

Bed Bugs - Typical First Strikes by Housekeeping and Maintenance

1. Carefully inspect for fecal spots, egg cases and cast skins (exuviae). Look behind wall paper, pictures, inside closets, drawers, cabinets, undersides of windows, door casings, moldings, cracks and crevices and the bed and frame, clock radios and/or night stands. Check the clothing, bed linen, bags and suit cases of travelers and visitors. A stiff brush can be used to clean the mattress seams in order to dislodge bed bugs and their eggs. Routinely spray Not Nice to Bugs® and/or clean with borax and Safe Solutions Enzyme Cleaner with Peppermint (1 oz. and 1/8 c. borax per quart of water). Tape all torn box springs and mattresses with duct tape or cover completely with shrink wrap or plastic wrap or, better still, replace them or enclose them in a zippered mattress cover used for dust mite control.
2. Steam clean with a steam iron or a low vapor steamer at 220° F., enclose in plastic or replace the mattress. Be very sure the mattress is dry or you can create a mold, mildew and/or dust mite problem. **(Be sure to touch all suspect surfaces with the nozzle that is releasing the steam.)**
3. Stand the legs of beds on glue boards or in soapy water; coat the legs of the bed with petroleum jelly (Vaseline) or double-sided carpet tape. Place duct tape, sticky side up, around the bed, bed legs and room; you can hold the duct tape in place with masking tape on the edges. Bed bugs can't climb on polished glass or metal easily, so the bed legs can be placed in glass jars or metal cans. Do not let bed covers touch the ground or the bed touch the walls. See also Typical First Strikes for Spiders.
4. Raising the temperature to 97° F. - 99° F. will kill most bed bugs in several days; lowering the temperature to 32° F. to 48° F. will take up to 50 days to kill all of the eggs. A hot dryer (140° F.) will kill all stages of bed bugs in 20 minutes. Use a dryer or place infested items into a black bag in the sun on 70+ F.-degree days to kill them on clothing, toys, etc. Use a sauna for larger items.
5. Routinely launder with borax and dry bedding at high temperatures to remove bed bugs and their eggs.
6. Caulk and/or dust with food-grade DE all cracks, crevices and other openings.
7. Discourage bats, birds, rodents and other animals from living in, on or near human dwellings.
8. Routinely clean and practice good housekeeping. A strong vacuum cleaner with proper tools will dislodge bed bugs from cracks, crevices and seams. Treat the carpet like it is a flea control project.
9. Inspect with red lights or night vision glasses at night; have a 'victim' in bed as you watch.
10. As a last resort, take the bed apart and fumigate the mattress with CO₂ inside a thoroughly sealed plastic cover. Use a respirator and carefully and lightly dust all joints, the mattresses, folds, edges and then carefully treat all cracks and crevices in the affected rooms with Safe Solutions, Inc. food-grade DE or fine body bath powder. Liberally sprinkle fine body bath powder over all sides of the mattress and then work the dust into the mattress. Your bed bugs should disappear overnight. Cover the mattress with a plastic cover before sleeping on it again. **Try turning off the heat in your infested bedroom. Bed bugs can only survive in the range of 48° F. to 97° F.**
11. Put infested and suspected material in a black plastic trash bag and set it in the hot sun all day. Most insects die when exposed to 115° F. for 30 minutes or so, or you can bag the items and freeze them.
12. In tropical countries you soak your mattress in hot water and put it in the sun. The sun dries the mattress and in so doing the hot water kills all of the bed bugs. See Typical Strike #2.
13. Place a heating pad on the floor with fresh bean leaves or several glueboards or sticky traps adjacent to the pad or with duct tape sticky-side up surrounding the heating pad. Lower the temperature of the room and leave the pad on all night. In the morning check for any bed bugs trapped in the glue or fresh bean leaves. You can improve the trap by putting an Alka-Seltzer tablet on a damp sponge on a small plate on the heating pad. Make sure the tablet does not dissolve too quickly — the slower the better.
14. As you travel, always check behind the hotel room headboard for bed bugs.
15. Cluttered conditions can cause a complete failure of any bed bug control program, so wash and remove clothes, pictures and other hiding areas from your infested bedroom.
16. Still having problems? Read the rest of the chapter.

Note: Cockroaches are wonderful predators of bed bugs. While Vapona® strips work, the Author believes they are dangerous to people and are already restricted to special situations.

Bed Bug Control Notes: If you truly have bed bugs, remember they are not very mobile and normally will not be far from “dinner” and they are not known to carry diseases. They are most vulnerable when you can see them. They are easily suffocated by fine powder and die when directly sprayed with Not Nice to Bugs®. Try using flannel sheets on the bed or under the heating pad to trap them and then vacuum the sheets every morning or put them in a clothes dryer. Remember, they can wait up to a full year to suck your blood at night.

*Safe Solutions products may be purchased online at:
<http://www.safesolutionsinc.com>
or by telephone at:
1-888-443-8738.

