

CARPET CARE TIPS

VACUUMING

Frequent vacuuming with a wool beater bar type vacuum will prolong the life of the carpet. You can never over-vacuum carpet. A beater bar used on wool or some berbers, may damage the carpet. Check manufacturers recommendations for wool and berber carpets.

CLEANING

You must maintain carpet for it to maintain its appearance. Each fiber manufacturer recommends cleaning of carpet on a regular basis. A good rule of thumb is every 12 to 18 months, depending on traffic and your environment. Spot cleaning of pivot points, such as doorways into kitchens, bathrooms and entry ways, will go a long way to maintaining the overall appearance of your carpet. Refer to the cleaning brochure of the particular fiber, for which cleaning system to use. Most stain-resist treated fibers have toll free numbers to call for cleaning instructions for a hard to remove spill or stain. They have warranty handouts that contain instructions for everyday spills and stains. Shaw Industries recommends the hot water extraction method.

The toll free "help line" number are as follows:

| | |
|---------|----------------|
| Invista | (800) 4-DUPONT |
| Solutia | (800) 633-3208 |
| Anso | (800) 441-8185 |
| Shaw | (800) 441-SHAW |

STAIN REMOVAL

No carpet is stainproof. Most carpets are treated with a stain-resist treatment, but in all cases immediate clean up is essential. Absorb as much liquid as possible, quickly, with paper towels, etc., replacing them as they become saturated. Use a blotting action, never a scrubbing motion, to prevent fuzzing of the carpet surface.

Be aware that certain household products, such as colored powdered beverages, frozen fruit-flavored bars and some liquid medications, contain a red food dye that is very difficult, if not impossible, to remove from carpet. Household cleaners such as bleaches, tile cleaners, mildew removers, etc., will cause permanent discoloration. In addition, acne medications containing benzoyl peroxide, will permanently stain carpet.

FIBERS

All carpet begins with fiber, either natural fiber like wool or one of three synthetic fibers:

| Natural Fibers | Synthetic Fibers | | |
|----------------|------------------|-----------|--------|
| Wool | Nylon | Polyester | Olefin |

While due to advertising of brand names, there may seem to be a long list of different fibers, there are actually only the above four basic types of carpet fibers. Occasionally two or more synthetic fibers may be mixed together to form a blend.

FIBER BRAND NAMES

Some confusion had developed because specific fibers are given brand names by their manufacturers. These brand names are sometimes advertised, however, they are only names given to the basic three synthetic fibers for recognition purposes. Despite the many names you hear, there are only the basic four - three man made and one natural (wool).

| Nylon | Polyester | Olefin |
|--|-------------------------|---------------|
| "Anso" Crush Resister, Caress, Wear-Dated II or Solutia, Durasoft, Luxura, Xtra-Life, Stainmaster-Plus, Tactesse | Clear Touch Corterra | Polypropylene |

UNBRANDED FIBERS

Just as you will find generic soup, paper towels and soap in the grocery store, unbranded or generic fibers are used in carpet manufacturing. Just like the brand names, these fibers are from the same three synthetic fibers discussed above. These fibers have the same characteristics, benefits and weaknesses as fibers with brand names. However, the warranty packages and consumer support may vary from branded to unbranded.

FIBER TYPES AVAILABLE

NYLON FIBER

Nylon carpet accounts for approximately 65% of all carpet sold in the United States today. Nylon is easy to dye and heat set, making it very versatile and available in more colors and styles than any other fiber. Nylon is the best fiber in high traffic areas because it has outstanding resistance to abrasion and crushing. Most nylons are treated to be permanently stain and static resistant for excellent soil resistance, ease of cleaning and appearance retention. These anti-stain treatments have been in use since 1986 and they work very well.

POLYESTER FIBER

Polyester fiber represents approximately 10% of carpet sold. Polyester feels soft and luxurious. However, it is also less resilient than nylon and is more susceptible to crushing and matting. While it resists products like benzoyl peroxide better than nylon, it has an unfortunate affinity for oily dirt and dust. Styling appearance retention and overall stain resistance are second to nylon.

