

## Routine Maintenance

Dirt and dust particles cause more damage than merely dirtying your carpet. When allowed to remain in carpet, these gritty particles can roughen the carpet's pile — causing it to look aged and worn long before its time.

To keep your carpet looking great for years vacuum regularly with a good vacuum cleaner. This not only prolongs the carpet's life, but also improves its overall appearance. If there are very high traffic areas that get excessive daily use, try to vacuum these areas daily. Be sure to change your vacuum bag frequently to enable the vacuum to function at full capacity.

Most carpets today are stain resistant so you can keep stains from setting in if you catch them quickly. The longer it takes to treat a spill, the more likely it will turn into a permanent stain. As soon as something is spilled on your carpet, follow these simple steps:

**Step One:** Blot liquids with a dry, white cloth or towel. For solids or semi-solids, scrape up the matter with a rounded spoon or vacuum until completely removed. Do not scrub the carpet — especially with any kind of brush.

**Step Two:** Pretest any cleaning solutions in a hidden area, such as a closet, to make sure the solution does not damage the dye or fiber. You can do this by applying a few drops of the solution in the test area and then blot with a white cloth after ten seconds. Check both the carpet and cloth to make sure no dye has come from the carpet onto the cloth and make sure no damage has come to the carpet. If there is any change in the color or texture of the carpet, choose another cleaning solution.

**Step Three:** If there was no change to the carpet, proceed with the chosen cleaning solution. Apply a small amount to a white cloth, allow it to sit for several minutes, and then work gently into the stain from the outside in (to prevent the stain from spreading). Don't be discouraged; you may have to repeat this step several times to remove a stain.

**Step Four:** Once you've removed the stain completely, rinse the area thoroughly with cold water and blot with a dry cloth until all cleaning solution residue is removed. Failing to remove the cleaning solution could cause soiling in the same area where you have removed a stain.

For other substances that may not come out easily with a standard carpet cleaning solution (for example, wax, gum, lipstick, pet urine, etc.) there are specialized cleaning solutions that work to remove these items. Contact your carpet manufacturer or supplier for recommendations on which of these particular solutions may be the best for your problem.

Remember, no carpet is completely stain proof and whether a carpet stains or not is determined by many factors, including how old the carpet is, carpet color, what the spill was (darker items are more likely to stain), how long the spill was left untreated, and even the cleaning solution used.

## Preventative Maintenance

In addition to frequent vacuuming, manufacturers recommend having carpet professionally cleaned using a hot water extraction method as needed. Below are some more specific recommendations for general carpet upkeep.

Furniture coasters help distribute the weight of heavy items and are recommended — especially for furniture with wheels that may leave permanent indentations in the carpet and padding. Also, take care when moving furniture with wheels by putting a protective barrier between the wheels and the carpet.

To keep carpet from discoloring or causing pattern fading, close drapes or blinds during hours of direct sunlight.

Try to keep all harsh cleaners away from carpet. Bleaches, tile cleaners, mildew removers, oven cleaners, drain openers, and plant food can all permanently discolor your carpet.

The most used areas, such as entrances, doorways, traffic lanes, and in front of sitting areas will collect dirt faster than other areas. Clean these areas as soon as they begin to show soil. This will stop dirt from spreading and will extend the time between professional cleanings.

Place rugs or mats at exits from the kitchen surface to carpet, so as not to transfer excess cooking oils to the carpet.