

# Ironing Tips

## How to Care for Your Clothes

Are your clothes getting what they deserve?

Judy Woolfolk, Certified Home Economist with the Faultless Fabricare Institute, offers answers to some commonly asked fabric care questions:

**Q:** My husband's shirts and slacks wrinkle, even though they're made with wrinkle-free fabric. What can I do?

**A:** Follow laundering directions carefully. Using a warm water gentle wash cycle, then tumble dry on a medium setting and removing promptly helps prevent wrinkling. Over time, some garments do lose their wrinkle-free characteristics. To revive fabric, spray with Faultless Sizing or Spray Starch and iron with a steam iron.

**Q:** Spray starch sometimes leaves a white residue on clothes and starch build-up on the iron. How can I prevent this?

**A:** Use two light applications rather than one heavy one. Use too much starch and it has no place to go, so it ends up on the bottom of the iron or on the fabric surface. You can also spray an entire garment before ironing, and roll it up for about 30 seconds before ironing, so the fabric has time to absorb the starch.  
**Q:** I do a lot of sewing and have a residue of starch and fusibles on the bottom of my iron. Do I have to buy a new iron?

**A:** A product called Hot Iron Cleaner removes starch, fusibles, melted plastic and just about anything else from your iron's soleplate. It works on a hot iron so there is no need to cool the iron down before cleaning. The cleaner won't remove water stains or discoloration but these stains don't affect performance.

**Q:** What's the difference between spray starches and sizings?

**A:** Sizing was developed for synthetics and fabric blends. It restores the original body to fabrics without stiffness and can be used on natural fabrics for a light finish.

Regular starch gives more body than sizing and can be used on natural fabrics and blends that have a higher natural fiber contents. Heavy starch gives more body and crispness - ideal for linens, jeans, and 100 percent cotton garments. Lemon starch gives a fresh, lemon scent while ironing, but quickly dissipates after ironing. Spray starch and sizing should not be used on items labeled dry clean only.

## Starch Through the Ages

There's nothing stiff about the fact that starch has enjoyed an enviable reputation through the ages. Here's some trivia to take home and iron.

**Then:** The ancient Egyptians used starch to size and weight papyrus as a writing material. A document dated to 312 A.D. shows the Chinese used the same technique. The Turkish, Tibetans, Arabians, Indians, Persians and others also used starch after the eighth century.

In 975 A.D., an Arabian teacher reportedly described a starch and saliva mixture which formed a honeylike substance used for treating wounds.

The 16th century Puritans favored blue starch, but Queen Elizabeth I hated it. She banned it in 1596. If you violated her will, you could get thrown in the slammer.

In the 1800's, it was a status symbol for families to only have to do their laundry once every six weeks. It was proof the family had plenty of clothing. Once the wash was done, it could be a five-day proposition: steeping, washing, starching, folding, ironing and airing.

**Now:** Starch can help keep you cool when it's warm. Starched clothing allows more air to pass through it, keeping the person wearing cooler.

One brand of powdered box starch is used on babies' bottoms to soothe diaper rash and other skin irritations.

If you're looking to save money on gift wrapping paper, be aware that you can use the same paper from year to year. Simply spray the used paper with starch and iron it, and it will be almost as good as new.

The Faultless Starch Company, now in its fifth generation of family owners, celebrates its 110th birthday this year. The company still offers its original dry white powder starch, along with other fabric care products such as spray starch and heavy starch. The company also offers larger sizes of its starches to shirt laundries so that consumers who prefer not to iron can get a Faultless finish on their clothes from the dry cleaner.

## **Get to Know These Helpful Symbols**

(NAPS) - You may be interested in ironing out the wrinkles when it comes to knowing how to care for your clothes.

- Before ironing clothing, read the fabric care label on the garments to make sure you press them correctly. The symbols for ironing can tell you whether to use a dry steam iron and which heat setting to select.
- According to Judy Woolfolk, certified home economist for the Faultless Starch/Bon Ami Company, it is safe to use sizing or spray starch as long as a garment is labeled "machine washable."
- Garments labeled "dry clean only" usually water spot. All sizing and spray starches are water-based products so spotting is possible.
- When deciding what product to use, you may want to remember that sizing restores original body to synthetics and blended fabrics without stiffness.
- Regular starch can give more body than sizing and can be used on natural fabrics and blends that have a higher content of natural fiber.
- Heavy starch gives more body and crispness and it is ideal for washable linens, jeans and 100 percent cotton.
- Labels have changed in the past year. In July 1997, the Federal Trade Commission began letting clothing manufacturers use symbols on care labels.

- For the first 18 months, manufacturers are using symbols along with the written care information.
- By the end of 1998, it will no longer be mandatory to have written instructions. The symbols may start standing alone. Reducing the words to symbols will mean smaller labels that may make the garments more comfortable to wear. It may also make it easier for non-English-speaking consumers to care for their clothing.

For more information on the symbols, you can visit The Soap and Detergent Association's Web site at <http://www.sdahq.org>.