

The Ultimate Guide



SECRETS OF A CARPET CLEANING PROFESSIONAL

EVERYTHING THE CARPET SALESMAN DOESN'T TELL YOU.

- BUYING THE RIGHT CARPET
- AVOID COSTLY SPOT CLEANING MISTAKES
- HOW TO CLEAN EVERYTHING FROM PET SPOTS TO PAINT
- REMOVING PET ODOR
- REPLACING, AND MUCH, MUCH, MORE!

Joni Scudder & Ginger Kasser

Table of Contents

How often Should I Clean my Carpet	3
3 Reasons the Carpet is Getting Dirty Faster	8
Absolutely Never Use these Products	13
Prevent Carpet Damage. Do This, Not That	15
Misconceptions about Stain Guard	19
How to Remove Urine Odors	21
Emergency Spot Tips	23
Remove Wax from Carpet	27
Carpet Wrinkles	28
4 Signs the Carpet Needs Replacing	30
Buying New Carpet	33

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Chapter 1: How Often Should I Clean My Carpet

Cleaning your carpet is an important part of home maintenance. It will increase the longevity of the carpet, and keep it looking beautiful for many years. However, the time frame to clean carpets is different for every family based on use, and other factors.

- Carpet Warranties

For a person who has recently purchased a new carpet there are a few important things to know when deciding on how to maintain the carpet. First, all carpets come with a warranty that requires professional cleaning once every 18 months. If you want to maintain your carpet warranty, you need to follow the requirements of the guarantee. Secondly, it is important to read the warranty information. On top of cleaning requirements, there may also be some very specific care instructions for removing spots and spills. While there are many spot cleaners on the market, opting for a spot cleaner instead of following the

recommendation of the warranty has the potential to void the carpet warranty. In fact, Mohawk's carpet warranty specifically states that a bleaching agent will void the warranty. If the spot cleaners you reach for says test for color fastness, you should avoid it.

When picking a spot cleaning agent, avoid any products that contain bleach or bleaching agents such as chlorine, peroxide, sodium hypochlorite, and sodium perborate. In addition, avoid anything that contains ammonia, petroleum or glycerin. Ammonia is found in urine and is often a cause for lingering smells. Petroleum and glycerin products are oil based. Oil acts as a magnet for dirt, and increases the likelihood of reoccurring spots, and the development of traffic patterns.

Some carpet manufacturers state that you can use dish soap, and certain types of ammonia to clean up specific spots. As carpet cleaners who see and clean several thousand carpets each year, we recommend avoiding ammonia, and dish soap as they can cause damage to carpet. Some dish soaps contain bleaching agents, and almost all of them contain glycerin which attracts dirt. Ammonia can discolor carpets, and since you must also be very specific in the kind of ammonia you use, we recommend avoiding it all together.

Additional information on warranties can be found at the following links.

<https://shawfloors.com/flooring/how-to/carpet/warranties/warranty-highlights>

<https://www.mohawkflooring.com/customer-care/warranty>

For almost all spots and stains, we recommend using a solution of half and half white distilled vinegar and water.

1. Remove any solids
2. Blot up with a towel or paper towel as much liquid as possible
3. Spray area liberally with the water and vinegar mixture
4. Let it sit for 1-2 minutes
5. Shop vac or blot up any remaining moisture.
6. Repeat until the spot has been removed.

If you have spilled paint, nail polish or ink on the carpet, we recommend checking out [Emergency Spot Tips](#) page for additional clean up options.

- No Warranty

If you are not trying to maintain a warranty, maintenance is still important if you want the carpet to look beautiful for a long time. Properly maintained carpets can last well beyond their life expectancy.

In order to know how often you should clean the carpets it is important to look at the amount, and type of traffic that is traveling over the carpet. If you are a small household of two people, who vacuum regularly, clean up spots as they happen, and wear house slippers instead of shoes in the home, you are going to be able to go much longer than a busy family of four with pets.

In addition, re-applying the carpet protectant when having the carpets cleaned will also extend the amount of time you can go between rug cleanings. On average, carpets should be cleaned once every year and a half to two years when a carpet protection is applied, but this does not hold true for all households. Here is a break down based on traffic and use.

