

Hints For The Home



Carpet Comes Clean: Easy Tips You Can Use

(NAPSA)—No matter how rich its colors and textures or how intricate its weaves, your carpet or rug is only as good as the care it receives.

To keep carpet looking good as long as possible, follow these easy tips from the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI).

- Vacuum thoroughly and frequently. Today's carpets are designed to hide dirt and resist soiling and staining. But that's no excuse to skip regular vacuuming. Soil can damage fibers if it remains in the pile. A good rule of thumb: vacuum areas of your carpet that get light traffic once or twice a week, and more often in places where people gather, kids play and pets roam. Use up to three passes of the machine for light soiling and five to seven passes for heavily soiled areas.

- Use the right vacuum cleaner. Your vacuum cleaner should remove soil and surface dirt without any damage to the carpet. Also, make sure dust particles are contained within the filtration bag and the machine itself so they don't fly back into air.

This is especially important for people who are sensitive to dust and other indoor pollutants. Visit carpet-rug.org for a list of CRI Green Label Vacuum cleaners that clean well, help improve indoor air quality and keep your carpet looking good.

- Purchase certified carpet-cleaning products. Tests have shown that some carpet-cleaning products don't clean any better than water.



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The Carpet and Rug Institute awards a blue and green Seal of Approval to carpet-cleaning products, such as spot removers and presprays, which pass a series of tests administered by an independent, accredited laboratory. The CRI Seal of Approval signifies to consumers that these products remove spots and soil effectively and don't damage the carpet's appearance or performance when manufacturer's instructions are followed.

Mustard, catsup, grape juice and dirty motor oil are just some of the staining agents used in the tests. For a complete list of Seal of Approval products, visit carpet-rug.org.

- Take care with spot cleaning. Spills and spots on carpet need immediate action. The longer a spot stays on the carpet, the harder it is to remove and the more likely it will become a permanent stain. Use a clean, white,

dry, absorbent cloth or paper towel to remove spots and spills. Always blot—never rub or scrub—or a fuzzy area might result. When blotting, work from the outer edge in toward the center of the spot to avoid spreading the spill. Be sure to absorb any remaining moisture by placing several layers of white paper towels over the damp area and weighing them down with a heavy object. All dry spills should be vacuumed to lift and remove as much of the substance as possible. Pouring liquid into a dry spill can create additional problems.

- Schedule regular deep cleaning. Stubborn spills and embedded soil require deep cleaning, preferably every 12 to 18 months. Your options are to use a professional service or to rent or purchase carpet-cleaning equipment for do-it-yourself cleaning.

Professional cleaning is recommended for carpet and area rugs that are made of wool, silk or other natural fibers. For any do-it-yourself cleaning method, the following points are critical: always vacuum to remove as much dry soil as possible, and follow instructions carefully. A common mistake with do-it-yourself cleaning is using too much cleaning product and failing to extract all the product from the carpet during the cleaning process. The residue not only attracts dirt and makes carpet look bad quickly, but it also speeds the breakdown of fiber, shortening the life of the carpet.

For more information, visit the CRI Web site at carpet-rug.org.