



How to Spot-wash Clothing

Wash a small spot stain out of a garment.

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INTRODUCTION

Mustard from that corn dog. Your dripping morning coffee. Toothpaste. Stains happen! Many people believe that once a garment has a spot on it, it's time for the wash—but this isn't always true. By spot-washing and re-wearing your garments, you create less wear-and-tear on your clothes and the environment.

This guide will walk you through the process of washing a spot out of a garment. Have a tricky stain? Check out our [Stain Removal page](#) for the proper cleaning agent.



TOOLS:

- [Toothbrush](#) (1)
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Step 1 — How to Spot-wash Clothing



- Examine the stain. Determine what cleaning agent you'll need using our [Stain Removal page](#). For general dirt, use a [gentle, low-chemical liquid laundry soap](#).
- Hold the garment over the sink and rub a small amount of your cleaning agent into the stain with your finger.
- ⓘ If you are dealing with a tricky stain, follow the instructions on the Stain Removal page linked above.

Step 2



- Using a toothbrush, gently work the cleaning agent into the stain.
 - Use an up-and-down motion with the brush—tapping the stain with the bristles—as opposed to a back-and-forth motion which can damage the fibers of the garment.
- ⚠ If you are working with a knitted garment, such as a sweater, do not stretch the garment as you are cleaning it as this can cause warping of the fibers.
- Work the stain out of the garment. If the stain isn't releasing, check out the [Stain Removal page](#) for help on your particular stain.

Step 3



- Rinse the spot thoroughly with cold water.
- ❗ For quicker drying, try to keep the water contained to a small area surrounding the stain.
- ⚠ If you are working on a knitted garment, such as a sweater, do not use hot water as it can shrink the fibers. In general, cold water is better for cleaning garments. The water from your sink is not hot enough to sanitize garments, so cold water works just as well.

Step 4



- Lay a towel out on a waterproof surface.
- With the wet area facing up, place your garment on the towel and allow it to dry.