- Traffic, Cleaning

1-3 people no pets, 18mo-2 years

2-4 people no pets, 1 yr. – 18 months

2+ people with pets (no pet soiling), 1 year

People with pets that soil, 6 months – 1 year

Wheel chair traffic, 6 months – 1 year

This information is based on standard use and proper care. When the carpet protection is not applied carpet will tend to get dirty faster and will also develop wear patterns.

But the carpets don't look dirty

Many people feel that it is not important to clean carpet until it looks dirty. However, carpets can accumulate as much as 25 + pounds of soil per year. Homes with higher traffic can accumulate much higher amounts, gaining as much of a pound of soil per week in the winter months when snow is on the ground. In addition, winter months also add an additional component aside from soil. Ice melt is a chemical that is not only toxic but is also a dirt magnet. If members of a family struggle with asthma, allergies or chemical sensitivities it is important to remove the extra soil regularly.

The other problem with the accumulation of soil without proper removal, is the compounding damage that occurs to the rug. Those who are very diligent with vacuuming and cleaning up spots may think that they can go longer in between cleaning (which is true). However, carpet protection does eventually wear off as you walk on carpet. In walk ways the protection is typically gone in two years. That means the soil in the carpet is starting to actually cut the fibers of the carpet. This leads to the development of traffic patterns.

If you have ever walked into a house where you can see the walking path from the front door, down the hallway, and around the bed, or into the living room and right in front of the couch, you are seeing a traffic pattern. While cleaning will remove a good portion of dirt from the areas, carpet that is permanently damaged will not lighten up completely in these paths. Instead, the cutting of the fibers has led to fraying which changes the way light refracts off the carpet, creating permanent darkening. If you see walking paths on the carpet, it is already past time to clean it.

Chapter 2: Two Reasons the Carpet is Getting Dirty Faster

Have you ever wondered why carpet seems to get dirty faster after it's been cleaned? There are reasons why you

may notice changes to the carpet after it's cleaned. Some of the common causes are:

- Quality of cleaning products
If the cleaning products are low quality, they will attract dirt, and if the protective coating is not reapplied your carpet will start to show damage very quickly.
- Protective coatings.

Product Quality

The quality of your cleaning products can make all the difference when cleaning your carpet. Store brand products are some of the lowest grade cleaning products available for carpets. Many of them use a petroleum base. Petroleum is oil, and when you clean with it, it will leave your carpets looking bright and shiny at first. However, about four weeks after the cleaning you will notice that all the spots have come back, and they may even look worse than before. Oil is a magnet for dirt.

Protective Coating

When carpet is brand new it has a protective coating that helps to protect against wear and tear, it also provides some protection against spills by repelling the liquid

allowing more time to clean it up. Over time, this protective coating wears off, and when you clean the carpet any protective coating that is left is removed.

If this protective coating is not reapplied, the carpet will not repel moisture and dust. Dirt has half the cutting power of glass, will start to cut away at the fibers fraying the carpet. Fraying creates permanent dark marks called wear patterns in the areas where you walk. Your carpet may also appear to get dirty faster because spills can permeate the fibers. Carpet manufacturers recommend putting the protective coating back on the carpet every time you clean. This coating naturally wears off after about one to two years depending on the amount of use.

Protective Coating Pros & Cons

There are different protectants available, and each of them its own set of pros and cons. One of the most recognized is **Scotch Guard**. This product is readily available and will provide a waterproof barrier. It also provides a limited protection against wear and tear, but its main function is to waterproof. Scotch Guard does leave a residue on the carpet that can attract soil. Customers that use scotch guard may notice they need to clean their carpet more frequently than those that use other protective coatings.

Teflon is another protective coating that is available. This is a great product, and it will keep moisture on top of the carpet for a while. This allows for easy clean up when you have a spill or pet accidents. Teflon doesn't leave a residue and provides protection against dirt cutting across the carpet fibers. However, there has been a lot of controversy over health risks associated with Teflon products over the last decade. You may wish to do your own research on this.

The last protective coating is a **silica polymer**. Silica provides a protective coating that will prevent dirt from cutting across the fibers, has no chemical smell. It is tolerated very well by people with chemical sensitivities and allergies. It does not offer waterproofing like Teflon or Scotch Guard so the moisture will not stay on top of the carpet as long. However, it will still provide protection against the spill permeating the carpet fibers allowing for easier clean up. This product is considered safe for children, pets, animals and the environment.

