

# Care and Maintenance of Wool and Wool Blend Carpet

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Wool carpet is an investment in your home; your choice of wool carpet is the first step to having an attractive, easy-care environment. Following basic maintenance rules will ensure that your investment in new floor covering will last longer and look wonderful for years.

*Please note that the following information is specific to wool and wool blend carpet. Some instructions may not apply to synthetic fibers.*

A comprehensive carpet care program consists of four elements:

1. Preventative maintenance
2. Vacuuming
3. Stain removal
4. Regular cleaning

## PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE:

1. Walk-off mats should be used at all entrances to absorb soil and moisture. Mats should be cleaned on a regular basis.
2. Use a quality pad under carpet, especially on stairs. A quality pad offers better comfort underfoot and is proven to add life to your carpet.
3. Use a protective barrier of cardboard or plywood when moving rolling furniture.
4. The use of protective roller cups is recommended for furniture over carpet with pad underlayment.
5. When using area rugs with your carpet, frequently remove the rug for cleaning. Also clean and restore the pile of the carpet that is underneath the rug.
6. Protect carpet from prolonged periods of direct sunlight with appropriate window coverings.

## VACUUMING:

The most important step in caring for your carpet is vacuuming. Vacuum thoroughly and frequently, especially in high traffic areas. Walking on soiled carpet permits the soil particles to work their way below the surface of the pile, where they are more difficult to remove. Frequent vacuuming removes these particles from the surface before wear occurs.

Vacuuming once per week will keep dust and dirt out of the pile. Vacuum more frequently in areas that have heavy traffic.

A good vacuum cleaner is vital to prolong the life of your carpet. The following are specific vacuum cleaner recommendations:

1. Carpets with thick, loop pile construction may be sensitive to brushing, or rubbing of the pile, which may cause fuzzing and pile distortion. A strong suction vacuum without a beater bar is best for loop pile wool or wool blend carpets.
2. Vacuum cleaners with a rotating or beater/brush bar are appropriate for cut pile wool or wool blend carpets. The brush/bar agitates the carpet pile and mechanically loosens soil for the vacuum to remove.
3. If your vacuum has a bag, empty it regularly to ensure the vacuum doesn't lose suction.

## STAIN REMOVAL:

Acting quickly when spills occur will help prevent stains. The following are some stain removal recommendations:

Stain removal items to keep on hand:

1. Mixture of dish detergent and water (1/2 tsp soap to one quart water) in a spray bottle.

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2. A solution of white vinegar and water (one part vinegar to 4 parts water)
3. Nail polish remover
4. Chewing gum remover
5. Dry cleaning fluid

Process:

Prompt attention to spots and spills is essential. Remove solids from the spill by gently scraping with a spoon or knife. Quickly absorb liquid by blotting with white paper towels. Always blot spills, never scrub or rub. When blotting, work from the outer edge to the center to avoid spreading the spill. Apply the appropriate stain removal solution. A final rinse by spraying with cool water and blotting may be necessary to remove any detergent residue. The nature of wool to absorb water without appearing damp makes it critical to remove excess moisture. To absorb any remaining moisture, blot with additional paper towels and apply pressure.

The following chart identifies specific stain removal procedures for wool and wool blend carpet:

- A. Water soluble stains: Blot stain with paper towels. Spray stain with detergent solution, and blot repeatedly. Rinse by spraying clean water and repeating blotting process.
- B. Same as above, but treat with white vinegar solution before using detergent
- C. Grease: Blot as much as possible with paper towels. Apply a volatile solvent such as Carbona, Energine or K2R to towels or cloth and repeat blotting. Do not pour or spray chemical directly on carpet as damage to the carpet backing or adhesive may occur. Follow with procedures in A.
- D. Freeze: Freeze stains, such as chewing gum and candle wax, with ice or commercially available products. Shatter with blunt object and remove.

PRO: professional cleaner

Stain	A	B	C	D	PRO	Other
Alcoholic Beverages	X					
Asphalt				X		X
Beer	X					
Berries	X					
Blood (wet)	X					
Blood (dry)	X					X
Bodily fluids			X			X
Butter	X					
Chewing gum					X	
Coffee			X			X
Cola drinks	X					
Crayon				X		
Food dyes	X					
Furniture polish	X			X		X
Grease (auto)				X		X
Grease (food)	X					
Ink (permanent)				X		X
Ink (washable)	X					
Lipstick				X		
Milk	X					
Mustard	X					

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Nail Polish						Polish removal (non oily)
Paint (latex wet)	X					
Paint (latex dry)			X			
Paint (oil)			X		X	
Rust					X	
Wax				X		
Wine	X				X	

Warning: certain products can cause irreparable damage to your carpet. Bleaches, tile cleaners, mildew removers, oven cleaners and drain cleaners contain chemicals that can discolor or dissolve carpet fibers. Medications that include benzoyl peroxide, powerful bleach, are capable of permanently damaging your carpet and other textiles as well.

### REGULAR DEEP CLEANING:

While vacuuming is sufficient to remove most dirt, the oily soil that comes from cooking vapors, air pollution and tracked in dirt presents a different type of problem. This type of dirt can create an oily film on the carpet that will dull color and attract soil.

If carpet is cleaned before the oily film has a chance to build up, the cleaning will be easier and more successful. It is a myth that frequent carpet cleaning will cause the floor covering to get dirty faster. However, the selection of cleaning system is very important.

The following recommendations represent the best current carpet cleaning knowledge:

### Professional hot water extraction:

Research indicates that the hot water extraction method provides the best cleaning. This system is commonly referred to as “steam cleaning” although no steam is used in the process. A solution of detergent and water is sprayed into the carpet pile, followed by recovery of the water and soil with a powerful vacuum into a holding tank. This can be done from a truck-mounted unit outside the home, with only the hose and wand brought inside. If a truck-mounted system is not available, a portable self-contained system can be brought into the home.

### Do-It-Yourself” Systems:

If the choice is made to rent a steam-cleaning unit, several different cleaning systems should be researched before making a selection. In general, most rental units do not have enough power to adequately clean residential carpet. The guidelines should be followed:

1. Cleaning equipment should be similar to what the professionals use.
2. Only cleaning solutions that have been approved for wool and wool-blend carpet should be used. The pH level of the solution should be near neutral – between 5 and 7 pH.
3. Bleach or optical brightening agents are not acceptable.
4. Adequate time for thorough drying should be allowed before walking on the carpet.

### Bonnet cleaning systems:

The bonnet system is not recommended for cleaning carpet. It has very little cleaning capability, as it does not extract water, and leaves much of the detergent used in the pile. As a result, rapid resoiling often occurs. Another disadvantage of this method is that the spinning of the bonnet can distort the pile of the wool carpet, causing overall fuzziness.