Product	
Supplier	Flooring2
Product Type	Broadloom Carpet
Number	SH
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Broadloom Carpet Care and Maintenance Guide

> **Document Version:** 1.2
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Important Notice

> **READ BEFORE USE**

This guide provides comprehensive care and maintenance information for broadloom (wall-to-wall) carpet, including wool. Following these guidelines will help preserve your carpet's appearance, extend its lifespan, and maintain warranty coverage. Always refer to your specific product's care instructions, as requirements may vary by manufacturer and product line.

> **WOOL AND WOOL-BLEND CARPET — READ FIRST**
>
> If your carpet is wool or a wool blend, go to the **Wool and Wool-Blend Carpet** section before treating any spill. Several treatments in the general stain table will damage wool. Wool also has its own vacuuming, cleaning and warranty rules. If your carpet is a blend, treat it as wool.

Disclaimer: This guide contains general recommendations based on Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) standards. We are not responsible for damage resulting from improper care, use of unapproved products, or failure to follow manufacturer-specific guidelines.

Quick Reference Card

Daily Care

Task	Frequency	Tools/Products
Vacuum high-traffic areas	Daily	CRI-approved vacuum, set for your pile type
Blot spills immediately	As needed	Clean white cloth, approved spot cleaner

> **Wool:** see the Wool and Wool-Blend Carpet section for vacuum settings and stain treatments. Do not use the general stain table.

Weekly Care

Task	Frequency	Tools/Products
Vacuum medium-traffic areas	2-3 times weekly	CRI-approved vacuum
Vacuum low-traffic areas	Weekly	CRI-approved vacuum
Inspect for spots and stains	Weekly	Visual inspection

Periodic Care

Task	Frequency	Tools/Products
Deep vacuum with slow passes	Monthly	CRI-approved vacuum, set for your pile type
Treat developing traffic patterns	Quarterly	CRI-approved cleaning solution
Professional hot water extraction	Every 12-18 months	Professional service (CRI-certified)

Routine Maintenance

Daily Care

Vacuuming - Your Most Important Maintenance Task:

Vacuuming is the single most effective way to maintain carpet appearance and longevity. Regular vacuuming removes dry soil before it works its way into carpet fibers, where it causes abrasion and permanent damage.

Proper Vacuuming Technique:

- Use slow, overlapping strokes (3-4 passes per area)
- Vacuum in multiple directions for cut pile styles
- Allow the vacuum to do the work—don't rush
- Empty the bag or canister when 2/3 full
- Check and clean the brush roll regularly

Frequency Guidelines by Traffic Level:

Traffic Level	Examples	Recommended Frequency
High Traffic	Entryways, hallways, in front of furniture	Daily
Medium Traffic	Living rooms, family rooms, bedrooms	2-3 times per week
Low Traffic	Guest rooms, formal rooms, closets	Weekly

Weekly Care

Spot Inspection:

- Walk through carpeted areas looking for new spots or stains
- Treat any spots immediately using the procedures in this guide
- Document any stubborn stains for professional attention

Edge and Corner Cleaning:

- Use crevice tool along baseboards
- Clean carpet edges where dust accumulates
- Address any matted areas near walls

Recommended Vacuum Features:

- □ CRI Seal of Approval certification
- □ Adjustable height settings for carpet pile depth
- □ Rotating brush or beater bar that can be turned OFF
- □ HEPA filtration (especially for allergy sufferers)
- □ Adequate suction

Match the brush to the pile, not to the fiber:

- **Loop pile, berber, cut-and-loop, frieze, shag, long pile** — suction only. Turn the brush off or fit a suction head. A brush fuzzes these constructions and pulls loops.
- **Thick soft cut pile** — highest height setting, so the brush only lightly touches.
- **Standard cut pile** — a soft brush at a raised setting is fine.

> **Wool:** do not select a vacuum for high sealed suction. Excessive suction fuzzes and shreds wool.

Monthly Care

Deep Vacuuming:

- Use slow, deliberate passes (3 passes for light soil, 5-7 for heavy soil)
- Vacuum under furniture edges
- Move lightweight furniture to vacuum underneath
- Focus extra attention on traffic patterns

Furniture Repositioning:

- Rotate furniture slightly to change traffic patterns
- Use furniture cups to prevent indentations
- Check for carpet crushing under heavy items

Spill and Stain Management

Immediate Response Protocol

> **Golden Rule:** The faster you respond to a spill, the better your chances of complete removal. Most spills can be removed if treated immediately.