No matter which product you choose; it is better to protect the carpet than to leave it without a protective coating. These three products will increase the length of time in which your carpets last, with less wear.

The quality of carpet you purchase also makes a huge difference. Low-quality carpets have a life expectancy of five years. However, with proper care, your carpet can outlive its life expectancy. Keep in mind that carpet, like any fabric, eventually wears out, so it will never look like it did when it was brand new.

Important Notes:

DO NOT USE DETERGENTS TO SPOT CLEAN CARPET.

- If these products are watered down, they will not provide proper protection. In the same way, if they are applied too heavily, they can make the carpet feel stiff.
- Protective coatings are easily removed by mild detergent. For this reason, use equal parts water to white distilled vinegar to clean up spills and spots that occur on the carpet. Anything else will strip the protective coating off.
- Whenever you clean your carpets, you should reapply the protective coating.
- Signs that the protective coating has worn off and it's time to clean:
 1. Matted carpet
 2. Fibers untwisting

3. Carpet appears to be getting dirty faster
4. Cleaning spills and vacuuming becomes more difficult
5. Darkening in the walk areas

Chapter 3: Absolutely Never Use These Products

Like many people I have a Pinterest account, with all sorts boards including one on cleaning. I love finding cleaning tips but am careful to research which cleaning tips could cause damage to the item I am cleaning before I proceed. I wish everyone did this. Many people thinking that they have found the holy grail of home cleaning products and post their ideas on Pinterest. Unfortunately, they are giving people advice that cause damage to the items they are cleaning. I see this a lot with carpet cleaning tips. The most cringe worthy tips include the use of hydrogen peroxide, bleach, dish soap, or ammonia (window cleaner). If you run across a tip containing any of these products you should ignore them. These products can do serious damage to carpets. If you are using a mixture of these, I urge you to stop. While you may not see the damage, you are causing right now, eventually you will be wishing that you hadn't used them.

Hydrogen Peroxide, & Bleach

These are bleaching agents (Peroxide is used to lighten hair). They remove color, and not just the color from the spots you have spilled, but color from the entire carpet. If the mixture is concentrated or laid down heavier in one area than the other, the carpeting will start to appear blotchy. It will be lighter in some areas even on white carpet. This is not something that can be repaired. Once it's bleached, you can't "unbleach" it.

In addition, unlike your hair carpet doesn't grow. Each time you apply a cleaning mix containing peroxide, or bleach you are causing damage that dries out, and makes the fibers brittle. Over time the fibers will start to break and fray at an accelerated pace. This kind of damage leads to early replacement.

Important side note: Any time you use a bleaching agent on carpet, any warranty the carpet has **will be voided**.

Dish Soap

Carpet manufactures recommend a mixture of white vinegar, water, and dish soap to help remove spots. While we agree with the white vinegar and water, we disagree with using dish soap. Using dish soap adds a cleaning agent that can have bleach, petroleum, and other items that can

leave residues. These residues can attract soil, bleach out the color, and cause other problems. While carpet manufactures may recommend this, we suggest you use only half and half white distilled vinegar and water to clean spots. Not all dish soaps are created equal, so it is better just to avoid using them all together. In most cases you will get good results with just vinegar and water.

Ammonia

This product is not meant for carpet. It will leave you carpet smelling terrible. Ammonia is the primary ingredient in cat and dog pee that cause bad odors and sets stains. Just don't use this product.

Chapter 4: Prevent Carpet Damage: Do This, not That.

Some of the most common practices used to maintain carpets are damaging them. These practices include, but are not limited to, not wearing shoes in the house, spot cleaning, and steam cleaning the carpets. While this may sound crazy, it all comes down to understanding how carpet gets dirty. If employed correctly these practices will

increase the life of the carpet, but when done incorrectly they can cause a carpet to wear out earlier than it should.

Shoes Or No Shoes?

Have you made the decision not to wear shoes in the house? You are on the right track, however if you do not replace the shoes with house shoes, you aren't really helping the situation. Walking on carpet in bare feet, or socks can still do damage to the carpet.

Skin produces oils that stick to carpet fibers and attract dirt. Walking on carpet bare foot, after applying lotion (oil), will actually do more damage than walking around the house in street shoes. In addition, feet are the sweatiest part of the human body. Sweat grows bacteria, which produces a foul odor. Bacteria and oils from your feet can pass through socks and get into carpets. These bacteria cause odors eat away at your carpet fibers, and grow unpleasant things that can turn into spots. If you are not going to wear shoes in the house make sure that everyone has a pair of slippers to wear, instead of going barefoot, or wearing socks. This will protect and help to keep your carpets fresh for years to come.

