

Are you thinking of cleaning your own carpeting?

Read this general information guide and tips before you begin. It may save you headaches, time, and money!

Carpets are one household item that needs to get a good cleaning at least once a year. A good deep cleaning of your carpets will help them look better and last longer, and you will not have to replace them as often. Many carpet manufacturers even require periodic cleaning to maintain your warranty. You can call on a professional to get the job done with minimal effort on your part, and a certified technician will bring with them their skills, industrial strength equipment, and professional chemicals that are not readily available directly to the homeowner. Or, you can be adventurous and do it yourself.

If you enjoy going barefoot, or even if you don't, kick your shoes off at the door. Why remove your shoes? If you have a rough board that needs smoothing, you grab a sheet of sandpaper for the job. Guess what's on the bottom of your shoes? Sand and dirt grind away at the fibers in your carpet, leading to an early death.

Take a closer look at the bottoms of those shoes and you'll find oil, dirt and heaven only knows how many bits of leftover dog deposits. Small wonder why your carpet stubbornly refuses to come clean. Do wear slippers or socks inside. The oil from the bottom of your feet also dirties the carpet.

There are many different types of equipment that you can rent or purchase to use on your carpets for your carpet cleaning DIY project, but you will want to do a thorough search to find out which carpet cleaner is best for you and your home. You can easily find carpet cleaning equipment in your local department stores to purchase, or the local grocery or hardware store to rent. However, they will not have enough power or heat to get your carpet completely clean.

The cleaning equipment that you rent should have enough power to suck up most of the liquids and cleaners out of the carpet. Any equipment that is used should leave you with a dry carpet within 12 hours. To avoid damage during your DIY carpet cleaning, always make sure that you check with the retail store or carpet manufacturer to find out the best way to get your carpet clean.

During your DIY carpet cleaning make sure that the carpets do not become too saturated as this can cause damage and eventually lead to problems with bacteria and mold spores. Common issues with carpet cleaning DIY projects are that homeowners tend to add too much liquid cleaner or water to the carpets. More liquid detergent is NOT always better. Manufacturers of most extraction cleaning detergents and rinses have tested and determined the proper dilution ratio to prevent later problems such as wicking, sticky residue, and even carpet fiber damage. (Ever wash your hair and forget to rinse out all the shampoo? The same thing happens to your carpet. The shampoo not completely rinsed out, leaves a sticky residue. That residue acts like a big magnet pulling the dirt from the bottom of your shoes. Now you have clean shoes and even dirtier carpets.)

Many homeowners choose to spray or sprinkle deodorizing powders or liquids directly on their carpeting. BIG MISTAKE! Many of the powdered “dry” deodorizers sold to directly spread on your carpeting then vacuum up contain various gritty particles of scents and baking soda. Yes, they do smell pretty but they damage your carpet fibers horribly. It’s like rubbing your clothing with sand and grit; eventually your clothes become worn and faded looking and totally destroyed. Also, these powders NEVER totally vacuum up. Simply look at your vacuum cleaner bag after every use and you will see residue for months on end. As for the liquid sprays, you might as well pour diluted shampoo on your carpeting. Also smelling pretty, that sticky constant residue is nothing more than a magnet for all the dirt, dust and soil tracked over your floors. If you must use deodorizers, use the plug in type or even spray a small amount of your liquid deodorizer onto your HVAC intake filter. This small amount will immediately flow throughout your home.

Although a retailer will make a suggestion as to what you should use to get your carpets clean, you should always check to make sure that it has a PH balance of less than 10. Also make sure that the cleaners will not leave your carpets messy and sticky when the job is done. Read the labels and know what fibers were used to create your carpet. You will be able to find cleaners for specific materials such as wool. (Wool and other natural fibers are a totally different task in that they may easily re-soil, bleed, yellow, and leave you with horrible musty or wet animal type smell.

Some carpets claim to be resistant to stains and you will need to find special cleaners made for that type of material. Using the wrong equipment or cleaners can void the warranty of your carpets. You can also void your warranty if you choose a DIY carpet cleaning over a professional one, so make sure that you are aware of all the rules before you start to work on your soiled and stained carpet.

Many homeowners have purchased carpeting treated with Scotchguard or Teflon protectants to assist in prevention of stains. You may also have had a professional to apply this treatment after a previous deep cleaning. You must understand that these types of fabric protectants must be reapplied after each deep cleaning. They are not designed to infinitely protect your carpeting. They do wash and wear off.

You do not want to have a carpet that is wet for a long time. Get as much liquid out of the carpet as possible and then pull out the fans, air conditioners and dehumidifiers to help your carpet dry quickly. You want a dry carpet within 12 hours and you do not want a carpet that takes up to or more than 24 hours. (Without a professional strength truckmounted machine Berber carpeting is famous for its extended dry times and can turn yellow or wick up if not dried effectively.) A carpet that takes too long to dry can mean that you added too much water or liquid cleaner or your rental carpet cleaning equipment may not be powerful enough.

Basic Steps To A Better DIY Carpet Cleaning:

1. Vacuum thoroughly before wetting the carpet.
2. Mix the traffic lane/pre-spray cleaner per the product directions. Apply it lightly to the soiled areas then using a soft/medium bristled brush, agitate it into the fibers of your carpeting. If the detergent doesn't reach the soil it can't release it. Let it dwell for 10-15 minutes. Only prepare an area that you can fully rinse before it has time to dry.
3. Prepare your cleaning equipment as directed by the manufacturers' specifications. Fill the rinse water tank with hot water. (NOTE: Some equipment pumps cannot handle water over 120-140 degrees and you will burn the pumping mechanism out!) Add the correct rinse solution to the water tank.
4. Using short, slow strokes, go over the entire pre-sprayed area of carpeting a minimum of 2-3 times with the rinse. Following the rinse, go over it again with at least 2 strokes using a dry vacuum pass to remove any remaining water from the carpeting.
5. Once a room/area is completed, immediately place a fan or air source in it. On sunny, breezy days open the windows and let nature dry it for you. Dry air flow is imperative to a fast drying carpet.
6. Do not place metal or stained furniture back on your wet carpeting until it is FULLY dry. If you must move the furniture back in, place plastic squares

cut from material such as seran food wrap under each leg of furniture. Failure to do this will result in a rust or furniture stain that almost always requires a professional and his chemicals to remove.

7. Finally, clean your equipment thoroughly. Dust and hair will totally ruin your small carpet cleaner if you don't keep it maintained. In addition, leaving dirty water in the waste tank will provide your home with an odor you won't be pleased with.

These basic steps and guidelines are meant to help you do a better job if you simply don't want to hire a professional. This information is not a full training on carpet cleaning and won't make you a professional. Before you decide to DIY and clean your own carpeting, compare the costs of rental/purchase of equipment, the chemicals, your time and fuel to pickup and return the machine, and the labor you will be required to put forth to actually do the work. You may be surprised at how little, if any, you are saving by cleaning your own carpeting. (Take a look at our website and see a detailed cost comparison on pricing for different companies as well as the use of rental equipment.)



www.professionalcarpetcarenashville.com

Phone (615) 228-7771