

4 ways to remove water stains from wood, according to experts

Living MARTHA STEWART

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Glass of water on wooden table. (Getty Images)

Few things are more enjoyable than an ice cold glass of water. But if you forget to use a coaster, the condensation will drip to the bottom of the glass and form an unsightly ring on wood furniture that can feel impossible to remove. Rather than get rid of your furniture, or resort to covering up the stain with [a fresh coat of paint](#), there are a few tried-and-true ways to remove water stains from wood.

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How to Remove Water Stains With an Iron

While an iron is typically used for [getting wrinkles out of clothes](#), it's also effective at removing water stains from wood. "This method is best for recent water stains," says Alicia Sokolowski, the president and co-CEO of [Aspen Clean](#). "If the stain has been on the wood for a long time, it may not be possible to remove it completely."

1. Fill an iron with distilled water and set it to a low heat setting.
2. Fold a clean microfiber cloth in half and place it over the water stain.
3. Gently place the iron on top of the cloth and hold it in place for about 10 seconds, making sure the iron is not too hot.
4. Pull back the iron and cloth periodically to check if the stain has lifted.

How to Remove Water Stains With Vinegar

If the stain isn't lifting with an iron, you may need to use something more heavy duty, like white vinegar. "If using a vinegar method, test a small inconspicuous spot to make sure the stained wood surface can tolerate the acidity of vinegar," says Melissa Poepping, founder of [The Chemical Free Home](#).

1. Mix equal parts distilled white vinegar and water in a small bowl.
2. Soak a microfiber cloth in the vinegar solution. Wring it out so it's damp but not dripping.
3. Place the cloth on the stain and press down gently, making sure the cloth covers the entire stain.
4. Let the cloth sit on the stain for an hour.
5. Remove the cloth and check if the stain has lifted.
6. If the stain is still visible, sprinkle a small amount of baking soda on the stain.

7. Pour a few drops of distilled white vinegar onto the baking soda. (Don't be alarmed when the mixture fizzes and bubbles, this is normal).
8. Using a soft-bristled brush, gently scrub the stain until it lifts.
9. Wipe the baking soda and vinegar mixture away with a clean, damp cloth.
10. Dab a small amount of olive oil onto a clean microfiber cloth and rub it into the wood in a circular motion to restore the shine of the wood.
11. Apply natural wood cleaner to a microfiber cloth and wipe clean.

How to Remove Water Stains With Mayonnaise

Another unexpected way to remove water stains from wood? Mayonnaise. "Mayonnaise works well to treat heat stains, or white stains on wood from fluid," says Poepping.

1. Dip a microfiber cloth in a bit of mayonnaise.
2. Dab the mayonnaise onto the stain, continuously wiping the spot clean as you work.
3. For stubborn stains, let the mayonnaise sit for about two hours.
4. Once the stain has lifted, apply natural wood cleaner to a microfiber cloth and wipe clean.

How to Remove Water Stains With Olive Oil and Salt

One common reason people use mayonnaise to treat water stains is because it contains oil. But an easier method (especially if you don't have mayonnaise handy) is to go straight to the source and use olive oil instead.

1. Mix equal parts salt and olive oil to create a paste.
2. Apply the paste to the stain and gently rub it using a microfiber cloth.
3. Let it sit for a few minutes, then wipe it away with a clean, damp cloth.