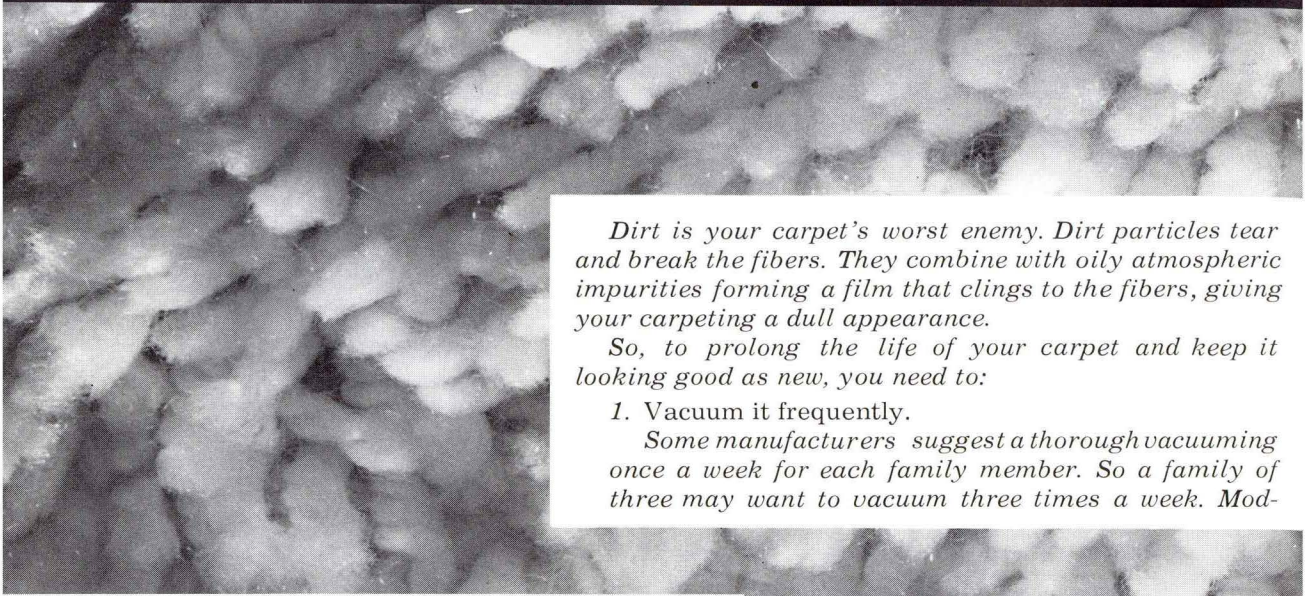


# **carpet care**

Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50010

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# Vacuum



*Dirt is your carpet's worst enemy. Dirt particles tear and break the fibers. They combine with oily atmospheric impurities forming a film that clings to the fibers, giving your carpeting a dull appearance.*

*So, to prolong the life of your carpet and keep it looking good as new, you need to:*

*1. Vacuum it frequently.*

*Some manufacturers suggest a thorough vacuuming once a week for each family member. So a family of three may want to vacuum three times a week. Mod-*

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# shampoo

*erate to heavy traffic areas may need vacuuming daily.*

2. Clean up spots and spills immediately.
3. Shampoo it only as often as needed.

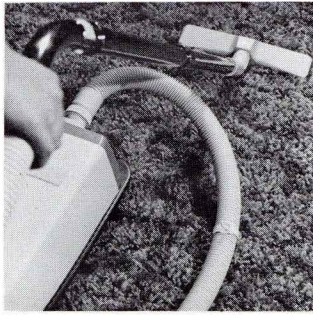
*Shampooing may be hard on carpet fibers. Therefore, it should be done infrequently, perhaps once every three or four years. In some situations shampooing is needed more frequently and in some, less frequently. Light colored carpeting may need more frequent shampooing than darker colored carpeting.*

## AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

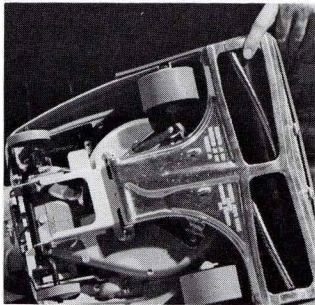
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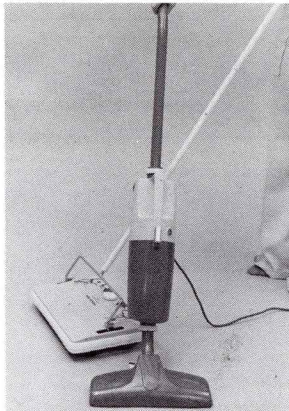
# vacuum



Tank type vacuum with straight suction.



Beater bar helps vacuum clean deeper.



Sweeper (left) and light-weight vacuum. Other styles are available.

