Q: Many of the cleaning products I use list the word *CAUTION* on the label. What does this mean, and are the products harmful to me or my family?**

A: The products should not be harmful to you or your family if they are used and stored according to the directions on the label.

The word *CAUTION* on a household cleaning product is a signal word required under the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (FHSA) to provide information on human safety. Specifically, the word *CAUTION* (or *WARNING*) is a mild warning often used for laundry and automatic dishwashing detergents, disinfectants and all-purpose cleaners. It means that the product is not likely to cause permanent damage if someone accidentally gets it in their eye, on their skin or swallows it — if appropriate first aid is given. The appropriate first aid for the product is also listed on the label. Usually, the warning is given because the product is an eye or skin irritant, or the product would cause dizziness or an upset stomach if it were swallowed.

As a point of reference, a food such as vinegar would also be required to have a *CAUTION* label if it were sold as a cleaning product instead of a food product.

**Q: Several of my husband's cotton shirts have tears under the arms. What causes this?**

A: The tears are probably a result of using an antiperspirant over a long period of time.

Antiperspirants are acidic and contain aluminum chlorides which can damage cellulose fibers, such as cotton, linen, and rayon, or cellulose fiber/synthetic blends. After prolonged contact with the antiperspirant, the fibers are weakened. During laundering, agitation can cause the weakened fabric to tear. Once the fabric is damaged, you can not reverse it.

To prevent or reduce this problem, wash garments as soon as possible after wearing to remove the antiperspirant. Using a deodorant rather than an antiperspirant will also help alleviate the problem because deodorants have a neutral pH. ■

**WHAT'S NEW?**

Perfect to tuck inside a wallet, a purse or a pocket, the FlashCard is a flat, credit-card-size flashlight that emits a light brighter than the standard-size flashlight. It runs on a 6-volt battery which provides a life expectancy of 18 months if used 15 seconds a day. The fact that it is waterproof makes it practical for use indoors or outdoors.

(Lumatec Industries; 815-A Brazos; Suite 264; Austin, TX 78701)

Get a grip on cooking operations with Good Grips. These barbecue and basic kitchen tools have handles specially designed to accommodate the turning and twisting motions that go with many cooking tasks. The barbecue tools are packaged as a set — fork, turner and a pair of tongs — in two versions, each with a different size handle.

(Oxo International; 230 5th Avenue; Suite 1100; New York, NY 10001)

All Frigidaire and Tappan microwave ovens are being redesigned this year, offering the consumer new styling and new performance features. The latter includes a brown-only pad that also permits browning after microwave cooking; a push-button, interlocking door system which shuts off all microwave energy before the door opens; and Touch-N-Cook electronic controls with 10 power levels and three or four program stages.

(The Frigidaire Company; 800-451-7007)

Do-it-yourself, fabric-covered home accessories, such as photo albums, lamp shades, picture frames and headboards, are easy to make with FabriCraft Peel 'n Stick Fabrics. The entire collection of adhesive-backed printed fabrics consists of 35 print motifs and six solid colors, all coordinated to by-the-yard fabrics from VIP Fabrics. Themes include florals, novelties, seasonal and juvenile designs.

(Rubbermaid Inc.; 1147 Akron Road; Wooster, OH 44691) ■





## "KEEP IT CLEAN" BRIEFS

Some items should not be washed in an automatic dishwasher. Aluminum items may discolor from the dishwasher detergent; cast-iron pots and pans may rust; crystal can chip, crack or become permanently cloudy or etched; decals, metal trims or painted surfaces can fade or peel; the metal on silver, gold plated or platinum pieces may be removed over time; copper or pewter can stain, discolor and pit; small, flexible plastics can melt; and wood may warp split, dry out, crack or lose its finish.

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Place two or three laundry baskets side by side in the closet, bedroom or wherever dirty clothes are collected. Use one for white clothes, one for colored clothes, etc. Labeling each will help family members sort properly. When washday arrives, the laundry is already sorted!

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Cleaning antique wooden furniture requires special care. A paste wax is preferable because it cleans gently and effectively and helps camouflage small cracks in the finish. The wax provides a protective finish against wear and spills and imparts the mellow luster often desired for antiques.

When cleaning carved areas, use a very small amount of wax on the cloth and buff it immediately. Any wax left unwiped will dry in the crevices and may turn white. Another method for cleaning crevices is to apply a spray polish to the cloth and then wipe into and over the crevices.

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To help keep baby sleepers and stretch suits from pilling and to keep lint hidden, turn them inside out before laundering.

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It's easy to fluff pillows and remove dust. Simply put pillows in the dryer and run the air-fluff cycle. ■

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