

A guide to carpet cleaning and getting the best out of your carpet

With a little care and attention you will be able to prolong the life of your carpet and help it keep its good looks.

When a Carpet is new:

Many people believe that you should not vacuum new carpets. This is not the case and you can in fact vacuum straight away.

When your new carpet is fitted you may notice a few single tufts or loose ends standing above the pile. This is quite normal and they should be trimmed off with a pair of scissors or a sharp knife. Don't pull them as this could damage your carpet. Your carpet may also "shed" fluff for some time after fitting. This is caused by very short lengths of loose fibre left over from the manufacturing process. This is not a fault and the fluff should be simply vacuumed away.

Vacuum regularly!

Dirt and tiny pieces of grit become trapped in all carpets. As the carpet is walked on these particles rub against the fibres and can cause premature wear. Vacuum at least once a week and use doormats to remove excess dirt and grit.

Using Rugs:

You might also like to consider using rugs or mats in areas that receive particularly high wear, such as in front of chairs. People have a habit of shuffling their feet when sitting eating or watching television. This can damage the pile of the carpet causing wear and flattening. This effect (known in the trade as "TV shuffle") can be reduced using rugs, occasionally repositioning furniture (if practical) and making people take their shoes off!

Your Footwear:

Also remember that rubber soled shoes (such as trainers) are designed to grip and will therefore pull at the pile of your carpet. If you avoid wearing such footwear in the house your carpet may retain its looks for longer

Stair Carpets:

In most homes stair carpets take the most punishment. It is therefore recommended that when you fit a stair carpet you leave enough carpet to allow for a change of tread on each stair every six months. This evens out wear and will prolong the life of your carpet. In practice this is more often recommended than actually done! It requires the stairs to be refitted and can leave an unsightly contrast between carpet that has been flattened by use and carpet that has yet to be walked on. So whilst you should do this you may decide not to. If that is the case, we recommend that you save some spare carpet (if there is any), which can then be used to re-fit areas of particularly high wear (such as half landings or bottom stairs) at some time in the future.

How to clean a fresh carpet stain or spillage

Accidental spillages happen in every home and have the potential to ruin your carpet. Here are some simple tips that may help prevent a spill becoming a nasty stain.

- ACT QUICKLY!

Spillages are more easily removed when tackled immediately. Always try to avoid letting a spill

dry on your carpet (with the exception of mud which can usually be vacuumed off when dry)

- NEVER SCRUB!

If you scrub your carpet it is likely that you will damage the carpet pile so even if you do remove the stain you will still have altered the appearance of the carpet. Instead always use a dabbing action or gentle wiping using absorbent material.

- DON'T USE HOT WATER!

Heat is used in the dying process to add colour to carpets. If you add hot water to a spill you are actually encouraging it to bond permanently with your carpet. Instead, use cold water to rinse the spillage out of the carpet.

- DO NOT SOAK!

Soaking your carpet with water may damage the backing. Simply dampen, then soak back up with a clean absorbent cloth or kitchen towel. If you patiently repeat this process then you have a good chance of removing the spillage completely. Once most of the visible stain has been removed, leave your carpet damp with several layers of kitchen roll, weighed down by something flat and heavy (such as a book) overnight. This will help to draw the remainder of the stain out of the carpet.

- AVOID USING WASHING UP LIQUID!

Have you ever cleaned a stain using washing up liquid only to find that a dirty mark appears in the same spot weeks later? This is caused by traces of detergent being left on the carpet pile. Detergent clings to dirt (which is why it cleans so well), but if not rinsed away it will gather dirt where you don't want it and keep it there! If you do use detergent make sure that you rinse the carpet very well indeed!

The following is a guideline on removing certain substances from your carpet. For persistent stains, or if in doubt, consult a professional carpet cleaner.

HOW TO DEAL WITH CARPET STAINS

COFFEE & TEA, RED WINE, PORT & SHERRY, FRUIT JUICE & MILK

Always soak up the liquid with absorbent tissue then dab the area with a clean white cloth which has been moistened in a solution of diluted carpet shampoo and warm water.

GREASE STAIN

Using a blunt knife or spatula, remove as much solid material as possible. Blot up the residue and treat with a dry cleaning liquid, blotting frequently with absorbent cloth.

TAR STAIN

Carefully scrape up the solids with a blunt knife and then treat the stain with a recognized brand of tar remover, following the instructions carefully.

URINE STAIN

Mop up immediately and dab area with a solution of diluted carpet shampoo and one egg cup of white vinegar per pint of solution.

BLOOD STAIN

Always soak up the liquid with absorbent tissue, then dab the area with a clean white cloth, moisten with cold water. If the stain has been allowed to dry, dissolve with cold water and continue as before.

Interesting fact: Bloodstains often return! It is not unusual to remove a bloodstain only to find it reappears later (particularly if there has been a large amount of blood). Needless to say this phenomenon has brought out the superstitious side in some people; however, there is a simple scientific explanation. Blood has a natural capillary action and therefore in very tight spaces (such as between carpet fibres) is drawn upwards. So whilst the blood on the surface of the carpet may have been removed more blood may be trapped deeper in the pile. This is then drawn to the surface over time giving the ghostly impression that the bloodstain has returned!

ANIMAL ACCIDENTS

Carefully scrape up the solids with a blunt knife then dab the area with a clean white cloth moistened with a solution of diluted carpet shampoo and warm water.

PAINT (OIL BASED)

Blot excess spillage with absorbent tissue then clean with white spirit. Dab the area with diluted carpet shampoo and then follow with an application of clean water. Dab until dry and brush the affected area.

PAINT (EMULSION)

Blot excess spillage with absorbent tissue then clean the affected area with cold water. Apply diluted carpet shampoo on a clean white cloth; apply clean water and dab dry.

CHOCOLATE STAINS

Carefully scrape off excess using a blunt knife. Dab the area with a clean white cloth, moistened in a solution of diluted carpet shampoo and warm water.

SHOE POLISH

Carefully scrape up the solid and clean gently with a dry cleaning fluid. Then use a clean white cloth, moistened with diluted carpet shampoo, to rinse the area.

CHEWING GUM

Freeze the gum with a proprietary freezing agent, break up when frozen and remove. Repeat as necessary.

CURRY

An extremely difficult stain. Large marks should be treated professionally. With small marks, scrape off the deposit and rub lightly with borax solution (15ml borax to 500ml water). Stubborn stains can sometimes be helped with a little neat glycerine rubbed into the carpet and left for about 10 minutes. Then sponge out with warm water and blot dry.

FELT-TIP PEN

Some felt-tip pens have spirit-based ink, some have water based ink. Methylated spirit on a cotton wool bud will remove spirit-based ink, which has a pungent smell. But do not allow it to

penetrate to a foam backing. The methylated spirit may stain a light coloured carpet. For water-based ink, use carpet shampoo.

BALL-POINT PEN

Speedy action is essential. Dab with methylated spirit on a cotton wool bud. Take care not to spread the stain. On vinyl upholstery or wall coverings, immediately scrub with a nail brush and warm soapy water (the ink will cause a permanent mark if left).

NAIL VARNISH

Spoon up deposit; avoid spreading the stain. Moisten a pad of cotton wool with amyl acetate or acetone (non-oily nail varnish remover) and dab on affected area. Use it only in a well-ventilated area.

DEEP CARPET CLEANING

Inevitably some dirt will accumulate over time and this can cause a carpet to lose its freshness. In such cases we recommended professional cleaning. Indeed periodic professional cleaning (how often depends on use) can help to prolong the life of your carpet.