Step 1: Contain the Spill

- Prevent the spill from spreading to a larger area
- For liquids, place clean towels around the perimeter
- For solids, prevent crumbling or spreading

Step 2: Remove Excess

- **Liquids:** Blot (never rub!) with clean, white absorbent cloths
- **Semi-solids:** Scrape gently toward the center using a spoon or dull knife
- **Solids:** Vacuum up dry particles, or let wet substances dry before vacuuming

Step 3: Clean the Area

- Apply a small amount of CRI-approved spot cleaner to a clean cloth (not directly on carpet)
- Work from the outer edge toward the center to prevent spreading
- Blot and lift—never scrub or rub
- Repeat until no more transfer occurs to the cloth

Step 4: Rinse and Dry

- Apply clean water to neutralize cleaning solution
- Blot thoroughly with dry cloths
- Place a weighted stack of white towels over area overnight
- Allow to dry completely (use fan if needed—typically 6-12 hours)

Common Stain Removal Guide

> **This table is for synthetic carpet (nylon, polyester, olefin, triexta). If your carpet is wool or a wool blend, use the Wool Stain Removal table in the Wool and Wool-Blend Carpet section instead. The ammonia and enzyme treatments below will damage wool.**

Stain Type	Treatment Method	Products to Use	Notes
Coffee/ Tea	Blot, apply solution, blot, rinse	CRI-approved spotter, or mix: 1 Tbsp white vinegar, 1 Tbsp dish soap, 2 cups warm water	Treat immediately; tannins can set quickly. NOT FOR WOOL — dish soap leaves a residue that re-soils
Red Wine	Blot excess, apply solution, blot	Club soda initially, then CRI-approved spotter	Never use white wine (old myth)
Fruit Juice	Blot, apply solution, blot	CRI-approved spotter with enzyme action	May require multiple treatments
Grease /Oil	Scrape excess, apply solvent, blot	Dry solvent-type spot remover	Test in hidden area first
Pet Urine	Blot, apply enzyme cleaner, extract	Enzyme-based pet urine neutralizer	Treat the pad if soaked through; may need professional attention. NOT FOR WOOL — use a wool-approved pet stain remover
Blood	Blot with cold water, apply solution	Cold water only, then ammonia solution (1 Tbsp to 1/2 cup water)	Never use hot water—sets protein stains. NOT FOR WOOL — ammonia destroys wool fiber
Ink (Ballpoint)	Blot with solvent, don't spread	Rubbing alcohol on cloth (test first)	Work from outside in; may need professional
Mud	Let dry completely, vacuum, then spot clean	Vacuum first, then CRI-approved spotter	Dried mud vacuums out much easier
Candle Wax	Freeze, scrape, iron residue	Ice cubes to harden, then warm iron over paper bag	Low heat only; bag absorbs melted wax

Stain Type	Treatment Method	Products to Use	Notes
Gum	Freeze, scrape	Ice cubes or commercial gum remover	Work carefully to avoid fiber damage

Stain Removal Best Practices

DO:

- □ Blot, never rub or scrub
- □ Work from the outside edge toward the center
- □ Use white cloths to avoid color transfer
- □ Test cleaning solutions in an inconspicuous area first (closet, behind furniture)
- □ Rinse thoroughly after using cleaning solutions
- □ Be patient—repeat treatments gently are better than aggressive scrubbing
- □ Keep a spot cleaning kit easily accessible

DON'T:

- □ Never let spills sit untreated—time is your enemy
- □ Never use excessive moisture—over-wetting damages carpet backing
- □ Never use harsh chemicals (bleach, drain cleaners, etc.)
- □ Never mix cleaning chemicals
- □ Never use colored cloths or printed paper towels
- □ Never apply heat to unknown stains (can set them permanently)

Wool and Wool-Blend Carpet

> **READ THIS INSTEAD OF THE STAIN TABLE ABOVE**

Wool is a protein fiber. Several treatments that are safe on nylon, polyester, olefin and triexta will damage it. This section replaces the Common Stain Removal Guide above and adds to the rest of this guide. If your carpet is a wool blend, treat it as wool.

Vacuuming Wool

The rule depends on how the carpet is made, not on the fiber.

Pile Construction	Vacuum Setting
Loop pile, berber, cut-and-loop	Suction only. Turn the rotating brush off or fit a suction head.
Long pile, frieze, shag	Suction only.
Thick soft cut pile	Highest height setting, so the brush only lightly touches the pile.
Standard cut pile	A soft brush at a raised height setting is acceptable.

