

CLEANING TIPS

By JOE DENMAN

Joe Denman is a floor covering expert, having been in the industry for nearly two decades. He's worked with every type of floor covering, served as an advisory council member for major manufacturers, been in demand as a guest speaker and directed clinics throughout the industry. Joe recently was certified as a carpet cleaning technician by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration Certification.



EVEN THE MOST DURABLE CARPET CAN QUICKLY LOSE ITS LUSTER, TEXTURE AND APPEARANCE IF NOT CARED FOR PROPERLY.

Carpet's worst enemy is soil. Defined as any foreign matter and far more than common dirt, soil is comprised of solid particulates, liquids, hair, skin cells, oils, pet dander, food and beverages. And those are just some of the things that make their way deep into our carpet's pile where they attach to the fibers and cut, abrade or otherwise change the appearance of your carpet. Cleaning can give carpet a new look again. Once carpet is worn, no amount of cleaning can make it look new again.



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TOP 5 EVERYDAY CARE FOR CARPET TIPS

1. Porch and Entrance Mats

Catch dirt long before it has a chance to reach your carpet. Floor mats capture abrasive dirt particles which can make your beautiful carpet look dull and dingy.

2. Vacuum Regularly

Proper vacuuming is crucial. It removes particles missed by entrance mats as well as other household dirt. You'd be amazed at the soil which blows through window screens and falls off your pets. This everyday soil can actually shorten the life of your carpet. (Change the bag when it is two-thirds full!)

3. Household Chemicals that Damage Carpet

Most stain warranties describe most household foods and beverages they cover. Few list chemicals that can destroy your carpet. Topically applied acne medication, tile, toilet and oven cleaners, chlorine bleach, swimming pool chemicals, pesticides, flea collars and plant food are common household products that can permanently damage your floor.

4. Clean up spots and spills.

Spots and spills can easily turn to permanent stains if not cared for properly. Cleaning immediately after the spots and spills occur will help ensure easy removal.

5. Professional annual cleaning

Carpet manufacturers and fiber producers agree that carpets should be maintained by the consumer on a routine basis to minimize soil build-up. They further agree (and often specify in their warranties) that periodic professional cleaning will enhance the performance and overall longevity of your floor.

Our homes are built to live in and our floors are designed to live on. It is a wonderful combination, but sometimes life gets a little messy. It's OK! Carpets today are designed to handle life's little problems. Stain-resistant carpets became a reality in the 1980's and continue with many improvements. Follow the steps below and you will be able to preserve the beauty of your flooring for years to come.

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TOP 5 FIRST AID FOR CARPET TIPS

1. Remain calm!

Most spots and spills can be removed easily from today's stain-resistant carpets. The key to effective spot removal is cleaning the area before it has a chance to permanently stain the carpet.

2. Remove excess material

Use a spoon or spatula to remove any material on top of the carpet before it has a chance to soak in to the pile. Use a wet-dry shop vac for extreme spillage.

3. Use a neutral or mild cleaning solution

Do not use bleaching agents or other caustic solutions to clean your carpet. Usually, a mixture of 1 cup warm water with 1/4 teaspoon of dishwashing liquid will suffice for most household spills. Allow about five minutes of soak time for this solution to work.

4. Blot, Blot, Blot

Using a clean white cloth or towel, rinse and blot-dry the cleaning solution with clear, warm water. Continue to rinse until there is no longer a transfer of the stain to the towel. Blot only! Resist the urge to rub excessively. While this aggressive method seems logical, it can actually permanently damage your carpet. Gently working toward the center of the spot will avoid further spreading.

5. Drying the carpet

Excessive long-term moisture can damage binding materials that help keep the carpet fibers in place. After the spot or spill has been removed, it's time to dry the carpet. The use of white paper towels over the area will help absorb any residue. Weight the paper towels with a non-staining items such as glass cookware.

The Institute of Inspection Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC)* has created a national standard and reference guide for professional carpet cleaning. In doing so, it has established the five principles of cleaning that are subscribed to by their members, manufacturers and Certified Firms. These five principles should be included as part of the carpet cleaner's service. Beware of cleaners who don't offer or who charge extra for these services. When looking for a reputable firm, make sure they subscribe to the following...

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TOP 5 PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL CARPET CLEANING

1. Dry Soil Removal

Up to 70% of the soil in carpet can be removed, in its dry state, by the use of professional quality vacuum equipment — before any cleaning solutions are applied to the carpet.

2. Soil Suspension

Soil suspension occurs when soil is separated from the carpet fibers. Professional carpet cleaners apply solutions to the carpet to break soil down and emulsify other soluble soils.

3. Soil Extraction

With dry soil removed, it's time to extract remaining suspended soils. While there are five primary methods of carpet cleaning, virtually all carpet manufacturers recommend professional hot water extraction. This method allows for the extraction of the soil and cleaning solutions by rinsing with hot water, generally by a truck-mounted extraction unit.

4. Grooming the Carpet Pile

Grooming assists in the drying time of the carpet and allows for the carpet to have an appearance free of swirl or "wand" marks in the pile. Grooming will also provide uniform distribution of carpet protectors such as Scotchgard™ by 3M or Teflon™.

5. Drying

Often times, the first question consumers ask of carpet cleaners is about drying time. The standard set by the IICRC is that drying should occur within 6 – 8 hours, however, drying time must not exceed 24 hours. Drying longer than these standards presents a variety of problems such as delamination and can create an environment for the growth of mold.

GUIDE REFERENCE GUIDE TO STAIN REMOVAL

Stainmaster®	www.stainmaster.com/carpet-care/stain_removal_guide_index.jsp
3M Scotchgard™	www.3m.com/us/home_leisure/scotchgard/carpet_stain.jhtml
Wear-Dated®	www.weardated.com/pages/warranty_care/cc_stain_remove_guide.aspx
Anso® nylon	www.ansosmartcare.com/main/stains/stainhome.cfm
Mohawk	www.mohawk-flooring.com/floorcare-emergency-waterbased.asp
Shaw	www.shawfloors.com/FloorCare/CarpetCare/CarpetSpotRemoval.asp

*For more information about the IICRC: www.iicrc.org

Joe Denman is Vice-President of Carpet Weaver's Floor Care and is an IICRC Certified Carpet and Upholstery Cleaner. He is also an IICRC Certified Floor Technician. (Carpet Weaver's Floor Care is an IICRC Certified Firm. Visit www.cwfloorcare.com).