

How to clean an area rug

Area rugs can quickly make your house feel more like home, but with regular foot traffic, they really take a beating! Is your rug in need of some TLC? Learn how to clean it easily and keep it looking fresh for longer:

Supplies you'll need

- Mild, dye-free detergent or rug shampoo
- White vinegar
- Baking Soda
- Rubbing alcohol
- Soft bristle brush or sponge
- White cloths

Before following any recommendations below, check the tag on the back of your rug for specific cleaning instructions. When in doubt, reach out to a reputable cleaner for help. Delicate materials such as animal hide, silk, or viscose should only be cleaned professionally.

If possible, take your rug outdoors for cleaning. Otherwise, set up a cleaning station in an area where you don't mind accumulating water runoff.

1. Vacuum

It's important to vacuum both sides of your rug to thoroughly remove dirt and debris. Do not use a beater bar.

2. Mix and test your cleaner

If you choose to use a rug shampoo, follow the manufacturer's mixing instructions. Otherwise, mix one part vinegar to two parts warm water and add a teaspoon of mild detergent. Before applying your cleaning solution, test it on an inconspicuous area to make sure the colors don't run.

3. Apply solution to the entire rug surface

Use your soft bristle brush or sponge to work the cleaning solution into the fibers of the rug. Allow it to sit for at least five minutes before moving on to the next step.

4. Thoroughly rinse

If you are cleaning your rug outdoors, rinse the solution with a garden hose until the water runoff is clear. Otherwise, use buckets of clean water.

5. Remove excess water and air dry

Using a wet/dry vacuum or squeegee, remove as much water as possible. Lay your rug across a raised surface or over a fence and allow one side to dry completely before flipping it to dry the other side. Depending on the material type and size of the rug, this may take anywhere from a few hours to a couple of days.

6. Vacuum again

After drying, you may notice some stiffness due to fiber shrinkage during the cleaning process. Vacuum the surface of your rug to loosen them up.

Cleaning Fresh Spills

Fruit Juice

First, grab a clean white cloth and blot up as much of the spill as possible. Mix 1 tablespoon of detergent with 2 cups of warm water. Using a sponge or a new cloth, apply the solution directly to the soiled area. Rinse with cold water. Repeat the process until the stain is gone.

Red Wine

Using a clean white cloth, blot up as much of the liquid as possible. Mix equal parts detergent and white vinegar with two parts warm water. Dip a second cloth into the mixture and dab it onto the stained area, then rinse with cold water. Repeat until the stain is gone.

Ketchup/Gravy

Use a dull butter knife or spoon to carefully scrape away as much of the condiment as possible. Sprinkle baking soda on the spot and let it sit for 15 – 30 minutes, then vacuum it up. Follow by blotting the area with a mixture of ¼ cup of detergent and 1 cup of warm water. Rinse with cold water.

Glue

If the glue has dried, press a warm, damp towel to the spot to loosen it. Then, soak a clean cloth with rubbing alcohol and lay it over the spot for at least 15 minutes before blotting it clean.

Pen Ink

Soak a corner of a clean cloth with rubbing alcohol and blot the area. Let it sit for at least 30 minutes. Follow with a vinegar and warm water rinse.

Note: Always perform a spot test before applying any mixture to the entire soiled area. For any other spills not listed here, or for stubborn stains, we recommend reaching out to a reputable rug or carpet cleaner.