

## Regular Carpet Care

### What is it?

Carpet fibers are designed to hide soil and reflect light. Consequently, soil in carpet is not as visible as it is on smooth flooring where soil remains on the surface and is easily seen. The ability of today's carpet fibers to hide soiling is a positive feature for most consumers. However, the lack of apparent soiling does not eliminate the need for regular cleaning. Soil can damage the fibers permanently if allowed to remain in the pile.

Even with carpet's ability to resist soiling and stains, a regular maintenance program extends the life and appearance of your carpet.

Specific carpet care information may be available from your carpet dealer, carpet manufacturer or fiber producer. Be sure and ask your salesperson for information when you purchase your new product.

### Vacuuming

#### Why It's Important

Whether you're cleaning out the spare bedroom or just tidying up around the house, it is important that dirt and dust are removed, not simply moved around or thrown back into the breathing zone. Properly vacuuming carpet is the easiest and most effective way to keep your carpet clean. It may be surprising, but something as simple as regular vacuuming can also have the largest impact on the cleanliness of your home and the air you breathe.

The Professional Association of Cleaning and Restoration (PACR) recommends vacuuming areas often that receive the most traffic, such as hallways, stairs, and exterior entryways in the home. Ideally, vacuum all the floor coverings a minimum of once a week, and the high-traffic areas more often, based on the usage. If you have pets, you may need to vacuum some areas daily. Removing loose soil while it remains on the carpet's surface is important so that it is not walked into the carpet pile.

Use a vacuum cleaner that effectively removes soil and minimizes generating dust from the filter and around the machine while keeping the carpet looking good. To help consumers select an effective vacuum, Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) initiated the Vacuum Cleaner Indoor Air Quality Testing Program. Vacuum cleaner models evaluated by an independent testing laboratory are tested for removing soil adequately, containing the dust in the machine and in the filter bag, and carpet appearance retention. Those that achieve the carpet industry's standard are identified by the CRI as "Green Label." Because of the impact of vacuum cleaners on indoor air, cleaning efficiency can vary significantly, it is important to identify models that clean well and protect the indoor environment. Vacuum cleaners that have met the CRI Green Label Standards are listed on CRI's website:

[www. carpet-rug.com](http://www.carpet-rug.com).

### Vacuum Cleaner Selection

For maximum effectiveness, use a vacuum cleaner with adjustable and rotating brushes that can loosen ground-in soil and has a strong enough airflow to penetrate to the backing, removing all particles.

The vacuum cleaner should have an enclosed, high filtration bag that limits particles re-circulating into the air. Regularly using a CRI Green Label vacuum cleaner will maintain a cleaner indoor environment. For the best cleaning results, no matter what type vacuum cleaner you purchase, inspect it periodically to be sure it is functioning properly:

- Keep brushes clean and replace them when worn.
- Keep vacuum hoses and attachments free of obstructions that restrict airflow.
- Inspect the vacuum head for rough edges or bent metal that may damage your carpet.
- Inspect belts frequently to make certain they are working properly.
- Always keep a spare belt for replacement as needed.
- Follow the vacuum cleaner manufacturer's instructions, and change the filter bag when it reaches the "full line."

## **Deep Cleaning**

### **When, Why, and Who**

Daily vacuuming is the most important cleaning activity, but restorative cleaning must be performed to remove stubborn or embedded soil. The Carpet and Rug Institute recommends that carpet be cleaned using a restorative cleaning method every 12-18 months before soiling shows. Use a cleaning method recommended by the carpet manufacturer to maintain your warranty.

Professional Cleaning Services should be considered before your carpet and rugs begin to show soil. Letting carpet and rugs become excessively soiled will make cleaning more difficult and shorten the carpet's useful life.

Obtain recommendations from satisfied friends, carpet retailers, the Better Business Bureau, and local business groups for reliable, certified cleaning professionals in your area.

In order to determine the amount and type of cleaning services needed, have the cleaning representative come to your home for a visual inspection. He or she can check the carpet for problem stains or excessively soiled areas that require additional attention.

Obtain a written agreement for all work to be performed. Under normal circumstances, there should be no extra charge for moving furniture, preconditioning, and routine spot and stain removal.

Beware of pricing that is "too good to be true." Professionals should charge only for services that are authorized in writing before cleaning begins. Most cleaning is based on the total number of square feet

to be cleaned. Many firms have cleaning specials; however, pricing by the room or low prices quoted over the phone may have hidden restrictions or additional cost add-ons. A reliable firm will tell you the steps needed to clean your carpet and provide a written agreement before work begins. If you question the need for any required add-ons, contact the carpet manufacturer for assistance.

### **Do - It - Yourself Cleaning**

For any do-it-yourself cleaning method, the following points are critical:

- Always vacuum first to remove as much dry soil as possible.
- Follow instructions carefully!

Consider the following precautions with a wet-cleaning method:

- Remove furniture from the room before cleaning or, if impractical, place plastic film under and around the legs of chairs, tables, and other furniture to prevent rust or furniture stains from developing on the carpet.
- Use only the recommended cleaning solution strength. Stronger solutions may cause accelerated re-soiling. Be sure to rinse all detergent from the carpet to prevent accelerated resoiling.
- Do not over wet the carpet. Over wetting may cause separation of the backing, separation of the seams, shrinkage, discoloration, and odor.
- The carpet should be dry within 12 hours. Provide proper ventilation or use fans to accelerate the drying process and exhaust any existing solution-related fragrances.
- Allow the carpet to dry completely before walking on it.