

Greater Seattle Floors

Carpet Care Tips

Your new carpet represents a substantial investment and, like other fine furnishings, requires proper care to keep it attractive over years to come. Carpet rarely wears out in terms of fiber wearing away, but its appearance deteriorates over time and becomes less attractive. You can protect your investment, prolong the life of your carpet, and improve the quality of the indoor environment by establishing a regular maintenance schedule.

The information here pertains to carpets made of synthetic or man-made fibers, and may not be appropriate for natural fibers such as wool. If your carpet is a wool or wool-blend, please ask one of our sales people for information on special considerations of these products.

Preventive Maintenance

1. Use walk-off mats at all entrances to absorb soil and moisture. Clean mats regularly so they don't become sources of soil themselves.
2. Use a quality pad under your carpet, particularly on stairs. A good pad gives better resilience underfoot and extends the life of your carpet. Some carpets carry warranties with specification requirement. Before purchasing your carpet pad, review your warranty.
3. Move heavy furniture occasionally to avoid excessive pile crushing. Put coasters intended for use with carpet under the legs of tables, chairs, and other furniture to help distribute the weight and prevent mashing the pile. Do not use chairs or appliances with rollers or casters on carpet without a chair pad designed for carpet. Continued use without a chair pad can cause damage to the carpet.
4. When moving heavy wheeled furniture (pianos, buffets, etc.), prevent damage by placing heavy cardboard or plywood between the wheels and the carpet.
5. Use of area rugs with our carpet can enhance the total look of a room, but be sure to remove and clean them regularly. Also clean and restore the pile of the carpet underneath. ***After cleaning your carpet, remember to allow the carpet and the area rugs to dry completely before replacing the rugs.***
6. Protect your carpet from prolonged periods of direct sunlight with blinds, shades, or awnings.

Please Note: Carpets with stain resistant treatments improve your ability to clean, not prevent, stains. No carpet is stain proof. Carpets with soil resistant treatments reduce the rate of soiling and make it easier to clean, but ***all*** carpets require regular care and maintenance.

Regular Vacuuming

The most important step in the care of your carpet is vacuuming. Vacuum thoroughly and frequently, particularly in high-traffic areas, to remove the dry soil. As particles of dry soil work down into the pile, they are more difficult to remove and can scratch the fibers leading to premature wear of the carpet. High-traffic areas might need to be vacuumed daily. The whole house should be vacuumed once a week. Change the vacuuming direction occasionally to help stand the pile upright and prevent matting.

Vacuum cleaner recommendations:

1. A good vacuum cleaner is vital to prolonging the beauty and life of your carpet. An inexpensive machine can remove surface dirt but will not effectively remove the hidden dirt and particles embedded in the pile.
2. Vacuums with a rotating brush or combination beater/brush bar are recommended to agitate the carpet pile and mechanically loosen soil for removal by the vacuum. Note that carpet with thick loop pile construction can be sensitive to brushing or rubbing of the pile surface and might become fuzzy. For these products, use a suction-only vacuum or a vacuum with an adjustable brush lifted away from the carpet so it does not agitate the pile.
3. Replaceable paper vacuum bags do a better job of trapping the small particles which pass through cloth bags back into the room. *High efficiency vacuum bags*, also called *microfiltration bags*, are now available and trap even smaller microscopic particles such as mold and mildew spores and dust mite byproducts, often found to be a source of allergies. This type of bag is sold under several brand names. Verify that these bags trap particles smaller than two microns. All vacuum bags should be checked often and replaced when 1/2 to 2/3 full.
4. Make sure the belt is in good condition and that the brush or beater bar rotates when in contact with the carpet. To adjust the vacuum to the correct height setting for the carpet, raise the beater/brush bar to the highest setting and then lower it until it contacts the pile enough to slightly vibrate the carpet several inches away from the machine, but not close enough to cause significant slowing of the motor.

Removal of Spots and Spills

Cleaning Agents and Equipment

A good checklist to handle spills should include the following items. Do not use any household cleaners other than those listed, since many household products contain chemicals that may permanently damage your carpet.

1. A solution of a mild liquid detergent (no more than 1/4 teaspoon of detergent to 32 ounces of water). A clear, non-bleach liquid dishwashing detergent such as *Dawn*, *Joy*, or clear *Ivory* is recommended. Do not use detergents which are cloudy or creamy because they may leave a sticky residue.
2. A solution of white vinegar and water (1 part vinegar to 1 part water).
3. White cloths, white paper towels.
4. An ammonia solution of one tablespoon of ammonia to one cup of water. **Do not use on wool.**
5. Non-oily nail polish remover.
6. Chewing gum remover (freeze or solid type).
7. Non-flammable spot remover specifically for grease, oil, or tar, such as *Carbona*, *Energine*, or *K2R*.

