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STAIN REMOVAL CHEAT SHEET

What to use on 16 common household stains, what to avoid, and the quick rules that stop a spill becoming a permanent mark.

16 stains | Do and don't | Free PDF

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First response

- [x] ~~Blot, never rub~~
- [x] ~~Work from the outside in~~
- [ ] Use cold water first
- [ ] Test in a hidden spot
- [ ] Rinse and blot dry

Save it before it sets.

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Stain Removal Cheat Sheet

Act quickly, blot gently and test any product on a hidden spot first. Always check the care label.

Three rules for every stain
1. Blot, never rub. 2. Cold water first for protein stains (blood, milk, egg) because heat sets them. 3. Never mix cleaning products, especially bleach with ammonia or vinegar.

STAIN	WHAT TO DO	AVOID
Red wine	Blot, cover with salt, then cold water and a drop of dish soap	Hot water, rubbing
Coffee and tea	Cold water, then a mix of dish soap and white vinegar	Hot water on fresh stains
Grease and oil	Cover in bicarb soda for 15 minutes, brush off, then dish soap	Water first
Blood	Cold water, then an enzyme cleaner or cold salt water	Hot water, heat
Ink	Dab with isopropyl alcohol on a cloth, working inwards	Rubbing outwards
Pet urine	Blot, rinse with cold water, then an enzyme cleaner	Ammonia products
Candle wax	Harden with ice, scrape, then press with a warm iron over paper	Scraping while soft
Chewing gum	Freeze with ice, then lift off and dab with dry-cleaning solvent	Pulling while warm
Mud	Let dry, brush off, then dish soap and cold water	Wiping while wet
Tomato sauce	Scrape, cold water from the back, then dish soap	Hot water
Chocolate	Scrape, cold water, then dish soap and an enzyme cleaner	Hot water
Sweat and deodorant	White vinegar and water soak, then wash as normal	Chlorine bleach
Grass	Dish soap and an old toothbrush, then wash	Drying before treating
Rust	Lemon juice and salt in the sun, or a rust remover	Chlorine bleach
Mould (light)	White vinegar, leave 1 hour, scrub, then wipe dry	Mixing with bleach
Limescale	White vinegar or citric acid, then rinse well	Acid on natural stone

Good to know
Old or set stains may need a professional. Delicate fabrics, silk, wool, leather and natural stone should be treated by a specialist. If a stain is on a rental property, tell your agent and keep photos for your condition report.