

Extension Home Economic News

Clean Wall Hangings

As you do your spring house-cleaning, be sure to give your wall hangings the special attention they need. After all, if you can get rid of the surface dust on embroidered or fabric wall hangings, you can probably keep soil from becoming embedded in the fabric. And, that's more than half of the battle. If the wall hanging is in a frame, you might find a simple dusting with your vacuum cleaner will do the job. If the wall hanging is made from a woven fabric, a good shaking out or airing may be all that's needed to freshen it up.

Here's a caution. If you're going to put the wall hanging outside to air, choose a shady place so there won't be any danger of sun fading.

If your wall hanging has fringe or is delicately trimmed, you might want to tack a piece of netting over the surface before you vacuum.

After you've dusted and aired the item, take a good look at it. If it's warm-looking you might want to pack it away and choose something cooler-looking for spring and summer.

If storage is your choice, do it properly. Don't fold your wall hanging; either store it flat or roll it loosely in white tissue paper.

Whether you put the wall hanging back now or later, it will be fresh and clean and ready to add beauty to your room.

Changing Your Will

Making a will shouldn't be a one time thing. Keeping that will up-to-date should be equally important.

When you need to change your will, don't write in the margins or between the lines. And don't mark through portions you want deleted. If you do, you may invalidate the entire will.

Instead, go to your attorney and tell him the changes you'd like to make. He will either redraft your will completely if the changes are substantial or he may just make an addition to your will.

The legal addition is called a codicil. You and witnesses must sign the codicil, just as you did your original will. You may add more than one codicil to an existing will and you may make these additions at several times. However, if you wish to make a lot of changes, you may be better off to have your will completely rewritten. And when you write a new will, destroy any existing copies of the old one.

Since there are some costs involved when you change a will, you should have important reasons for making alterations. Reasons may include changes in your family situation, your financial situation or even in your ideas.

And if you move to another state, or if you moved to North Carolina from another state, you might want to check with the state laws to be sure your will is in compliance.

Your will is an important document, so make changes when necessary. But make them legally.

Stain Removal for Carpets and Upholstery

Cold or rainy weather often means more time spent indoors. And additional time inside may mean more spills on carpets and furniture. But with quick clean-up action, you may be able to keep those spills from becoming permanent stains.

No matter what the spill, the treatment is basically the same.

First, remove any excess. Absorb or blot liquids with a clean cloth, towel, paper towel or even tissues. Blot with a light touch so you won't work the liquid into the fibers.

Gravies or other thick substances can be lifted with a spoon or the dull edge of a knife or spatula. Avoid rubbing or brushing. This could force the substance into the carpet or upholstery fibers.

Next, apply an appropriate removal formula. The cleaning agent you use depends on the nature of the stain. A solution of a half cup of lukewarm water and a half cup white vinegar is effective against many food-related stains.

Whatever you use, test it first in an inconspicuous place to see if it discolors the fibers. Then, work small amounts of the cleaning agent from the outside edges in towards the center of the stain. This will prevent it from spreading. Do not soak the carpet or the upholstery. Finally, blot with paper towels until as much moisture as possible is removed.

To be prepared, fill a shoebox with stain removal supplies — cloths, towels, the vinegar-water solution and a dry-cleaning solvent. Keep the box in a handy place and you'll be ready to keep minor spills from becoming major disasters.

Save Energy at Mealtime

Energy conservation isn't just a cold-weather problem. It is a year-round proposition.

You can conserve energy in many everyday tasks such as preparing a meal. For example, don't use a burner that is too large for a pot, and don't let the pot extend more than one inch beyond the outside of a burner. In other words, match the size and shape of the cooking utensil to the task.

Remember that some materials, such as aluminum and copper, are good heat conductors for surface cooking, while others such as stainless steel are not. Cast iron is good for long, slow cooking and a pressure cooker is an excellent energy-saver.

Here's another tip. Every time you open the oven door, the temperature may drop as much as 75 degrees. So don't be a peeker. Use a timer.

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