POLYPROPYLENE - OLEFIN FIBER

Olefin fiber represents approximately 20% of carpet sold. Olefin is usually manufactured in a level loop or Berber construction in order to give better performance characteristics due to its susceptibility to crushing and matting. It will perform very well in these constructions. Olefin has fair resistance to soil and excellent resistance to stain because color is added as a basic component, even before the olefin is made into a fiber. This is called solution dyed, which also makes it very resistant to fading from sunlight and excellent for use as outdoor carpeting. Olefin has a natural resistance to static electricity, moisture and mildew. It is used in both indoor and outdoor installation, particularly in playrooms, dens, kitchens, offices and other similar areas.

WOOL FIBER

Wool fiber represents less than 5% of carpet sold and is primarily used in decorative area products such as rugs. It has luxurious appearance and good performance qualities.

COMPARISON OF PHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF VARIOUS FIBERS

| Characteristics | Nylon | Olefin | Polyester |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Abrasion Resistance | Excellent | Good | Excellent |
| Texture Retention | Excellent | Good | Good |
| Resilience | Excellent | Fair | Good |
| Soil Resistance | Excellent | Fair | Excellent |
| Ability to Clean | Excellent | Excellent | Excellent |
| Bleaching | Poor | Excellent | Poor |
| Luxury Look | Excellent | Fair | Good |
| Low Static Build-up | Very Good | Excellent | Very Good |
| Hand and Feel | Excellent | Fair | Excellent |
| Fade Resistance | Very Good | Excellent | Very Good |

The above comparison is based on all carpet manufacturing specifications being the same. Carpet manufacturing specifications such as density, pile height, construction (level loop / cut loop) and finishing techniques will affect some of the above considerations.

Physical properties of the fiber and manufacturing specification jointly influence the finished carpet and thus both contribute to the carpet's surface appearance, performance, use value and benefits.

A review of the homebuyer's needs and desires is critical in determining which combination of fiber and manufacturing specifications create the carpet which provides the best benefits and value for the individual homebuyer.

FIBER PRODUCTION

Synthetic carpet yarns are formed by melting solid chips of base material and forcing it through tiny holes in a showerhead device called a "spinneret". The product coming out of the spinneret is called filament. The size or weight of filament is called a denier. The higher the denier, the bigger and coarser the yarn. This process is called extrusion and color pigments can be added during this process if pre-dyed fibers are desired. Next, the filaments are drawn or stretched like warm taffy, to give strength. Then they are crimped or texturized through controlled cooling and hardening operations. Crimped filaments produce yarns with a soft hand, because filaments do not pack down.

Resulting from these processes are continuous strands of filaments about the thickness of a hair. These continuous strands can be twisted and packaged as continuous filament yarn ready for tufting (BCF yarn), or cut into desired staple lengths to be later spun into yarn (staple yarn).

CONTINUOUS FILAMENT VS. STAPLE FIBER

Since all carpet yarn is either continuous filament or spun yarn from staple, it is worthwhile to look at the advantage of each.

Bulked Continuous Filament Advantages:

1. Less piling and fuzzing because the individual filaments in a yarn are virtually endless.
2. Produces a stronger, tougher yarn because of the uniform denier size.
3. Higher luster.
4. Better coverage of primary back due to bulking, particularly where little twist is used.

Staple Advantages:

1. Softer, more luxurious hand or feel (hand is an industry word for feel).
2. More styling flexibility by blending colors, heather yarns).
3. Produces yarn with a wool-like texture.
4. Excellent for cut pile plushes.

PLY / TWISTING

Twisting is the process of combing two or more strands of yarn to form one yarn. This adds the properties of increased weight, strength, bulk and resiliency. Some continuous filament yarns pass through this process on their way to the tufting mill. When two yarns are plied together into one, the term 2-ply is given to the resultant yarn. Three yarns plied into one is 3-ply.