- Use 3 passes for light soil and 5-7 passes for heavy soil. Do not use the 7-8 pass count given for synthetic carpet.
- Do not select a vacuum for high sealed suction. Excessive suction fuzzes and shreds wool.
- Adjust the beater height so the brush is not beating the carpet.

New wool carpet sheds. Loose surface fiber, mostly shearing clippings left from manufacture, works out over the first months. Vacuum lightly and frequently during the first week, then 2-3 times weekly until shedding eases.

Wool Stain Removal

> **Never use ammonia on wool.** Also avoid: enzyme cleaners not approved for wool, hydrogen peroxide, oxygen bleach, chlorine bleach, dish soap, laundry detergent, and any strongly alkaline cleaner.

Three rules for every wool spot:

- Use warm water, never hot.
- Never rub, scrub or brush. Rubbing raises a permanent fuzzy patch.
- Apply the cleaner to the cloth, never directly onto the carpet.

Wool detergent solution: 1 teaspoon of a mild detergent approved for wool plus 1 teaspoon of white vinegar in 1 quart of warm water. The detergent must contain no bleaches and no strong alkalies.

Stain Type	Treatment
Coffee/Tea	Blot. Cold water. Wool detergent solution. Rinse with warm water.

Stain Type	Treatment
Red Wine	Blot. Cold water. Wool detergent solution. Rinse.
Fruit Juice	Blot. Cold water. Wool detergent solution. Rinse.
Grease/Oil	Scrape. Mineral spirits on a cloth, then wool detergent solution. Never use a solvent on bonded (non-tufted, non-woven) carpet.
Pet Urine (fresh)	Blot. Wool-approved pet stain remover. Rinse thoroughly with clean water.
Pet Urine (old or set)	Professional only. Do not attempt.
Blood	Blot with cold water. Wool detergent solution. Rinse. No ammonia.
Ink (Ballpoint)	Rubbing alcohol on a white cloth. Hold on the stain 2 minutes. Blot. Repeat until no more transfers. Then wool detergent solution.
Mud	Let dry completely. Vacuum. Then wool detergent solution.
Candle Wax	Brown paper and a warm iron on low heat. Wool fiber only.
Bleach marks, rust	Professional only.

Deep Cleaning Wool

Professional hot water extraction is the correct method for wool. Do not substitute dry cleaning as the primary method.

- **Frequency:** every 12-18 months, or as your warranty requires.
- **Water temperature:** the solution must not exceed 150°F.
- **Jute backing:** hot water extraction must NOT be used on jute-backed carpet, which shrinks. Much wool broadloom is jute-backed. Confirm the backing before booking.
- **Do not use a rented or consumer extraction machine on wool.** These over-wet.
- **Over-wetting is the main cause of wool cleaning damage.** It causes slow drying, pile discoloration, browning from the backing, shrinkage and odor. Require fans and ventilation.
- **Technician:** a professional cleaner qualified in wool carpet care. Ask what wool-specific training they hold.

Between wet cleanings, absorbent dry compound cleaning of traffic lanes is recommended for wool. The prohibition on powdered cleaners elsewhere in this guide does not apply to these systems. All compound must be vacuumed out fully; residue left in the pile can itself cause browning.

Products for Wool

- **Products:** use cleaning products formulated for wool. Independent certification marks for wool products are a useful check - see Additional Resources.
- **pH:** every chemical touching wool, including spot cleaners, pre-sprays and in-tank extraction solutions, should be pH 5.5 to 8.0.
- **Do not apply an aftermarket protector to wool.** Silicone-containing repellents accelerate soiling, and a topical treatment applied after installation voids most wool warranties. Wool is naturally soil-resistant.

Moths and Carpet Beetles

Wool is a protein fiber and carpet pests eat it.

- Most wool carpet carries an insect-resist treatment applied during manufacture. This does not stop insects entering, and some populations have developed tolerance.
- Vacuum along baseboards, in corners and under furniture. Activity starts in undisturbed areas.
- Treat a small infestation with an insecticide extending about 6 inches beyond the visible activity.
- Call a pest control service for anything larger.

> **Check your warranty first.** Some wool warranties are voided by applying insecticides, and some cover wool rugs only, not wool broadloom.

Normal Wool Characteristics (Not Defects)

What You See	What It Is
Shedding	Loose surface fiber and shearing clippings. Can continue up to two years, and longer on wool than on synthetic carpet. Vacuum it out.
Pilling and fuzzing	Fiber ends bunching together. Corrected by professional shearing. Do not pull.