Spot Cleaning Is Important!

Spot cleaning is definitely an important step in carpet maintenance. However, if you use the wrong products to

clean up spots, it can permanently damage the carpet. Common cleaning agents are known to set stains or bleach the carpet fibers. Avoid carpet products that you can buy in the grocery store. The quality of the product sold in grocery stores is typically very low. Most of these products contain oil, and petroleum that leave a residue behind that attracts soil and dirt. Have you ever cleaned up a spot and noticed that it disappears for a week maybe two, then suddenly reappears? This is one of the problems caused by using products that leave a residue.

Many of these products also warn that you should test for color fastness. Why? They can actually alter the color of your carpet, and the product manufacturer doesn't want to be responsible for any type of damage. **Using these low-quality products on your rugs can void your carpet's warranty.** No matter what, do not use bleach, peroxide or dish soap to clean spots. These products are not designed for carpet and can do considerable damage.

Best Spot Cleaning Product Available

The best spot cleaner out there is probably sitting under your kitchen sink, or in your pantry already. White distilled vinegar contains antibacterial properties and will not leave behind any kind of residue. We recommend keeping a spray bottle mixture of half and half distilled white vinegar and with water. Use it for general cleanup of normal spots,

and even pet spots. It can actually help to keep “Fido’s” lovely spots from becoming a permanent stain on the carpet.

Baking soda, corn starch, and salt are other items that you can use to clean up spots. Baking soda can help remove odors. Simply sprinkle it over the carpet and vacuum it out. Corn starch is an absorbent material that can be used if you spill juice on the carpet. When a juice spill occurs, towel up the spot as much as you can, use straight white vinegar, and pour it over the spot. Let the vinegar sit 2 minutes then towel out and coat the top of the spot with a good layer of cornstarch. The cornstarch will draw out the moisture, and the color left by the juice. Let the cornstarch dry completely. Once it is dry, break it up, and vacuum. Then take a carpet brush to the rug and brush it the loosen any that is left and vacuum again. Next a solution of warm salt water can be used to remove blood from the carpet. Make sure the salt is dissolved the salt completely before working it into the spot. For more information on how to treat problem spots and spills check out our emergency spot tips.

Don’t Over Heat or Soak Your Carpet

Lastly, steam cleaning the rug with a home cleaner can definitely help with spot cleaning, but you must be careful. Water that is too hot can cause your carpet backing to breakdown. This causes wrinkling. By using a steam cleaner every month to clean your carpets, you are taking

years off of the life of your rugs. At most you should clean your carpet two times a year.

Make sure to use quality products or just a solution of vinegar and water, otherwise you will notice spots returning quickly. To sum it up, remember products that leave a residue will just attract dirt back. Carpets that get too wet growing *mold* and *mildew*. Water that is too *hot* can cause damage to the backing of the carpet, and cause wrinkling.

For best results, use your steam cleaner for spot cleaning and have your carpets professionally cleaned once a year to keep your warranty intact. This will ensure the longest life for your investment. Both dry, and steam cleaners can do a great job when properly used.

Want more information? Feel free to call us any time at 303.993.6751, or email me at joniscudder@pristinecarpetcleaning-co.com.

Chapter 5: Misconceptions About Stain Guard

The protective stain guard coating DOES NOT prevent stains.

Contrary to the title, a stain guard doesn't prevent stains. Instead, it prevents absorption into the carpet. However,

the effectiveness of stain guard can be negated by scrubbing.

If a spill occurs on the carpet, resist the urge to scrub. Scrubbing pushes the liquid deeper into the fabric and negates the protective coating. This will make spills harder to remove. It may also set the stain. Instead, blot up the spill. If the spot is already dry, use a spray bottle of half and half white distilled vinegar, and water to dampen the area. Let it sit for a minute or two and use a sponge to blot the moisture.

Cleaning your rug removes the stain guard coating.

Surprise!! Using anything to clean spots, aside from the vinegar and water mixture will remove the stain guard coating. This includes any type of spot cleaners, carpet cleaning solutions, and regular carpet cleaning service.

