

# Wool Carpet Care Guide

*Simple Solutions for Maintaining Wool Carpets*

2024

Wool has been carpeting our homes since 2000 BCE.

Wool is flame retardant thanks to its high nitrogen and water content.

Wool is resilient thanks to its bouncy, coil-like structure.

Wool is easy to clean thanks to a protective membrane that repels dirt and stains.

Wool is 100% biodegradable in soil and in water.



**IW  
TO**   
International Wool  
Textile Organisation

## CARING FOR WOOL CARPETING IS EASIER THAN YOU THINK

This wool carpet care guide has been compiled by an expert group of wool experts in consultation with WoolSafe®, an organisation devoted to advanced research in care and maintenance of wool products.

The guide addresses the benefits of preventive care, routine maintenance, and restorative cleaning.

### CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Regular care and maintenance extend the value and the life of your carpet. When establishing a carpet care routine, it's important to consider the carpet's construction, its exposure to wear and tear, foot traffic patterns, and the desired appearance of the carpet over time.

#### *Preventative & Routine Maintenance*

The goal with all wool carpeting is to minimize exposure to soiling. Most soiling is tracked onto a carpet from the outside or occurs because of liquid spills which may result in staining.

As a preventative measure, barrier mats may be placed at entrances and exits to the carpeted area. Barrier mats minimize the amount of soil tracked onto carpets. In commercial buildings, positive air pressure from the filtered air circulation system will aid in preventing dirt from settling in.

Otherwise, preventative maintenance is as simple as regular and thorough vacuum cleaning. Pay particular attention to areas around and under furniture that is not moved frequently, and along base boards.

Extra attention should be given to areas exposed to food, animal, or plant substances, as insect damage can occur. Spills and staining should be addressed as soon as possible using an appropriate low-moisture spot cleaning technique.

#### *Restorative Cleaning*

Periodic restorative or "deep cleaning" is recommended to maintain the look and value of wool carpeting over time. The frequency of restorative cleaning will depend on the effectiveness of routine maintenance and the carpet's location, colour, pattern, and overall rate of soiling.

Restorative cleaning should only be undertaken by a professional carpet cleaner with experience in wool carpeting. Restorative cleaning typically includes hot water extraction and steam cleaning with an aim at restoring the wool carpet to as clean a condition as possible. Restorative cleaning uses water-based cleaning methods that remove accumulated and embedded dirt at a higher intensity than the ones used for routine cleaning. With wet cleaning, it is important to avoid over-wetting the carpet as this may lead to re-soiling and carpet discolouration.

Experts recommend seeking advice from a qualified professional cleaner.



## GENERAL ADVICE

- Address spills or stains promptly. Removing a fresh stain is always easier than removing an old stain.
- Refer to the stain guide to determine if you should treat the stain yourself. In case of extensive or old, set-in stains, consult a professional cleaner with experience in wool carpets.
- Always contain and gather up as much of the soil/stain as possible before applying any treatment or cleaner.
- Always pre-test any treatment or cleaner in an inconspicuous area of the carpet before treating the stain.
- Always apply treatment or cleaner with a cotton cloth, never directly on the stain. Wear rubber gloves.
- Never use cleaning products not intended for carpet as they may leave sticky residues that cause rapid soiling.
- Use small quantities of treatment or cleaner at a time. Two or three light applications are more effective than a single large application.
- Ensure not to over wet the carpet.
- Always work from the edge of the stain towards the middle. This avoids spreading the stain.
- Blot, never rub or scour.
- Use cleaning products with care and ensure good ventilation.
- Rinse out water-based treatments and cleaners with clean water.

## SOILING

Wool carpet is exposed to two main types of soiling (dirt), each requiring a different maintenance approach.

### *Particle soiling*

Particle dirt such as coarse grit, sand, soil, coffee grinds and other particles require regular vacuum cleaning with a soft bristle mechanical brush. Regular vacuum cleaning removes particle dirt imbedded in the roots of the carpet tufts.

### *Liquid soiling*

Liquid dirt such as grease, oil, rust, wine, blood, crayons, and other liquid-like spills require low moisture cleaning using an appropriate cleaning product. Remember that if the liquid stain is fresh, you may be able to treat it yourself following our care guide. If it's an old or dried stain, consult a professional with experience in wool carpeting.

*Image Source: Campaign for Wool/Wilton Royal Charter/Plain Loop*



## ABOUT CLEANING METHODS

There are no hard and fast rules on which cleaning technique is the best for wool carpets and no technique is foolproof. It depends largely on the carpet's construction, the degree and type of soiling and the level of experience of the cleaner.

When in doubt, consult a professional cleaner with experience in wool carpeting.

### *Vacuum Cleaning*

Many models of vacuums have overly stiff roller-brushes with overly powerful suction that can fuzz and shred wool fibers. A soft touch, non-abrasive rotating brush on a vacuum with varying brush height settings is recommended. This removes shedding fibers while not damaging the carpet pile itself.

