

CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

CRI / CARPET FOR HOMES / CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

What You Need to Know



The beauty and life of your carpet depend on the care it receives. Proper cleaning will keep it looking great for its full lifetime, help improve your indoor air quality, and keep your carpet warranties intact.

Cleaning your carpet properly is easier than you think. All it takes is a little knowledge about how to select the right carpet cleaning products and the right way to clean your carpet. The CRI [Seal of Approval Program](#) helps you easily identify effective carpet cleaning solutions, equipment, and service providers that clean carpet right the first time, without the fear of faster resoiling, stains reappearing, or damage to your carpet or the environment.

Cleaning Essentials

Four Steps for Proper Carpet Care

Carpet cleaning is all about developing a routine. If you get into a good routine and keep it up, you will see great results. Products that rate highly on CRI's Seal of Approval (SOA) program are your assurance that you will clean correctly the first time (more on the SOA program below). Here are four simple steps to keep your carpet clean and looking great:

- **Vacuum** regularly and more frequently in high traffic areas, and everywhere according to a vacuuming schedule, using a Seal of Approval-certified vacuum.
- **Clean spots and spills quickly** with products that do not damage the carpet or cause it to resoil quicker. SOA-certified solutions to clean effectively and maintain the life of carpet.
- **Professionally deep clean** your carpets every 12 to 18 months to remove embedded dirt and grime. SOA-certified cleaners are recommended and sometimes required by the manufacturer.
- **Stop dirt at the door** by using mats outside and in, taking your shoes off when you enter the house and changing your air filters to reduce airborne dust particles.

The Seal of Approval Program

CRI wants vacuums, extractors, cleaning systems, cleaning products, and service providers to be as effective as possible. The Seal of Approval program is the only one in the industry that scientifically measures cleaning efficacy. The results help consumers make informed decisions and manufacturers improve their products. So carpets are cleaner, healthier, and last longer. Find out more about the [Seal of Approval Program](#).

Basic Rug Care

Rugs deserve the same care as wall-to-wall carpet and, in some cases, require special attention.

- **Washing rugs** – If your rug is small and the label says “machine washable,” shake the rug outside first and then put it in the washing machine at the recommended temperature. Use warm water (90 to 105 degrees) and a mild detergent. Tumble your rug dry on the lowest heat setting.
- **Beating larger rugs** – If your larger rug is easy to pick up, shake it outside first; then put it over a clothesline and beat it. Next, take the rug inside and vacuum it. Many carpet cleaning professionals have rug cleaning expertise as well, but, if the label says dry clean only, your best bet may be to roll it up and take it to a dry cleaner. Save time by calling first to see if the cleaner does rug cleaning – many do not.
- **Vacuuming area rugs** – Area rugs with fringe require special technique. Use gentle suction and start from the center of the carpet, vacuuming toward the fringe, and being careful not to catch the strands in the beater bar. Lift the carpet edge to vacuum beneath the fringe.
- **Caring for Oriental, Turkish, or Persian rugs** – Clean imported rugs according to your carpet manufacturer's specifications or bring in a professional cleaning

Vacuuming 101

Proper vacuuming is the easiest and most effective way to keep your carpet clean. Regular vacuuming can also have the largest impact on the air you breathe by removing dust, dirt, allergens, and particles.

To get the most out of your vacuuming regime, remember these few easy tips:

- A quick once-over doesn't do much. Slow and steady does the trick.
- When vacuuming, don't ignore those corners and crevices where dust builds.
- "Top-down" cleaning saves you the step of vacuuming again after dusting. Dust blinds, windowsills, and furniture surfaces first and then vacuum away any fallen dust.
- Remember to replace or empty vacuum bags when they are half to two-thirds full as this improves the efficacy of the vacuum.

How Often Should You Vacuum?

As a rule of thumb, you should vacuum at least once a week with a Seal of Approval-certified vacuum cleaner. However, the more foot traffic over your carpet, the more you need to vacuum.



Cleaning Spots and Spills

A Two-Step Solution

With today's stain-resistant carpet, treating spots and stains has never been easier. While no carpet is completely stain proof, the key is to act quickly with the right solution to knock out spots with a one-two punch.



Step One: Absorb the Spill

- Blot liquids with a dry, white absorbent cloth or plain white paper towels (no prints or colors). Using a printed or colored material may transfer ink or dye to your damp carpet. Continue until the area is barely damp. Semisolids, like food spills, may need to be scooped up with a spoon. Solid, dried bits can be vacuumed.
- Do not scrub or use a brush! Bristles and scrubbing can damage the carpet. Fraying and texture change are the likely results.

Step Two: Treat the Spot or Stain

- Use a **CRI Certified Seal of Approval carpet cleaning product**. Though these have been laboratory tested, you should still pretest any cleaner on a scrap of carpet or an unseen area of your carpet.
- Follow the product's directions carefully. (Note: more is not better.) Apply a small amount of the cleaner to a white cloth and work in gently, from the edges to the center. Blot; don't scrub. You may need to do this several times to remove the spot. After the spot is gone, blot the area with clear water once or more to remove any remaining product.

What if you don't have a CRI-approved carpet cleaner handy? Try one of the remedies from our **Spot Solver**.

Special Carpet Cleaning Tips for Pet Owners

Do you have a pet? You can combat pet odors and stains in many ways:

- Vacuum carpet more frequently to capture pet hair and dander from your pet's fur.
- Use **Seal of Approval cleaning products** that are specifically designed for pet stains and odors.
- Clean up new messes promptly and then follow the steps for spot and stain removal.
- Use small hand extractors for quick cleanups of pet accidents, but remember that these quick clean ups don't take the place of periodic deep cleaning.
- Have your carpet professionally cleaned every 12 to 18 months More frequently if necessary.
- Don't use a steam cleaner when dealing with urine spots because the heat will set the stain and the smell. Extracting the spill with a wet-vacuum and rinsing with cool water will reduce the odor. If necessary, contact a certified carpet cleaning firm that knows how to remove pet stains and odors permanently.