What You See	What It Is
Sprouting	A single tuft standing above the pile. Trim it level with sharp shears. Never pull it — that unravels the row. In woven loop pile, work a high loop flush with an awl instead of cutting.
Shading, pooling, watermarking	Light and dark patches caused by the pile lying in different directions. Permanent. Cleaning will not correct it. Every wool manufacturer classes this as normal.
First fade	Wool lightens noticeably in its first weeks of light exposure, then stabilizes.
Yellowing	Different from sun fading. Caused by changes in alkalinity and by cleaning solutions. Corrected professionally with a 10% citric acid solution.
Browning after cleaning	Usually the jute backing getting wet and drying slowly, not the wool. Do not attempt a correction. Call the cleaner back.

Deep Cleaning

DIY Deep Cleaning

Frequency: Every 6-12 months for light-use areas; more frequently for high-traffic areas

> **Do not use a rented or consumer extraction machine on wool carpet.** These over-wet, and over-wetting is the main cause of wool cleaning damage.

Important Warning: Many DIY carpet cleaning machines can cause problems if not used correctly:

- Over-wetting damages carpet backing and pad
- Soap residue attracts dirt faster than before cleaning
- Improper technique can spread stains

If You Choose DIY:

Materials Needed:

- □ CRI-approved carpet cleaning machine (rental or owned)
- □ CRI Seal of Approval cleaning solution
- □ Clean water for rinse passes
- □ Fans for accelerated drying
- □ Furniture blocks or foil squares

Procedure:

1. **Preparation**
   - Vacuum thoroughly (this is critical—don't skip)
   - Move furniture or protect legs with foil/blocks
   - Pre-treat spots and high-traffic areas
2. **Cleaning Process**
   - Use LESS solution than you think you need
   - Make overlapping passes
   - Extract thoroughly—multiple dry passes
   - Do not over-wet the carpet
3. **Drying**
   - Run extraction passes until minimal moisture recovered
   - Open windows, run fans, turn on HVAC
   - Do not walk on carpet until dry (12-24 hours)
   - Keep furniture off until completely dry

Professional Deep Cleaning

Recommended Frequency: Every 12-18 months (CRI recommendation), or as required by your warranty

> **Wool:** the same 12-18 month interval applies. Between wet cleanings, professional absorbent dry compound cleaning of traffic lanes is recommended.

When to Call a Professional:

- Visible traffic patterns or soil lines
- Stubborn stains you couldn't remove
- Before the cleaning becomes visible (proactive maintenance)
- Pet odor issues

- Annual deep cleaning for warranty compliance
- After any water damage or flooding

What to Expect from Professional Cleaning:

1. **Pre-Inspection**
   - Technician assesses carpet type and condition
   - Identifies spots and stains requiring special treatment
   - Discusses any areas of concern
2. **Pre-Treatment**
   - Application of traffic lane cleaner
   - Spot treatment of stains
   - Pre-spray with cleaning solution
3. **Hot Water Extraction (Steam Cleaning)**
   - Recommended by CRI as the most effective method
   - Hot water and cleaning solution injected deep into carpet
   - Powerful suction extracts soil, water, and solution
   - **Wool:** the solution must not exceed 150°F
   - **Wool:** must NOT be used on jute-backed carpet, which shrinks. Much wool broadloom is jute-backed — confirm the backing before booking
4. **Post-Treatment**
   - Application of protector (optional but recommended — **synthetic carpet only**; a topical treatment voids most wool warranties)
   - Grooming of carpet fibers
   - Placement of blocks under furniture
5. **Drying Time**
   - Typically 6-12 hours for carpet to dry
   - Avoid walking on carpet during this time

Industry Standards:

- CRI 100 (Residential Carpet Cleaning Standard)
- CRI 104 (Commercial Carpet Maintenance Standard)
- Look for IICRC-certified technicians
- **Wool:** use a professional cleaner qualified in wool carpet care

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Approved and Prohibited Products

Approved Products

Category	Approved Products	Notes
Daily/Spot Cleaner	CRI Seal of Approval certified spot removers	Check cri.org for current product list
Deep Cleaner	CRI Seal of Approval certified extraction cleaners	Use as directed—more is not better
Enzyme Cleaner	CRI-approved enzyme-based cleaners	For protein-based and pet stains
Protective Treatment	CRI-approved carpet protectors	Synthetic carpet only. Reapply after each professional cleaning. Do not apply to wool — see below

> **Wool:** use cleaning products formulated for wool. Every chemical touching wool — spot cleaners, pre-sprays and in-tank extraction solutions — should be **pH 5.5 to 8.0**. Independent certification marks for wool products are listed under Additional Resources.
>
> **Do not apply an aftermarket protector to wool.** Silicone-containing repellents accelerate soiling, and a topical treatment applied after installation voids most wool warranties. Wool is naturally soil-resistant.