The stain guard coating wears off.

As you travel across your rug every day you are slowly removing the stain guard coating. With brand new carpet this coating should last approximately 2 year with light traffic (2 people), 1.5 years with medium traffic (family of 4), and 1 year with heavy traffic (+4 people, or 2-3 people with pets). Once the allotted time has elapsed it is time to clean. Remember to reapply the coating, or spots may set into stains, and wear will appear more quickly.

Carpets not cleaned when recommended may develop stains, and wear patterns.

Cleaning carpet cannot remove wear patterns. It is damage caused by friction as the carpet fibers are frayed apart by walk. The stain guard coating seals the fibers to help slow the development of wear patterns, leading to a longer carpet life.

Chapter 6: How to Remove Urine Odors

Every now and then we get a call from a customer that says, “I shampooed my carpet, and now it smells like urine.” The smell was not present prior to the cleaning leaving a frustrating situation for homeowners without pets, or one who didn’t smell urine prior to cleaning.

Why does it smell now?

Urine has a unique way of hiding. Carpets that contain dried urine don’t always smell because the concentration wasn’t high prior to cleaning or has been in the carpet long enough to air out. When water hits the carpet two things happen. First, the bacteria and ammonia in the urine reactivate. Second, the water causes the urine to spread out further. If the shampooing chemicals did not include products designed to treat for urine, or the wrong amount

of such a product was used, it can actually make the situation worse than it was prior to cleaning.

Removing the pet odor.

To remove the odor, you must treat it for it. Just like laundry, carpet is a fabric, and sometimes additional products are needed to remove odors. With urine problems you need a **pet odor neutralizer** designed to kill the bacteria and break down the ammonia. Once the urine has spread out treating it yourself is very difficult. You must treat everywhere the urine has spread to.

How do you find the spots?

In order to best treat the urine, you must know where the smell is coming from. One of the best ways to find the areas that have been affected is with a **black light**. Black lights are fantastic for highlighting any biological items on carpet and walls. (We recommend you check your walls with the black light and wash them down with a mixture of half and half white distilled vinegar and water if anything shows up.) It is also a good idea to stick your nose in the carpet, anywhere you place the black light illuminates as a potential hotspot, to confirm you have located the problem area.

Once you have located the problem areas you must use a product the right products. We recommend a product

called **Mister Max Anti-icky-poo (Link for purchase below)**. It is a high-quality pet odor neutralizer which is enzyme based. It is also safe, and biodegradable.

Here are the links where you can find both the Anti-icky-poo <https://amzn.to/2WtT's1W> and the black light <https://amzn.to/2JI0eLz> on Amazon. As an Amazon Associate we earn from qualifying purchases.

Treating for urine odor can get expensive even when you are doing it yourself. Hiring a professional cleaner will give you the best chances for fast effective results.

Pristine Carpet Cleaning offers odor treatments that are guaranteed. If you would like more information on our odor treatments, and costs please check out www.pristinecarpetcleaning-co.com. Our treatments will also work for human urine, which is sometimes an issue as well.

Chapter 7: Emergency Spot Tips

Every household has its share of spills and accidents. Most people do the right thing by trying to get to the spill quickly, but not knowing what to do can actually make the problem worse. When you spill a gallon of paint or a glass of wine on the carpet don't let it send you into a panic.

Keep your head, and you are much more likely to walk away happy with the results.

Also check out [4 Products to Never Use On Carpet.](#)

Spot “Do's & Don't's”

Do not scrub a carpet when a spill, or pet accident occurs. Scrubbing can fray the carpet fibers and push the item you are trying to remove in deeper.

Do absorb the spill by pressing a towel into the carpet to absorb the moisture. It is best not to use a colored towel as they can transfer color to the carpet.

Do not reach for store bought carpet cleaning products. These products typically recommend testing in a area for color fastness. That means they can actually remove the color from the carpet, and I am not talking about the wine. These products can bleach color from carpets and set stains, so, avoid them.

Do use a mixture of 1-part white distilled vinegar to 1 part water to remove most problem spots and spills around the house.

Do not add dish soap to the vinegar and water mixture.

Ink & Nail Polish

Proceed with caution these products can damage your carpet. You can use hairspray to remove both ink and nail polish. You can also use non-acetone nail polish remover for nail polish. Important: When you are done make sure

to use a mixture of vinegar and water (equal parts), to neutralize and remove the hairspray, or nail polish remover.

