

Maintaining, Caring for Carpet

Maintaining carpet through regular vacuuming, deep cleaning and stain removal has many benefits:

- Extending the life of the carpet (ground-in soil particles weaken carpet fibers)
- Providing a fresh, clean look to a room
- Making a room smell better
- Helping allergy and asthma sufferers by removing germs and dust

NOTE: Carpet runners and mats help prevent soil from being tracked inside. Pads under desk chairs can prevent ground-in soil.

Vacuuming

Dirt and grit damage carpet by rubbing against carpet fibers. Carpet sweepers and rakes can remove surface dirt, but regular vacuuming (as often as possible—some manufacturers recommend one day per week per person in the household) prevents the deep abrasion that ruins carpet. Remember to empty the vacuum or change the disposable bags often. GoVacuum has a large inventory of vacuum cleaners, bags, belts, and parts with free shipping, secure ordering, and friendly service.

Choose a vacuum with:

- Dual motors (one motor provides suction while the other powers a beater bar that loosens dirt)
- Good filtration
- Correct brush height adjustment for your type of carpet
- A beater bar or rotating brush which loosens the dirt and grit better than a canister vacuum
- A top-loading bag instead of a bottom-loading bag

NOTE: Vacuum brushes can damage some thick loop pile carpets (such as Berbers). Follow the carpet manufacturer's recommendations or use a suction-only vacuum for these carpets.

TIP: Sprinkling salt an hour before vacuuming brightens carpet.

TIP: Hold a steam iron over flattened carpet to pull the fiber up. Be sure not to touch the carpet with the iron.

TIP: Allow an ice cube to melt in indentations left by furniture for the carpet fibers to rise again.

Deep Cleaning

Carpet should be deep cleaned with hot water extraction (steam cleaning) every 12 to 24 months. Steam cleaning involves spraying a high-pressure solution of water and detergent and vacuuming the dirty solution. Refer to the manufacturer's warranty for the recommended deep cleaning method.

Many grocery stores and rental stores, rent steam cleaning equipment. You may also purchase deep cleaning equipment. If you choose to have a professional clean your carpet, do your homework:

- Determine what services you want (i.e. stair cleaning, furniture moving, special treatments such as stain proofing, etc.)
- Ask for recommendations from friends and family
- Look for membership in Carpet Cleaners Institute of the Northwest (CCINW) or The Association of Specialists in Cleaning and Restoration (ASCR)
- Consult the Better Business Bureau or local consumer protection office for complaints
- Check for the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICR)
- Ask how long they have been in business and contact references
- Make sure they are insured for liability and carry workers' compensation insurance
- Beware of unrealistic claims (particularly in advertisements and coupons)
- Make sure they follow the correct procedure for cleaning carpet:
 1. Vacuuming
 2. Adding detergent and conditioners
 3. Brushing the detergents in
 4. Hot water extraction
 5. Drying
- Check for written guarantees and conditions
- Compare prices that seem realistic (\$40 per room is average)
- Pay by check or credit card as a record

Before the cleaner arrives, make sure to clean up and vacuum the carpet. Hide all valuables and make sure that nothing is hanging over the carpet (e.g. curtains). When the cleaner arrives, point out stains and describe all of the past carpet cleanings. Make sure to review the written guarantee and service agreement. Amend the service agreement if needed.

After the cleaning:

- Inspect the carpet
- Ask about drying instructions (i.e. expected time and ventilation requirements)
- Make sure not to cover the carpet until it dries
- Keep moisture shields or carpet protectors under all furniture until the carpet dries
- Vacuum the carpet when it dries
- Call the cleaner if the carpet is still damp or any spots remain after 24 hours.

Stain Removal

There are many commercial products such as Quick 10, 409 Carpet, spot removal kits, and dry cleaning fluids. In addition, many fiber manufacturers provide toll-free telephone help for stains (consult your warranty). Since stains can be better cleaned right after they happen, if you do not have one of these commercial products consider using a homemade solution:

- Club soda
- Nail polish remover made of amyl acetate (do not use polish remover on acetate fiber)
- 1 cup of lukewarm water and 1/4 teaspoon of mild liquid laundry detergent (non-bleach and non-lanolin such as Woolite)
- 2 tablespoons household ammonia and 1 cup water (apply the ammonia solution before the vinegar solution)
- 1 cup white vinegar and 2 cups water (apply the ammonia solution before the vinegar solution)

NOTE: Test all cleaning solutions in an inconspicuous area.

Pick a cleaning solution and follow these steps:

1. Remove excess wet stains by blotting with a clean absorbent cloth (use a wet/dry vacuum for large stains) and dry stains by scraping with a dull edge. Always blot or sponge stains, scrubbing can spread stains and damage carpet fibers.
2. Apply cleaning solution to a clean absorbent cloth or paper towel. Do not soak the carpet. Working from the edges of the stain (to prevent spreading), blot until no more stain is absorbed. If necessary, use your fingertips to work the solution to the base of the stain. Always blot or sponge stains, scrubbing can spread stains and damage carpet fibers.

3. Wait 3 minutes for the solution to work
4. Apply clean water to another cloth or paper towel. Blot to remove any residue.
5. Carpet fibers may later absorb deep stains. More cleaning may be necessary.
6. Allow the carpet to dry (or use a towel or a hair-dryer at medium setting), vacuum or brush the carpet to restore its texture.
7. Contact a professional cleaner if the stain cannot be cleaned.

Other cleaning tips:

- Sponge red wine stains with club soda or white wine.
- Club soda works on most stains.
- Absorb grease with cornmeal or baking soda. Leave overnight and vacuum.
- On a high pile carpet, shave off burn marks.

Source

- www.carpet.org/maintenance.htm

Contact LCEF to find an Architectural Advisory Committee member near you for additional information.



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