Prohibited Products

> **WARNING:** Using prohibited products may void your warranty and permanently damage your carpet.

Product Type	Why It's Prohibited	Potential Damage
Bleach or bleach-containing cleaners	Destroys carpet dyes and fibers	Permanent color loss, fiber damage
Dish soap (except as directed)	Leaves sticky residue	Rapid re-soiling, attracts dirt
Laundry detergent	Designed for fabrics, not carpet	Residue buildup, fiber damage

Product Type	Why It's Prohibited	Potential Damage
Automatic dishwasher detergent	Highly alkaline, contains bleach	Color damage, fiber degradation
Ammonia on wool carpet	Damages wool protein structure	Fiber destruction
Powdered cleaners	Residue impossible to remove completely	Abrasive damage, residue buildup
Oxygen bleach	Can still affect certain dyes	Potential color change
Hydrogen peroxide	Bleaches natural fibers	Permanent color loss on wool
Optical brighteners	Alter fiber color	Voids most wool warranties
High-alkaline pre-sprays	Above pH 8 attacks wool protein	Color bleeding, yellowing, fiber weakening

> **Exception for wool:** absorbent **dry compound** systems (used by professionals on traffic lanes) are recommended for wool and are not covered by the powdered-cleaner prohibition above. All compound must be vacuumed out fully; residue left in the pile can itself cause browning.

Cleaning Equipment Guidelines

Approved Equipment:

- □ CRI Seal of Approval vacuums (Green Label certification)
- □ Professional hot water extraction machines (truck-mounted or portable)
- □ CRI-approved rental extraction machines (when used correctly)
- □ Low-moisture carpet cleaning systems (by trained professionals)

Prohibited Equipment:

- □ **Steam mops** - Not designed for carpet; over-wets and leaves residue
- □ **Bonneting machines** - Pushes soil deeper, doesn't extract; causes pile distortion
- □ **Dry foam machines** - Generally leaves excessive residue (**exception:** dry foam and encapsulation are recommended interim methods for wool when done professionally)
- □ **Stiff brushes or scrub brushes** - Damages carpet fibers, causes fuzzing

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Climate and Environmental Control

Temperature Requirements

Condition	Recommended Range	Acceptable Range	Risk if Exceeded
Room Temperature	65°F - 75°F (18°C - 24°C)	60°F - 80°F (15°C - 27°C)	Adhesive breakdown, backing shrinkage
During Cleaning	65°F - 80°F (18°C - 27°C)	Same	Improper drying, odor development

Humidity Requirements

Condition	Recommended Range	Acceptable Range	Risk if Exceeded
Relative Humidity	35% - 55% RH	30% - 65% RH	Too low: static, fiber brittleness; Too high: mold, mildew, odor

Humidity Management Tips:

- Use humidifiers in winter when heating dries air below 30% RH
- Use dehumidifiers in summer or damp basements
- Monitor humidity with a hygrometer
- Address any water intrusion or leaks immediately

Seasonal Considerations

Winter:

- Increase vacuuming frequency (salt and sand tracked in)
- Use walk-off mats at all entrances
- Monitor humidity levels (heating systems dry air)
- Watch for static electricity issues (indicates low humidity)

Summer:

- Increase vacuuming (windows open = more dust and pollen)

- Monitor for humidity spikes
- Watch for sun damage (fading)
- Address any mold or mildew odors immediately

Transition Seasons (Spring/Fall):

- Deep clean in spring after winter tracking
- Clean in fall before holiday entertaining
- Adjust humidity control as seasons change

Sunlight and UV Protection

- **Use window treatments** - Blinds, curtains, or UV-filtering film
- **Rotate furniture periodically** - Prevents uneven fading patterns
- **Apply UV-protective window film** - Reduces fading by up to 75%
- **Close blinds during peak sun hours** - Especially south-facing rooms
- **Accept some fading as natural** - All fibers fade somewhat with UV exposure

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Preventive Care Strategies

Furniture Protection

Furniture Leg Protection:

- Use furniture cups, coasters, or wide glides under all furniture legs
- Choose cups slightly larger than leg diameter
- Check cups quarterly for soil accumulation
- Replace cups when they become compressed

Heavy Furniture:

- Use furniture cups designed for carpet (wide base to distribute weight)
- Lift and reposition periodically to prevent permanent indentations
- Never drag furniture—always lift with helpers

Indentation Recovery:

- Place an ice cube in the indentation and let it melt
- As the moisture is absorbed, gently work the fibers upright
- Use a fork or carpet rake to lift compressed fibers
- Vacuum when dry

Entry Point Protection

Exterior Doors:

- Place coarse-textured walk-off mats outside entrances
- Use absorbent interior mats (minimum 4-6 feet of walk-off space)
- Clean or replace mats frequently—dirty mats redistribute soil
- Choose mat backing that won't stain carpet

Interior Traffic Flow:

- Use area rugs in high-traffic paths (hallways, in front of seating)
- Rotate area rugs to even wear patterns
- Ensure rug backing is breathable and won't discolor carpet
- Vacuum under area rugs regularly

Pet Care

Nail Maintenance:

- Keep pet nails trimmed to prevent snags and pulls
- Consider nail caps for persistent scratchers
- Use nail grinders for smooth edges

Accident Prevention:

- Take pets outside frequently
- Place waterproof pads under pet beds in case of accidents
- Clean accidents immediately using enzyme-based cleaners
- For set-in urine stains, professional treatment may be required

Pet Hair Management:

- Brush pets regularly to reduce shedding
- Vacuum with pet-specific attachments
- Use rubber squeegees or pet hair removers for stubborn areas
- Consider professional cleaning more frequently

Damage Prevention

Protect Against:

- **Tracked-in soil** - Use mats, remove shoes
- **Furniture damage** - Use appropriate protectors
- **Sun fading** - Window treatments
- **Moth and insect damage** - Regular cleaning, immediate treatment of any infestation
- **Stain damage** - Treat spills immediately

Room-Specific Guidelines

Kitchens

> **Note:** Carpet in kitchens requires extra vigilance

- Clean spills immediately—food and grease stains set quickly
- Consider runner rugs over carpet in work zones
- Keep spot cleaner accessible under the sink
- Address grease spatters promptly

Bathrooms

> **Generally not recommended:** Carpet absorbs moisture and is difficult to keep sanitary

If you have bathroom carpet:

- Ensure excellent ventilation (exhaust fans, open windows)
- Allow to dry thoroughly after showers/baths
- Watch for mold or mildew odors
- Consider replacement with hard surface flooring

Basements

- Monitor humidity levels continuously (target: 50% RH or lower)
- Use dehumidifiers as needed
- Watch for musty odors indicating mold/mildew
- Address any water intrusion immediately
- Consider professional mold remediation if odors persist
- Choose synthetic carpet and pad with moisture-resistant backing

High-Traffic Areas

- Vacuum daily
- Use area rugs in paths to absorb wear
- Rotate furniture to change traffic patterns
- Have professional cleaning more frequently (every 6-12 months)
- Consider applying carpet protector after each professional cleaning

Stairs

- Vacuum stairs weekly (more frequently for active households)
- Use proper stair vacuum attachments
- Watch for wear on nosings (edges of steps)
- Consider protective stair treads for heavy-use areas
- Professional cleaning may be challenging—budget for specialized service

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Troubleshooting Common Issues

Matting and Crushing

Symptoms:

- Carpet fibers lay flat instead of standing upright
- Appears worn or dull in traffic areas
- Pile doesn't spring back

Possible Causes:

- Heavy traffic without adequate maintenance
- Furniture compression
- Inferior carpet quality
- Improper vacuuming (not frequent enough)

Solutions:

- Use ice cube method to restore indentations
- Professional steam cleaning may restore some pile height
- Use a carpet rake to lift matted fibers
- More frequent vacuuming going forward

Prevention:

- Choose carpet with appropriate traffic rating for the area
- Vacuum regularly with beater bar
- Use furniture cups under heavy items
- Rotate furniture periodically

Fading or Color Loss

Symptoms:

- Uneven coloring, especially near windows
- Overall dull appearance compared to when new
- Distinct lines between exposed and protected areas

Possible Causes:

- UV sunlight exposure
- Atmospheric pollutants (ozone, nitrogen oxide)
- Cleaning products or household chemicals
- Natural aging of dyes