Dyes

Quickly, sop up the spot as much as possible, then pour distilled white vinegar directly on top of the spot. You can also use club soda. Let it sit for about 3 minutes and then towel up. Then mound cornstarch over the spot. The cornstarch will act as an absorbent and lift the moisture from the rug. Break up the cornstarch once it is dry and vacuum. You may need to brush the carpet with a scrub brush to loosen some of the cornstarch and vacuum again.

Vomit, Urine & Diarrhea

Shop vac the spot first. Then use a towel or paper towel to press down into the spot to absorb any remaining moisture if it is still wet. Spray on the 1 to 1 mixture of water and vinegar liberally, and let it sit for 2 minutes. Shop vac again, and or use a towel to blot up the the moisture. Do not scrub the area!

Blood

Warm salt water can remove blood. IMPORTANT: Make sure the salt is completely dissolved before applying it to the carpet or you run the risk of fraying your carpet fibers.

Red Wine

You can use white wine, club soda, or 1-part vinegar to 1 part water, to remove red wine as long as the spot is still wet. Dab up as much moisture as you can, and then pour a small amount of one of the mentioned liquids. Let sit about a minute and use a towel to press into the spot and absorb the moisture.

Paint

Follow these steps and get a carpet cleaner to your home the same day if possible.

1. Immediately use a shop vac to suck up as much paint as you can. Do not try to rub it around with a towel. This will force the paint further into the fibers and embedding it there.
2. For water-based paints take a spray bottle and spray water over paint. Use paper towels to sop it up. Do not rub, instead, blot it up pressing into the carpet. Keep repeating this process until the paint no longer transfers.
3. If the stain is still present but is no longer transferring to the paper towel, grab an old damp towel and set it on top of the spot. Keep it damp until your cleaner can get there. Do not walk on it or rub the carpet. If the paint dries the chances of it becoming permanent go up exponentially.

Keeping the carpet damp will not work for *oil-based paints*. These are very difficult to remove and are usually permanent.

Call us @ 303.993.6751 to schedule immediately.

Be aware that there is no guarantee we will be able to get the paint completely out. However, acting quickly greatly improves your chances.

Chapter 8: Remove Wax from Carpet

There is nothing quite a gut wrenching as dropping hot candle wax on a brand-new carpet. However, wax is pretty easy to remove. Whether the carpet is new, or not you will need three items to remove the wax.

- A hot iron set to Cotton.
- A large white terry cloth towel that you don't mind ruining. **Do not use a colored towel.**
- Water

While the iron is heating up take the terry cloth towel and immerse it in water. You want it wet not damp. Wring it out so it isn't dripping. Once you have wrung out the towel, place it over the wax spot. Start ironing. Keep the iron moving back and forth as if you are ironing a garment.

This is important because you don't want to scorch the carpet. As the wax starts to migrate to the towel, move it around so that you have a clean spot to work with.

It may take several minutes to completely pull the wax out. Once it has been removed take a clean portion of the towel and brush out the carpet to lift the nap back up.

Please note: Removing the wax may not remove colors left behind by the wax. Sometimes those colors may become permanent. The faster you act to remove wax, the less likely it is to stain the carpet permanently.

Chapter 9: Carpet Wrinkles

When you walk into a room of freshly laid carpet, you can't help but admire how beautiful it looks. However, carpet wrinkles can be unsightly and a tripping hazard. There are several reasons that a carpet can start to wrinkle starting with improper installation, to the backing of the carpet breaking down from use or improper care.

The backing of the carpet serves a very important role in the life of the carpet. The backing provides alignment, stability, shape, and protection. Over time this backing will wear down, but it can be accelerated by things we do in our day to day activities.

Everyday Wear & Tear

Hot water extraction can be a very good cleaning method. Yet, a well-documented drawback shows that hot water extraction leads to the breakdown of carpet backing. Cleaning too frequently is another common cause for carpet backing break down. On average, your carpets should not be cleaned more than twice a year.

Make sure your home cleaner is only used for spot cleaning, and do not go over the entire rug once a month. This will cause your carpet to wear out very quickly. A thorough cleaning is not the same as spot cleaning. Spot cleaning needs to be done when necessary, to prevent permanent spots and stains. Also, if you frequently like to change the configuration of your room, be sure to lift heavy furniture instead of dragging it across the carpet. Dragging heavy furniture can cause the backing to stretch or pull loose, which can eventually form little rolling hills or waves.

