

1-1-2002

Do You Have Tips On Removing Stains From Carpet?

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Recommended Citation

Biers, Karen, "Do You Have Tips On Removing Stains From Carpet?" (2002). *All Archived Publications*. Paper 291.
http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_histall/291

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A weekly question/answer column

Do You Have Tips On Removing Stains From Carpet?

Karen Biers answers:*

Because most newer carpet has been given a stain resistant treatment, it is easier than ever to get rid of spots before they become permanent. Be prepared for spills by having the necessary cleaning solutions on hand as well as a clean white, absorbent cloth or white paper towels with no printing. Consider these stain removal tips.

- When treating a stain, be sure to blot the area rather than scrub. Scrubbing can cause pile distortion, fiber damage and may cause the stain to spread. For semi-solids, gently scrape with a rounded spoon. Hard scraping with a sharp knife can break fiber and damage the pile. Solid spills should be broken up and vacuumed until completely removed. If the spill is still fresh, blot the area with a dry white cloth or white paper towel until you have removed as much of the spill as possible. If a stain remains, use a spot removal agent.
- Pretest any spot removal agent in an inconspicuous area to make certain it will not damage the fiber or dye. To test, apply several drops of the removal solution and hold a white cloth on the wet area for 10 seconds. Check the carpet and the cloth to determine if there is any color transfer, color change, or damage to the fiber. If you notice any changes, try a different solution. The Carpet and Rug Institute's world wide web site (www.carpet-rug.com) gives cleaning solutions for a variety of stains.
- Once you have determined the best solution for your carpet, apply a small amount to a white cloth and work gently into the stain. Work from the edge of the stain to the center to prevent the stain from spreading. Blot with a white cloth or towel. Continue using the cleaning solution until there is no more transfer of the stain to the cloth or towel.
- When the stain is completely removed, rinse the area thoroughly with cool water and blot with a dry white cloth or towel until all the solution has been removed. Rapid soiling of the carpet may occur if the cleaning solution is not completely removed. Several rinses are often necessary to thoroughly remove cleaning solution residue. A mist sprayer may be used to help prevent over-wetting of the area.
- Once the cleaning solution has been removed, place a one-half inch layer of white paper towels over the dampened area. Weight the towels with a flat, heavy object. Continue to change the towels until they no longer absorb moisture.

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