Solutions:

- Fading is generally permanent
- Professional cleaning may brighten overall appearance
- Area rugs can cover severely faded areas
- Replacement may be needed for severe cases

Prevention:

- Use window treatments to block UV light
- Install UV-filtering window film
- Rotate furniture to even exposure
- Avoid harsh cleaning chemicals

Sprouting and Fuzzing

Symptoms:

- Individual tufts or fibers standing above the pile surface
- Loose, fluffy appearance at surface

Possible Causes:

- Normal occurrence during initial "bloom" period (first year)
- Snagged fibers that pulled loose
- Manufacturing variation (not a defect)

Solutions:

- Carefully trim sprouting fibers level with scissors
- Never pull loose fibers—this creates larger damage
- If excessive, contact your retailer

Prevention:

- Normal occurrence—cannot be completely prevented
- Keep pet nails trimmed
- Avoid walking with damaged shoes or heels

Odors

Symptoms:

- Musty smell (indicates moisture problem)
- Chemical smell (off-gassing)
- Pet or organic odors

Possible Causes:

- Moisture trapped in carpet or pad
- New carpet off-gassing (normal for 1-2 weeks)
- Pet accidents (especially if soaked into pad)
- Spills not cleaned properly
- Mold or mildew growth

Solutions:

- Increase ventilation for new carpet odors
- Professional deep cleaning with enzyme treatment for pet odors
- Check for and address moisture sources
- May require carpet and pad replacement for severe mold/mildew

Prevention:

- Address spills immediately
- Maintain proper humidity levels
- Ensure adequate ventilation
- Professional cleaning annually

When to Seek Professional Help

Contact a flooring professional if you experience:

- Persistent odors that don't respond to cleaning
- Rippling, buckling, or bubbling
- Seams separating or edges unraveling
- Suspected mold or water damage
- Stubborn stains you've tried unsuccessfully to remove
- Heavy soiling beyond DIY cleaning capabilities
- Damage covered under warranty

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Cleaning Mistakes

Mistake	Why It's Harmful	Correct Approach
Rubbing or scrubbing stains	Spreads stain, damages fibers, pushes stain deeper	Blot gently, work from outside in
Using too much water or cleaner	Over-wets pad, causes mold, leaves residue	Use minimal moisture, extract thoroughly
Not testing cleaners first	Can cause color damage or residue	Always test in hidden area
Using household cleaners	Leave residue, may damage fibers or dye	Use products formulated for carpet
Waiting to treat spills	Stains set and become permanent	Treat immediately—within minutes
Infrequent vacuuming	Soil grinds into fibers causing wear	Vacuum high-traffic daily, all areas weekly
Using ammonia on wool	Destroys the wool protein structure	Cold water, then wool detergent solution

Mistake	Why It's Harmful	Correct Approach
Running a beater bar over loop-pile wool	Fuzzing, picks, pulled loops	Suction only; turn the brush off
Over-wetting wool	Slow drying, browning, shrinkage, odor	Professional extraction with fans and ventilation
Pulling a sprout	Unravels the row	Trim it level with sharp shears

Environmental Mistakes

Mistake	Why It's Harmful	Correct Approach
Allowing low humidity	Static, fiber brittleness	Maintain 35-55% RH
Allowing high humidity	Mold, mildew, odors	Use dehumidifier, address moisture sources
Ignoring sun exposure	Permanent fading	Use window treatments
Poor ventilation	Traps moisture and odors	Ensure adequate airflow

Protection Mistakes

Mistake	Why It's Harmful	Correct Approach
Not using entry mats	Tracks in soil and moisture	Use interior and exterior mats
No furniture protection	Causes crushing and indentations	Use appropriate cups and coasters
Allowing shoe traffic	Tracks in soil, grit, and contaminants	Remove shoes or use mats
Using improper area rug backing	Can stain or damage carpet	Use breathable, non-reactive backing

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Maintenance Schedule Checklist

Daily Checklist

- □ Vacuum high-traffic areas (entryways, hallways, living areas)
- □ Blot any spills immediately
- □ Check entry mats and clean if soiled

Weekly Checklist

- □ Vacuum all carpeted areas thoroughly
- □ Vacuum edges and corners with crevice tool
- □ Inspect for spots or stains and treat
- □ Check and empty vacuum bag/canister

Monthly Checklist

- □ Deep vacuum with slow, overlapping passes
- □ Move lightweight furniture to vacuum underneath
- □ Inspect traffic patterns for developing wear
- □ Check furniture cups and coasters
- □ Clean or replace entry mats

