



# EASY CARPET CLEANING TIPS AND TRICKS FROM THE EXPERTS

(ARA) – As the weather cools and daylight hours shorten, families tend to spend more time inside. After a long summer of open windows, sticky treats and constant activity in and out the door, you might notice that your carpets are looking a bit drab. Keeping carpets clean might seem like a daunting task, but with some tips from the experts it's quicker and easier than you think.

Carpet provides good traction, absorbs noises, and saves homeowners money because it naturally insulates a room. And, contrary to popular misconceptions, carpet that is cleaned regularly is fine for people with allergies, and even asthma. The best practice for keeping carpets consistently clean is having a regular maintenance routine.

Refreshing carpets after a special event, season of tough use, or simply any time of year is easy with these tips from the experts at the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI), a national carpet trade association that focuses on science-based research, customer advocacy and environmental initiatives.

## Create a vacuum schedule

Have you ever wondered if vacuuming really makes a difference? Removing soil when it's on the surface, before it gets tramped down, is the first and most important step in carpet maintenance. Use slow, repetitive motions that overlap (about four swipes), ensuring you get right up to the edges where dust, pollen and pet dander like to accumulate.

How often do you need to vacuum? That answer may surprise you. Generally once a week with a CRI-certified vacuum is a good place to start, but depending on how frequently the area is used, you'll likely want to do it more often. For example, high-traffic or pet areas should be vacuumed daily, medium-traffic areas require about twice a week and light-traffic areas can be done once a week. Just as you wouldn't wear a shirt over and over again without washing it, you don't want to go too long between vacuuming your carpets.

## Treat stains the correct way

Up to 98 percent of carpet is manufactured in the United States, and most is made to be stain-resistant. However, junior's ice cream cone drips and Fido's dirty paws can leave marks that may seem almost too difficult to remove. No matter how hard you try to prevent them, stains do happen, so it's important to act quickly. Scoop up solids and blot liquids with a dry, white cloth or paper towel, starting at the edge of the spot moving toward the center. Do not scrub – it can damage carpet and spread the mess.

Next, treat the spot with a CRI-tested and approved carpet cleaning solution. If you don't have one on hand, plain water often works better than untested carpet cleaners. For wine or chocolate stains, try mixing 1/4 teaspoon clear dishwashing liquid with one cup warm water. Avoid laundry detergent which can cause permanent damage, such as a change in color. For coffee or tea stains, try mixing 1 cup white vinegar with 1 cup water. For ink stains, apply rubbing alcohol to a cloth and blot. Have a wax spill? Cover the spot with a clean brown paper bag or heavy brown paper and apply low heat from an iron. The paper will absorb the wax as it melts.

## Call in the pros

Just like you visit the dentist to get your teeth cleaned regularly, your carpets also need attention from a trained professional. To keep your carpets looking great and lasting for years to come, you should get them professionally deep cleaned every 12 to 18 months with a CRI Seal of Approval Service Provider. Find one near you by visiting [www.carpet-rug.org](http://www.carpet-rug.org).

If you've never had your carpets professionally cleaned, now is a great time to start before the holidays arrive. Start by getting bids and don't be afraid to ask questions. A good carpet cleaning should include vacuuming, a pre-spray and routine spot removal. Many won't charge for furniture removal either.

Whether you want to get in a better habit with routine carpet maintenance or you simply want to refresh your carpet for the change of seasons or a special event, these tips will keep your carpet and home looking wonderful today and long into the future.

Visit [carpet-rug.org](http://carpet-rug.org) and [www.criblog.org](http://www.criblog.org) to learn more.