Generally, there are two types of vacuum cleaners (although some are a combination of both):

## 1. Straight suction

- It adequately removes dust and litter on the carpet surface.
- It is convenient to use in hard-to-reach places, such as under counters and furniture.
- Some manufacturers recommend it for long shags because straight suction does not harm long fibers. (Some uprights feature adjustable heights to accommodate longer shags.)
- You have to vacuum more frequently with a straight suction vacuum than with the beater type.

**CAUTION:** Often the nozzle of the suction-type cleaner is equipped with a metal or plastic comb. Although these combs are helpful in opening the pile of a *cut* pile carpet, they can snag, cut or tear the face yarn of a *looped* pile carpet to produce a fuzzy surface.

## 2. Suction with beater bar

In addition to suction, a beater opens the pile of the carpet and shakes the dirt loose. Thus, dirt deeper down in the carpet is sucked up by the vacuum. Manufacturers recommend using this kind on sculptured, plush, and level loop carpeting.

**LIGHTWEIGHT VACUUM:** This appliance is handy to use in the kitchen on level loop carpeting or on indoor-outdoor carpeting. However, it doesn't have enough power to remove embedded dirt or to clean carpets with longer tufts.

**SWEEPER:** This cleaner works less thoroughly than the lightweight vacuum. It only picks up surface litter.

## SHAG RAKE

With the advent of long shags came a device called the "shag rake." It is designed to fluff up the pile of long shags and keep them from matting. Using it keeps the dirt from accumulating in one specific spot but, of course, does not remove dirt.

# shampoo

After a period of time, even with consistent vacuuming, you will probably want your carpet to have a thorough cleaning. Professional cleaning is best. However, home cleaning methods used properly are adequate. There are two types of home cleaning methods. *For both you need to use a powerful vacuum cleaner to remove cleaning residue.*

Note: Before shampooing carpet, place wax paper or plastic bags under legs of furniture that can't be moved from the room to prevent possible staining.

1. The dry powder method

A number of powder-type cleaners are available. Manufacturers' directions for using these materials should be followed carefully.

*Advantages*

Minimum texture distortion  
Good removal of greasy soil  
No color bleeding  
No dry time

*Disadvantages*

Cleans only top of carpet strand  
  
Difficult to remove all the dry cleaning powder

2. The wet method

Two types are available:

a. Liquid shampoos sold specifically for carpets.

*Advantages*

Provides deeper cleaning

*Disadvantages*

Requires drying time  
Overwetting may cause backing to become wet. Color from it may cause browning on carpet surface.

b. Foam spray shampoos. With these you spray a thin layer of foam on the carpet, sponge it with a sponge mop and then vacuum when dry.

*Advantages*

Quick, convenient method

*Disadvantages*

May be difficult to remove all residue after dry  
Overwetting may cause carpet to brown.

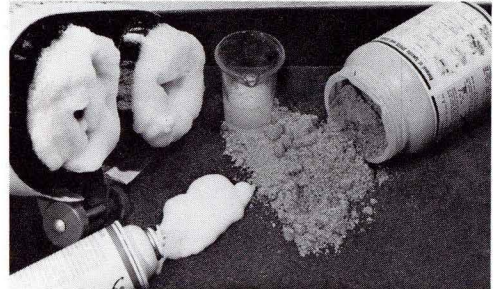
## FINAL CLEANING STEPS:

—After shampooing brush the pile with a long-handled brush or sponge mop to raise the nap and help speed drying. All final strokes should be in the same direction for the best appearance.

Note: Rake shag carpeting while still damp with a plastic shag rake.

—Allow the rug or carpet to dry overnight, if possible. An electric fan may be used to speed drying. If the rug must be walked on before it is dry, protect it with towels. (Some foam cleaners, however, require less drying time and may be dry and ready to walk on in 2 to 4 hours.)

—When the rug is completely dry, va-



Examples of shampooing agents sold for carpeting.

cuum thoroughly to remove loosened dirt and detergent residue.

—Frequent light vacuuming for the first few days after shampooing will fluff the pile and improve the appearance of the rug or carpet.

## SPOTS AND SPILLS

Scrape or blot up excess immediately.  
Work from outer edge inward to avoid spreading.

### FOR GENERAL SPILLS:

Beat together *one teaspoon liquid dishwashing detergent* with *one cup warm water*. Use foam.

or

Use commercial dry cleaning solution.

### FOR ACID-BASED STAINS:

(fruit juices, milk, catsup) Beat together *one tablespoon white vinegar*, *one teaspoon liquid dishwashing detergent*, and *three cups water*. Use foam.

Interchange blotting with solution and blotting with a dry towel. Overwetting can cause browning. Repeat as many times as necessary. Do not allow to dry naturally. Dry with a towel.

If you cannot remove, consult a professional rug cleaner.



*Prepared by Maridel Kumbier, extension applied art specialist,  
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