General Instructions

Prompt attention to spots and spills is essential.

- Remove as much of **food spills** as possible by scraping gently with a spoon or dull knife.
- Absorb **wet spills** as quickly as possible by blotting repeatedly with white paper or cloth towels.
- Always blot; never rub or scrub abrasively, as a fuzzy area may result. When blotting, work from the outer edge in toward the center of the spot to avoid spreading the spill.
- Always follow up with water to remove detergent residue that may become sticky and cause rapid re-soiling.
- Draw out any remaining moisture by placing several layers of white towels over the spot and weighing them down with a heavy object that will not transfer color.

Stain Removal Procedures

The following recommendations are for spot cleaning.

A. Water Soluble Stains. Absorb as much as possible with **white** towels. blot the stained area with white towels dampened with cool water until there is no more transfer of the stain onto the towels.

If any of the stain remains, use the detergent previously described. Spray lightly onto the spot and blot repeatedly with white towels, working from the outer edge in toward the center of the spot to avoid spreading.

Rinse thoroughly by spraying with clean water, and then blot or extract. Do not use too much detergent because the residue will contribute to rapid re-soiling.

B. Oil Based Stains. Blot as much as possible with **white** towels. Apply the special oil and grease spot remover to a paper towel and repeat blotting. Do not pour or spray directly on the carpet pile, as damage to the backing or adhesive underneath could result; use the towels to transport the solvent to the carpet. Repeat as much as necessary.

Provide adequate ventilation! Do not use flammable solvents! Follow with procedures in **A**.

C. Gum and Wax. Freeze stains such as chewing gum and candle wax with ice or a commercially available product in an aerosol can. Shatter with a blunt object and vacuum before the chips soften. Follow up with solvent as in **B**.

Periodical Professional Care

Even though vacuuming can remove most of the dry soil, it is also necessary to clean your carpet on a regular basis to remove the more oily or sticky soil which builds up in the pile. When cleaned regularly, it is much easier to remove this material. The carpet in a typical household should be cleaned every 12 to 18 months depending upon the number and age of the residents and presence of pets.

A cleaning system should clean the carpet without leaving detergent residue. **The hot water extraction system, also called "steam cleaning," is recommended.** The process consists of spraying a solution of water and detergent into the pile and removing or extracting the dirt and solution with a powerful vacuum from either a truck-mounted or a portable unit. It is to your advantage to use a professional cleaner because his experience enables him to do a better job than you can do yourself. His equipment has more extraction power than the rental units available to you, so the carpet should dry more quickly. A true professional has also made the investment in training to understand the equipment, to know the proper cleaning agents for the situation at hand, and to recognize the differences in fibers and carpet construction.

One way to locate a professional cleaner is to contact the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) at 1-800-835-4624. This organization maintains a national directory of independent professional cleaners who are trained and certified in a variety of cleaning specialists. Specify that you would like the name of a cleaner near you who uses the hot water extraction system.

If you choose to clean your own carpet, avoid the most common problems which are due to over-wetting and use of excessive detergent. Your carpet should be dry in six to twelve hours. A carpet that is wet for more than 24 hours could develop a growth of mold and mildew. Increasing the detergent beyond the recommended amount does not increase the cleaning power, and excess detergent residue will be difficult to remove. Detergent residue left in the carpet will collect soil more quickly, and the carpet will require cleaning sooner. Carpet with stain resistance treatments must be cleaned only with products formulated for this purpose, or the stain resistance will be damaged and the warranty voided. Do not use cleaning or spotting solutions which contain bleaches or optical brighteners because they can discolor the carpet.

Bonnet cleaning systems spray a detergent solution onto the carpet and attempt to absorb soil with a rotating bonnet of an absorbent material, such as terry cloth, attached to a machine similar to a rotary floor polisher. **This cleaning system is *not* recommended.** The bonnet system has very limited ability to remove soil and leaves much of the detergent in the pile since it employs no real extraction. As a result, rapid re-soiling often occurs. Another disadvantage is that the spinning bonnet may distort the fibers of cut pile carpet, fuzzing the pile and leaving distinct swirl marks.