### *Low Moisture Spot Cleaning*

Spills and staining should be addressed as soon as possible using an appropriate low-moisture spot cleaning technique. Ensure the products in your cleaning kit are compatible with the carpet installed. Applying them must not cause colour bleeding, bleaching, or other damage.

Spot removal products must be used in accordance with their safety instructions. Always test products following the manufacturer's guidelines and refer to the Spot Removal Guide for step-by-step instructions.

### *Wet Cleaning*

Professional wet cleaning has many positive effects on the texture and appearance of carpets. It lifts the carpet pile, improves tuft definition, improves hygiene, and reduces or removes allergens.

Damage to carpets in wet cleaning usually relates to over-wetting, too much mechanical agitation and/or the use of unsuitable cleaning products.

Experts do not recommend home-steam machines as they are most often designed with synthetic carpets in mind.



## CLEANING PRODUCTS

The basic requirements of cleaning chemicals on wool carpets are:

- Low alkalinity
- Non-sticky residue on drying
- Good cleaning power
- No added bleaches, dyes etc.
- Safe to use and safe once applied to the carpet

The reasons for these requirements are:

- High alkalinity can cause colour bleeding with dyed yarns, jute back staining of pile surface in light-coloured carpets, and, in extreme cases, yellowing and weakening of wool fibres.
- Sticky residues cause quicker re-soiling.
- Poor cleaning power necessitates excessive mechanical agitation of the pile and added risk of pile distortion.
- Additives can cause uneven cleaning, bleaching or a change of colour.

Some commercially available carpet cleaning products do not conform to one or more of the above requirements.

WoolSafe® is a global approval programme for wool carpet maintenance products. All products tested and approved under this programme carry the WoolSafe® Approved mark.

It is also recommended to consult with your carpet dealer or directly with the manufacturer for further advice.

Visit WoolSafe® to learn more:

<https://www.woolsafe.org/woolsafe-approved-carpet-care-products/consumer-products/>



## SPOT REMOVAL GUIDE

SPILL TYPE	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4
Beer	2			
Bleach, rust, or old urine stain	7			
Blood	2	8	11	17
Burn or scorch marks	5	1		
Butter and cream	3	9	15	17
Candle wax	6	13	9	17
Chewing gum	4	13	9	15
Chocolate, cocoa	3	9	15	17
Coffee, cola, syrup, or tea	2	9	16	15
Dirt, soil, or mud	1	10	16	
Egg	3	10	11	17
Feces, vomit	3	11	15	17
Felt-tip pen	9	16	15	17
Fruit juice	2	9	16	17
Furniture polish	2	9	16	17
Glue, adhesive	14	13	16	17
Gravy, sauces	3	9	15	17
Ink (fountain)	2	8	9	15
Ink (ballpoint pen)	12	16	9	15
Lipstick	3	9	12	
Metal polish	2	9	15	17
Milk	2	8	11	19
Mustard	3	9	15	17
Oil, grease	2	13	16	17
Paint (emulsion)	3	8	16	17
Shoe polish	1	7		
Nail varnish	14	16	17	
Paint (oil)	3	13	16	15
Soot or pollen	18	1		
Tar (asphalt)	3	13	16	17
Urine (fresh stain)	2	11	15	17
Wine (red and rosé)	2	9	15	17

## TREATMENT PLAN

1	Vacuum clean thoroughly when area is dry.
2	Blot up as much of the spill as possible using a clean cloth or paper towel.
3	Scoop up as much of the spill as possible with a spoon or blunt knife then blot with paper towel.
4	Freeze with ice cubes in a plastic bag and use a task-specific chewing gum remover and scrape.
5	Rub gently with a coin and brush off.
6	Place brown paper on spot and heat gently with iron on low heat (100% wool fibre only).
7	Seek assistance from a professional cleaner.
8	Apply clean water to a white cloth and blot. Repeat until no more stain transfers to the cloth.
9	Apply a pre-tested spot remover to a white cloth and blot.
10	Apply a pre-tested carpet shampoo.
11	Apply a pre-tested pet stain remover.
12	Apply rubbing alcohol carefully to the area of the stain only, leave for 5 minutes and blot.
13	Apply mineral spirits to the area of the stain only, leave for 5 minutes and blot.
14	Apply acetone or lanolin-free nail polish remover carefully to the area of the stain only, leave for 5 minutes & blot.
15	Repeat the blotting with clean warm water again to remove any residues.
16	Blot with clean white cotton cloth or paper towel and repeat application and blotting if necessary.
17	Dry the treated area with white cloth or paper towel and align the pile.
18	Place sticky tape on top and peel back, repeat.
19	Apply a pre-tested disinfectant or deodorizer.

*Image Source: Campaign for Wool/Wilton Royal Charter/Berber Loop*