Quarterly Checklist

- □ Move and vacuum under all furniture
- □ Treat any developing traffic lane soiling
- □ Check for any needed repairs (loose seams, fraying)
- □ Rotate furniture slightly to change traffic patterns
- □ Apply spot treatment to high-traffic areas if needed

Annual Checklist

- □ Schedule professional hot water extraction cleaning
- □ Consider applying carpet protector (after professional cleaning)
- □ Inspect for any warranty-related issues
- □ Evaluate overall carpet condition
- □ Deep clean under all furniture and in closets

Warranty Considerations

Maintaining Warranty Coverage

To preserve your warranty coverage, you must:

- □ Follow manufacturer's care and maintenance guidelines
- □ Vacuum regularly using equipment appropriate to the carpet pile construction
- □ Have professional hot water extraction cleaning every 12-18 months
- □ Use cleaning products formulated for carpet and suitable for the fiber
- □ Maintain proper environmental conditions
- □ Address issues promptly
- □ Keep maintenance records and cleaning receipts
- □ **Wool:** have cleaning done by a professional cleaner qualified in wool carpet care

> **Wool — normal characteristics excluded from warranty:** shading, pile reversal, pooling and watermarking; shedding; pilling and fuzzing; sunlight fading; crushing. These are normal for wool and are not manufacturing defects. See Normal Wool Characteristics in the wool section.

Actions That May Void Warranty

- Using unapproved cleaning methods or products
- Failure to clean as recommended
- Improper installation (DIY without following guidelines)
- Physical damage or abuse
- Exposure to harsh chemicals
- Failure to address water damage promptly
- Using prohibited equipment (bonneting, steam mops)
- **Wool:** applying ANY topical treatment after installation — stain resists, anti-statics, insecticides, optical brighteners

Documentation Recommendations

Keep records of:

- □ Original purchase receipt with date and retailer
- □ Product identification (style name, color, warranty documents)
- □ Professional cleaning receipts with dates and methods used
- □ Any warranty claims or correspondence
- □ Photos of any issues for warranty claims

Additional Resources

Industry Associations

- **Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI)** - carpet-rug.org
  - Seal of Approval product listings
  - Cleaning standards and guidelines
  - Consumer information
- **Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC)** - iicrc.org
  - Certified cleaner directory
  - Cleaning standards
- **The WoolSafe Organisation** - woolsafe.org
  - Approved product directory for wool (re-checked annually)
  - Wool stain removal guide
- **Restoration Industry Association (RIA)** - restorationindustry.org

- Wool-care specialist directory

Certification Programs

- **CRI Seal of Approval** - Certified vacuums and cleaning products (carpet-rug.org/seal-of-approval)
- **IICRC Certified Technicians** - Professional cleaning certification
- **WoolSafe Approved** - Products independently tested for use on wool
- **RIA Wool-Care Specialist** - Wool cleaning certification

Where to Find Help

- **Product-specific questions:** Contact the manufacturer
- **Care product recommendations:** Visit carpet-rug.org for CRI-approved products
- **Professional cleaning services:** Seek IICRC-certified professionals
- **Warranty questions:** Contact your flooring retailer

Fiber-Specific Care Considerations

Different carpet fiber types have unique characteristics and care requirements:

Fiber Type	Characteristics	Special Care Notes
Nylon	Durable, resilient, excellent wear resistance	Most versatile for cleaning; can lose stain resistance over time—consider reapplying protector
Polyester	Excellent stain resistance, soft feel, vibrant colors	May mat or crush in high-traffic areas faster than nylon; avoid harsh chemicals
Wool	Luxurious, naturally soil-resistant, excellent appearance retention	Keep all cleaning chemicals at pH 5.5-8.0 (manufacturer requirement); never use ammonia; no aftermarket protector. See the Wool and Wool-Blend Carpet section — wool has its own vacuuming, stain, cleaning and warranty rules.
Olefin/Polypropylene	Moisture and mildew resistant, colorfast	Can attract oily soils; clean oil-based stains promptly; lower melting point—avoid heat
Triexta (PTT)	Soft, stain resistant, resilient	Generally easy to maintain; follow manufacturer guidelines

> **Important:** Always verify your carpet's fiber type and follow manufacturer-specific recommendations, as care requirements can vary even within the same fiber category.

This care and maintenance guide is provided for general reference based on Carpet and Rug Institute recommendations.