

Caring for your carpet doesn't have to be overly expensive, extraneous or time-consuming.

There are four basic requirements for caring for and cleaning your carpet that will help it stay looking great, keep it sanitary and ultimately prolong your carpet's life:

- Vacuuming your carpet frequently and thoroughly
- Cleaning up all spills promptly
- Periodically employing professional steam cleaning services
- Taking simple preventative maintenance steps

Initial care

In the weeks after your new carpet has been laid you may notice that it is shedding some fuzz/lint. Don't worry, this is normal for some carpet types and isn't a sign of carpet damage. Simple light vacuuming will remove this surface lint.

Vacuuming

Purchasing a good quality vacuum is an investment in the appearance, cleanliness and life span of your carpet. We recommend the frequent use of an upright vacuum cleaner that has a correctly adjusted and clean beater bar and a revolving brush. Adjusting the beater bar height regularly also helps prevent damaging the carpet with excessive beating. Vacuums with micro filters are preferable as they eliminate fine particles (a common cause of allergy and asthma-related problems). Many people don't realise that the suction performance of a vacuum is significantly reduced once the dust bag is half full. We recommend changing or emptying bags at the halfway mark and replacing filters as per the vacuum manufacturer's instructions. Giving your carpet a light vacuum (three passes over an area) twice a week, and a thorough vacuum (five to seven passes over an area) once a week will keep your carpet clean and ultimately improve its life span. Vacuum against the direction of the pile first to lift the surface and remove dirt and grit as well as reduce matting. Finish by vacuuming in the natural direction of the pile to achieve a smooth, even finish. Regular vacuuming removes soil and grit on the carpet's surface before it is worked down underneath the pile and is harder to clean.

Steam Cleaning

Steam cleaning is an integral part of keeping your carpet in premium condition. Steam cleaning gets rid of oily and sticky soiling, and penetrates the pile to remove dirt that vacuums can't access. Carpet should be steam cleaned at least once every twelve months, depending upon the amount of usage it receives and its colour. Even though both light and dark colours attract the same dirt and grit, the lighter colours tend to show soiling earlier.

Never wait more than two years to steam clean your carpet.

We do not recommend do-it-yourself steam cleaning, shampooing or dry cleaning.

Steam cleaning should be carried out by a professional carpet cleaner who is a member of a professional association in accordance with Australian and New Zealand carpet cleaning and maintenance standards AS/NZS 3733-1995. After steam cleaning always wait until your carpet is completely dry before walking on it. Carpets can take between six and twelve hours to dry after steam cleaning. If your carpet takes any longer than this, this may be a sign that your cleaner has over-wet your carpet. If your carpet is wet for over 24 hours mould or mildew could develop. If your carpet starts to look dirty soon after professional cleaning this may be a sign that the carpet cleaner has not removed all the detergent after steaming.

Cleaning

No carpet is absolutely stainproof. Some carpets have stain resistant treatments to make stain cleaning easier, but these don't prevent stains from ever occurring. Carpets treated with soil resistant products have a reduced rate of soiling, but all carpets require regular care and maintenance. Most manufacturer's warranties require steam cleaning to be carried out in accordance with their own guides. It is advised that you keep records of any professional cleaning carried out.

Soil and Grit

The abrasive action of soil and grit will accelerate wear on your carpet. Household entrances should have mats to act as barriers. It's always better to leave most of the soil and grit on the mat than walk it into the carpet. A shoes-off policy in your house will significantly reduce the amount of soil and grit in your carpet. Regular vacuuming and cleaning is essential to keeping your carpets looking good and to extend carpet life.

Spills and Spot Cleaning

Spills need to be attended too immediately. It's a good idea to keep a carpet cleaning kit with white cloths, paper towel, a spray bottle of water, a plastic scraper and some Scotchgard Carpet Cleaner handy. Whilst many of our carpets are treated with water resistant products it's still best to take care of spills straight away to ensure liquids don't penetrate the pile and stain/discolour the carpet. Whatever you do, don't let a cool spill dry or a hot spill cool! Spot cleaning spills is as simple as:

- Scooping up any solids with your plastic scraper or a spoon, making sure you avoid scraping them down into the surface of the carpet.
- Blot remaining liquid with an absorbent white cloth or paper towel (don't use one with prints or colours, these may bleed into the spill and make it worse!). Push the cloth into the carpet with the heel of your hand. Don't use a brush or scrub as this will damage the carpet, leaving a fuzzy or frayed area. If the spill is particularly large you can use a wet/dry vacuum to remove the majority of the spill before blotting.
- Pre-test your carpet cleaner on a small inconspicuous area of carpet to ensure it is suitable to use on your carpet.

- Dab a small amount of a certified carpet cleaning product (Carpet Call recommends Scotchgard Carpet Cleaner) around the spill, working it gently from the edges to the centre. Remember to always follow the directions on the container and rinse your cloth frequently.
- Remove excess foam and cleaner. Dip a white cloth in water and blot the area to remove any remaining cleaner. Blot again with a dry towel. Repeat these two steps until no more residue comes out.
- Dry by placing a few layers of paper towel or white cloth over the cleaned area. To absorb the remaining moisture weigh this down with an object that won't transfer colour. If you need to dry the area quickly, a hair dryer can be used but ensure it is set on "warm" not "hot" otherwise you may damage your carpet.

Note: Some spillages by their very nature can be difficult to remove. With some stubborn spillages, the use of Scotchgard Carpet Cleaner may not be sufficient to completely remove the stain. In this event, you may need to follow the steps in the Alternative Stain Removal Guide, or alternatively call in a professional cleaner. Hint: If you find chewing gum in your carpet, place an ice cube on it until its frozen solid then simply use a spoon to lift it out. Carpet Call highly recommend avoiding using any strong chemical cleaning products on your carpet, including bleaches, peroxides or strong alkaline based cleaners. Using these may permanently damage or discolour your carpet and may also void your warranty if you have had your carpets treated for stain-resistance.

Stains VS Soiling

When it comes to carpet care, there is often confusion about the difference between soiling and staining. The majority of stain complaints are actually soil related. For example: a good deal of sugar based spills (soft drinks, tea, coffee) leave a sugary residue after removal. This sticky residue easily attracts soil from ordinary shoe traffic and the resulting discoloured area appears to be a stain, yet it can easily be removed by simply misting the affected area with water and blotting. The same thing happens when spills are cleaned with a detergent solution and the area is not sufficiently rinsed with clean water, leaving a sticky detergent residue. It is important to always rinse the carpet thoroughly with water and blot it dry after removing any spill.

Preventative Maintenance Tips

You can further extend the life of your carpets by following these simple preventative maintenance tips:

- As carpet ages it may occasionally have the odd sprout or snag. Just clip these with scissors – never pull snags out as this will damage the carpet!
- Use furniture coasters and chair pads to avoid carpet dents.
- Occasionally move heavy furniture to avoid excessive pile crushing.
- Remove heavy furniture dents by stroking the dented area against the natural direction of the pile with a coin.
- Place a chair pad between carpet and chairs with rollers to prevent snagging and damage.
- If you're planning to move heavy furniture across your carpet, make sure you place a protective barrier of heavy cardboard or plywood between the wheels and the carpet.
- When possible, close blinds or curtains to protect carpet from being in contact with direct sunlight for extended periods of time. UV rays from sunlight can age carpet prematurely.
- If you use area rugs over the top of your carpet make sure these rugs are dry, colourfast and clean. Don't forget to clean and restore the pile of the carpet underneath area rugs either.