Twist is the winding of the yarn around itself. One way to judge the twist level of a carpet is to look closely at the cut ends of the individual yarns. They should be neat and well defined, if not, it blossoms open at the ends. A carpet made with a **large** lighter weight, more tightly twisted yarn, will appear to the eye to be less of a value than a heavier weight, more loosely twisted carpet.

Yarn twist, particularly in cut-pile carpets, is critical to carpet performance. **The tighter twist, the better the carpet will retain its appearance over time.** Therefore, a more loosely twisted product may be the look some homebuyers are shopping for, while others prefer the performance of a tighter twisted product.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FINISHED PRODUCTS

As we have seen, both the fiber itself and how it is constructed into the carpet are important considerations in choosing the right carpet to fulfill a homebuyer's needs. The chart on the preceding page will assist us in comparing various products. Here are some of the characteristics of the finished product in the homebuyer's selection process (homebuyer benefits).

RESILIENCY

Resiliency might be defined as the ability of a fiber to spring back to its original shape after being compressed. The resiliency of the fibers can be measured, but the resiliency of two carpets of the same fiber may be entirely different. A dense, short pile carpet is more resilient than a loose, high pile carpet of the same pile weight. A carpet with tightly twisted fiber will have more resiliency than one of a fiber with less twist, but the lower twist carpet may look better to the eye. Close inspection and product presentation will show the tighter twisted carpet will look better longer.

WEAR OR ABRASION RESISTANCE

Wear resistance is related to fiber, density of the carpet, and construction of the carpet.

TEXTURE RETENTION

Texture retention is the ability of a carpet to retain its original look after traffic and wear. The fiber is an influence but so is twist, density, amount of traffic, and type of soil. Also important is the amount and type of vacuuming and cleaning.

SOIL HIDING AND SOIL RESISTANT CHARACTERISTICS

The less sheen or luster a fiber has the better it hides soil. Many fibers have chemicals blended in to de-luster or remove some of the sheen. This tends to improve their soil-hiding and soil resistant characteristics. The color of the dyed fiber is important too. Lighter colors do show more soil than dark colors. Multi-colors show less soil than plain colors. Multi level textures in finished carpet disguise the appearance of soil better than level construction.

SOIL AND STAIN TREATMENTS

Olefin and polyester are naturally stain resistant, although oily substances may cause spots if they penetrate the fiber. Fiber manufacturers have added static control and stain-resistant chemicals to nylon yarns to prevent acid-based liquids from penetrating the fibers and staining them. These advanced generation nylon yarns are warranted by the fiber producer to be stain resistant (not stain proof) and may be branded or unbranded. Stainmaster, Weardated, ANSO, and R2X are examples of brands of stain resistance.

SOIL REMOVAL OR CLEANABILITY

The type of fiber, type of soil and color have much to do with success in soil removal. An abrasive soil will scratch and pit the sides of the fiber, making it appear dull and dirty even after dirt has been removed. The scratches in individual fibers absorb light, cut down light reflectivity and give the carpet a dull look. This is why **frequent vacuuming** of any carpet is highly recommended. The higher the frequency of vacuuming, the better the carpet will look over time.

STAIN TREATMENTS - BRANDED AND UNBRANDED

Just as with branded and unbranded fibers, the introduction of a multitude of stain treatments has led to some confusion. A stain treatment is nothing more than that - A STAIN TREATMENT. The base product is still made with one of the four fibers. Just as with branded and unbranded fibers, there are branded and unbranded stain treatments.

The branded fibers are well recognized because of the great amount of advertising done by the fiber companies. These advertised brands are well known, for example: Stainmaster, Weardated, and Anso. Only Stainmaster makes both the fiber and stain treatment. Weardated and Anso fibers utilize Shaw's R2X stain protection.

There is not much difference between one treatment or another. Read and compare the individual warranties. All are basically the same. Carpets will stain under certain conditions - **no carpet is stain proof**. So if a homebuyer does not feel strongly about a particular treatment, feel free to show other carpets.

Most stain treatments are applied after the carpet is tufted, but we elected to cover them here since most homebuyers associate stain treatments with fiber.