Dry cleaning the carpet is an effective method of cleaning and can actually extend the life of your carpet. Dry cleaning offers a wonderful cleaning option that has benefits that can help with preventing carpet wrinkling and other damage over time. Because dry cleaning uses less water, it slows the breakdown of your carpet backing. Also,

your carpet is less likely to develop mold and mildew problems. This leads to a healthier environment for your family.

Proper Installation Is Important

If the carpet is not stretched properly at installation; it may take months or even years before you start to notice a problem. One of these signs may occur when you get your carpets cleaned. If you notice more than a little wrinkling, chances are your carpets were not power stretched. Most present-day carpets require power stretching. A good way to check if your carpet has been installed correctly is to go to the center of the room with a pair of pliers, grab the carpet and lift it. If the carpet doesn't snap back down quickly when you let go it was not properly installed or stretched correctly.

If the carpet was not measured correctly for the space, you may have too much carpet in the area where the wrinkling occurs. When purchasing new carpets, be sure to check references and get several estimates. Have a couple of carpet layers measure your room to make sure you are getting the correct amount of carpet for your room.

Wrinkly carpets don't have to wrinkle your outlook. With proper installation and care, the beauty and life of your carpet will be extended.

Chapter 10: 4 Signs Your Carpet Needs to be Replaced

Is it time to replace the carpet?

Are you looking at your carpet and wondering if it is worth cleaning? Just because the carpet is dirty or has spots does not mean it is a lost cause. Here are 4 signs that will help you to determine if the carpet needs to be replaced.

Path That Looks Dirty After Cleaning

Traffic patterns are found in the main walk areas of the home. You will see a distinguishable path where you walk, from one area of your home to another. These are commonly located near the front door, hallways, or by the couch where you put your feet. Traffic areas that do not lighten after cleaning are a sign of damage. In these locations, the fibers may be worn and frayed apart. When they don't improve with current cleaning method, try a different method (every method does have its pros and cons). If they do not improve, then consider replacement.

Matted Carpet

Carpet that is matted cannot be fixed by cleaning. Fibers fray apart over time as they are walked on. Individual strands of the yarn pull apart and then mat together, like the hair on a shaggy dog when not brushed regularly. When it gets to a certain point the only thing left to do is shave the dog. When your carpets get to this point the only thing you can do is replace it.

Are there tears or is the carpet unraveling in different areas? Occasionally rips can be repaired. However, if the carpet has multiple tears, or is starting to unravel it is time to replace it.

A Heavy Odor that will not Respond to Treatment

Believe it or not, an odor doesn't always mean the carpet needs to be replaced. If the carpet still looks pretty good, then it may be salvageable. There are many products on the market now that allow cleaners to neutralize odors that you would think impossible.

Before cleaning, use a black light to check the walls and vents in your home when it is dark. Urine will show up under a blacklight. You may need to wash down your walls, baseboards, or have your vents cleaned. If the carpet

isn't very old, then it is worth attempting odor removal before replacement.

Treating for odor may take a few treatments. Make sure you check with the company you hire to see what their policy is on pet odor treatment. We will return as many times as needed within 30 days to treat for pet odor.

If you decide to replace the carpet, you may need to treat the floor with Kilz to seal it before laying a new floor. Kilz will prevent odors in the wood from coming up into the house.

Stains that will not Come Out

If you have stains that won't lift; look at the carpet and decide if you can hide it. Carpet that isn't that old, matted, and hasn't developed traffic patterns still has a lot of life.

You can choose to repair the carpet. A professional can cut out the spot and patch in a new piece of carpet. They can accomplish this by cutting a piece of carpet from a closet, or you may have a piece of carpet left over from your install. If they are experienced professionals, you shouldn't be able to see the lines in the patch.

Carpets with too many spots or showing excessive wear should be replaced. Treating spots as soon as they happen is the best way to prevent permanent stains.

If there are multiple stains that won't come out with cleaning, then it may be time to consider replacement.

11. Buying New Carpet

Selecting the right carpet is different for every family. There are many aspects to consider when you choose carpet. Some will depend on the type of use, allergies, preferences, and budget. Before you shop, there are a few important things you should know about carpet and the people who sell them.

