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Chic Talk: Stains, stress disappear

By Angela Allen

The way materials "perform" might very well be the future of textile success. Even the scientists are excited: The National Science Foundation predicts that **Nano-Text**, a patented stain-resistant treatment, will grow enormously in 10 years.

Such respected brands as Gap, Nike, Brooks Brothers, Levi's, Eddie Bauer, L.L. Bean and Perry Ellis treat clothes with it, so we figured, why not put it to the test? Pour all kinds of junk on a Nano-Text shirt, like those laundry ads do with dirt.

First, we drizzled Diet Coke on a **Nano-Text**-treated shirt. Then we dumped Starbucks' thick, chocolate Chantico drink onto the material. Next came peanut butter and jelly, then red wine, a little mustard and mayo, and coffee.

Liquids beaded up and rolled off the fabric. Peanut butter and blackberry jelly, which we mercilessly rubbed into the shirt, took a little cold water to work out.

Overall, I was impressed.

Nano-Text is a treatment with "breakthrough spill-resistance," according to the seven-year-old manufacturer in Emeryville, Calif. The company claims the treatment "repels liquids, retains a fabric's natural softness, provides long-lasting protection" and makes clothes easier to care for. Gap labels its **Nano-Text**-treated clothes "Stress Free," and certainly watching red wine or coffee roll off one's shirt rather than sink in, reduces stress.

Dave Yewman, president of Dash Consulting in Vancouver, is a cheerleader for the treatment. He says he has dripped coffee down white shirts and splashed spaghetti on himself minutes before teaching clients how to make fabulous first impressions.

Short of wrapping himself in Saran Wrap, "the spill-resistant stuff is the way to go," says Yewman, who was on his way to Amsterdam to coach Adidas communicators. "I'm wearing head-to-toe Nano-Text. I don't leave home without it."

He wears clothes from Travel Smith, Gap and Perry Ellis, and he looks pretty darn put-together. The presentation coach is now a spotless, dyed-in-the-wool **Nano-Text** freak instead of a messy guy with spots all over his shirts. "It wouldn't do to have a huge coffee stain on my shirt when I'm lecturing clients like Adidas and Coinstar on the importance of appearances."

As well as clothes, **Nano-Text** is coating lab coats and hospital scrubs, furniture, children's mattresses, and stadium seating. **Nano-Text** is such a hot high-tech deal that Time magazine named it one of the "Coolest Inventions of the Year" and that was three years ago, before either Yewman or I discovered it.