

The lively needle

Now is time to wash those old quilts

By MARY KAY DAVIS

My column was a masterpiece of informative clarity, though its timing was off. It's fine to launder fine quilts in a way calculated to preserve them, but I shouldn't have run that particular set of directions in January.

Such phrases as, "...dry the quilt over three or more clothes lines in the shade" lose their punch when the

reader knows his quilt will be frozen stiff in 15 minutes.

Many of you may have picked up quilts over summer vacation. If they're in need of cleaning, here are the washing directions again. Fall is a much better time to undertake this labor of love than winter ever was.

These directions are only for all cotton quilts. If your coverlet has wool or silk patches in it, Don't Wash It. Bet-

ter to live with the stains you have than fly to crises that you know not of.

Check to see if the old quilt has been washed before. Old dyes sometimes bleed. Look for pencil marks under the quilting threads. These lines originally marked the quilting pattern and are washed out after several launderings. If you can't see any pencil, your quilt has survived previous washings and you're safe to go ahead.

MAKE YOURSELF a "sandwich bag" from four yards of 72-inch wide white nylon net. Fold the net in half and machine stitch up the two sides, leaving the top open. The bag will measure 72 inches square. Save it and use it for all quilt washings.

Put your quilt in the bag and spread it flat. Baste the top closed with white thread and big stitches. Then baste a large 'X' from corner to corner, attaching bag to quilt. This will prevent damage when the quilt is heavy with water.

If your quilt is valuable, fragile or old, don't wash it in a machine. You want the safest of cleanings, so wash by hand. Choose a good drying day—



By
MARY KAY
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one that's warm with a slight breeze and low humidity.

Fill a clean bathtub, free of all traces of scouring powder, with three to four inches of cool, softened water. (One and a half tablespoons of Calgon softens one gallon of hard water.) Soak the bagged quilt for an hour.

Drain and repeat soaks until the water is no longer yellow. You are removing loose dirt and old soap scum.

Run the same amount of cool, softened water and add 1½ tablespoons Woolite per gallon. Mix well and let the quilt soak for 30 minutes. Gently agitate with the palms of your hands in an up and down motion. Do not wring, squeeze or scrub. Drain and

repeat until the wash water shows no signs of yellow.

Rinse with softened water, agitate gently and drain. Repeat until there are no soap bubbles. This will probably take from five to seven rinses. Omit Calgon from the final rinse water.

GENTLY PRESS the water from the quilt with your hands. Don't wring. Remove more water by blotting with towels until the quilt's as dry as you can get it. The less water, the less weight to damage the quilt.

Dry the coverlet over three or more parallel clothes lines in the shade. Don't hang it down from one line, or swing it like a hammock between two lines. If you need clothes pins, choose the one-piece kind without metal springs. They're cheaper, too.

Keep checking and, when the quilt is dry, take it off the clothes lines before a flock of starlings fly overhead. Remove the nylon bag and save it for future washings. You'll be exhausted, but the quilt will be beautiful and in one piece. Keep it clean and you may never have to go through this again.

Series teaches cooking for hearts

The Birmingham Community House will be the site of a series of heart-healthy nutrition and cooking classes in October.

Sponsored by the nutrition committee of the Oakland County Heart Unit, the series, titled "Way to Your

Family's Heart," will be held from 9:30-11:30 a.m. on three consecutive Mondays, Oct. 3, 10 and 17.

Dr. Lawrence Zgliniec, cardiologist, will discuss "The Heart: It's Life and Yours" at the first session.

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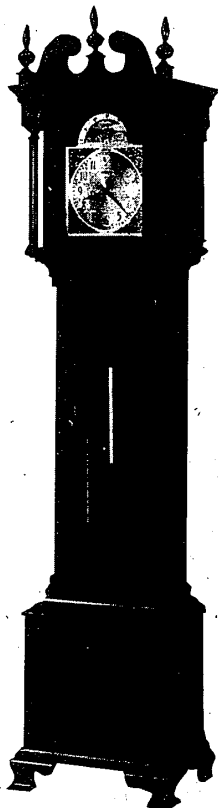
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