Carpet salesman vs. Carpet Cleaner

If you are shopping for a new carpet, you might be surprised to know that an experienced carpet cleaner may not recommend the same kind of carpet as your carpet salesman.

A salesman only has the information provided by the manufacturer regarding durability. However, a carpet cleaner may know how well a carpet will hold up, depending on his experience.

Checking for Durability

Ninety percent of all carpets are made of synthetic fibers. Some have great stain resistant qualities, are fade resistant, and designed to withstand a lot of abuse. These are all

great qualities, but you also need a carpet that won't *bloom*, or fray easily.

A good way to assess a carpet is to remove a single strand from the carpet and untwist it. The strand should spring back without fraying. If it doesn't, the durability will be low, and the carpet will likely fray or bloom early on.

Types of Carpet Fibers

There are five types of carpet fibers that are used today. Each one has its advantages and disadvantages. Knowing the pros and cons before you go shopping will help you to pick the one that is best suited for your family.

Nylon is strong and resilient, resists stains and compression. It is the most widely used and comes in a wide range of colors. This carpet tends to have issues with static electricity, can be pricy, and may feel stiff.

Wool is natural, both strong and resilient. It offers softness and cleans up nicely. It also is fire resistant and an excellent insulator. However, many people with allergies are sensitive to the fibers. It can discolor or stain when improper chemicals are used. It also is prone to pilling.

Acrylic is a soft synthetic material that will not fade, and it resists insects and mildew. It is also easy to clean because of a natural ability to resist soil and oils. Acrylic is not fire resistant and can be difficult to extinguish. It also has problems with static electricity. Acrylic can also be blended with wool. If you have allergies to wool, be sure not to purchase a blend.

Polyester retains vibrant colors, is often made from recycled fibers, soft and comfortable and is stain resistant. It is also affordably priced, resistant to static electricity, and water resistant. Polyester comes up short in durability, and ease of cleaning. This carpet can matt easily under high traffic, and may show traffic patterns more easily than other fabrics.

Polypropylene Olefin is moisture, stain, and fade resistant. It repels static electricity and is mostly colorfast. However, it does not bounce back well after compression and does not do well in areas of high traffic such. It might be a good choice for a basement because it resists mildew and is moisture resistant, but it is not a good choice for high traffic areas like stairs and hallways.

Which carpet is best for you?

Before you go shopping ask yourself the following questions:

What is your budget?

Are there any allergies to fibers?

Do you have light or heavy traffic?

Are you okay with static electricity?

Is fire resistance important to you?

Do you need moisture resistance?

What kind of stain resistance do you need?

These questions should help you select the correct fibers when you are ready to purchase new carpet.

Additional things to consider

A family with pets and kids will do best with a fiber that resists stains and moisture. You should also choose a stronger density of carpet. The density will help the carpet hold its shape. Carpets that are dense and tightly tufted hold up better than less dense carpets. Stay away from low durability carpets when you have a lot of traffic.

You may have heard that Berber carpet has fantastic carpet durability. In truth, the carpet will last a very long time, however, it also has some large drawbacks.

Berber carpet is made of looped fibers. With normal use, dirt becomes trapped between the loops. Because dirt has half the cutting power of glass, it starts to cut away at the carpet fibers. Once this happens, a darkening occurs, and even when cleaned properly, the darkening will not go away. We do not recommend Berber carpet for families with high traffic.

Don't Skimp on Quality Padding

A good quality pad will help to slow down carpet wear and can extend the life of even a low-quality carpet.

Most pads are made of foam rubber. They break down over time and disintegrate. Pet proofing uses this type of material with a cellophane product applied to the surface. The purpose is to prevent urine from penetrating. Our experience has shown that urine will eventually burn

through, thus making this type of pad ineffective over time.

Unfortunately, instead of the urine staying in one location it will spread out more along the backing of the carpet. Padding is essentially foam and can crack and develop holes. If this occurs, urine can get trapped below the barrier, which will cause bacteria and mold growth.

It is essential if you have pet-proof padding to tell your carpet cleaner. A Pet-proof pad will change the way a carpet cleaner needs to be treated for pet urine issues.

Go shopping and enjoy your new carpet. We hope these tips help you to pick the best carpet to meet the needs of your family for years to come.