



## Household care series - Upholstery Tips

When making purchasing decisions it is important to begin by purchasing upholstery that fits your lifestyle. Often we select an upholstered piece of fabric because we like how the fabric feels or the color or pattern. The fiber content is usually an afterthought. It is important to know the fiber content and cleaning codes before you make a purchase. Understanding your lifestyle will help you make a better choice in selecting the appropriate fiber content.

For example, if you have children or excessive wine lovers in your house you may want to protect that crisp white sofa from the likely accidents that will surely follow.

**Cleaning Codes:** Deciphering the cleaning codes will help you understand how to clean before you have a problem. For example one client use a water based cleaner on a stain, only to find out it was dry clean only. After that the fabric was discolored. It was eventually resolved by a professional cleaning service, but the knowledge ahead of time would have saved much grief.

- S: Clean the fabric sparingly, with dry clean solvent. Test for color fastness, use sparingly
- W: Clean fabric with water based solution, such as mild detergent and water or a foam upholstery cleaner, avoid over wetting
- WS: Depending on stain, use a water based solution, or dry cleaning solvent or upholstery shampoo
- X: Fabric should be professionally cleaned. Vacuum or brush lightly to remove accumulation of dust and debris. Do not use cleaning solvents or water based products.

**Stain protection:** I always recommend that you upgrade to include professional stain protection. This is often included in the purchase of furniture or an optional service from the furniture store. Many new fabrics have this incorporated into the weaving process so it may not be a necessary upgrade. As for non-treated fabrics, I recommend you have them treated by some type of professionally applied fiber protector.

By being proactive, you will be able to reasonably protect most fabrics, and ensure your enjoyment of your new furniture for years to come.

**What type of cleaning product to use:** Depending on what type of stain you have will also dictate what type of cleaning product to use. Read the label of the product, it will indicate what types of stains the product is suitable for.

**Preventative care:** Frequent vacuuming will extend the life of your upholstery. Just like your carpet, if you keep the dirt and other particles off of your sofa, the fibers will hold up longer, and look brighter. We recommend vacuuming once a month, if you have dust allergies you may want to do more frequently.

When in doubt, always contact a professional cleaner to get professional advice. A house call is a good investment.

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