

## HOME IMPROVEMENT

# Carpet influences colour, style and lifestyle

A key to low maintenance living is selecting basic decor elements for your home that are easy to care for.

Carpeting, a major household investment and one of your most important decorating considerations, should be selected with colour, texture and style in mind. These are important factors in carpet maintenance.

Here are 10 tips for easy carpet care that you should remember.

Select a dense pile carpet, made with yarn of the same height, for high traffic areas like hallways and children's rooms. Soil tends to stay on top of its tight surface, so it is easy to clean. It also performs well and hides footprints and furniture marks.

Remember, the carpet fibre you select is critical to carpet performance. A manmade fibre like nylon is more durable than natural fibres and provides the best in performance, color and style at a reasonable price.

If you have pets, consider a dense, low-cut pile carpet that will not show claw marks easily.

Carpet reduces foot fatigue and breakage in the kitchen, but in this room where food and drink abound, avoid light, solid-colour carpets in favour of subtle prints and multi-coloured saxonies that help hide stains.

The most important thing you can do to protect your carpet is regular vacuuming. Thorough

vacuuming once a week will help your carpet look better and last longer.

Clean up spills and stains immediately. Never rub or brush a spill or spot; use a blotting or dabbing motion.

Use a spoon or the back of a knife to remove semi-solid or

greasy substances from carpeting.

To get up chewing gum or wax from a carpet, freeze the spot with an ice cube, shatter the frozen mass with a hammer, vacuum up the chips, apply solvent, wait a few minutes and then blot up the stain.

If you get a small cigarette burn or other burn on your carpet, just

snip off the darkened fibres and wipe with a sponge, soapless cleaner and water.

If you vacuum regularly and remove stains promptly, your carpet should only need a major cleaning every one to three years. When it starts to look dull and matted it's time for a major cleaning.

## Buying your home

Although the dream of owning a single-family house with front and back yards in a nice suburb may have widened to include other housing choices today, such as high-rise apartments, garden condominiums and mobile homes, the nesting instinct is still very much a part of us. The cost of that instinct, however, is marching steadily upward.

Now more than ever before, a home has become for many people the single largest purchase they make. For this reason, people are taking more interest in their home environment including the way it is furnished and decorated.

While many persons seek help from professional designers to pull the elements of furniture, colours, fabrics and textures together, a growing number of homeowners choose to do their own decorating. The reasons they cite are dollars saved and the pleasure of doing it themselves.

The last few years have made the do-it-yourselfer's task much easier, too. Rigid decorating rules of the past, such as not mixing different furniture styles or patterns, have long been abandoned in favour of an eclectic approach reflecting an individual's style of

living and taste preferences.

In addition, the retail marketplace has burgeoned to satisfy these needs. Today, there are almost 19,000 decorating products' centres across the country, offering such key ingredients to any decorating project as paint, wallcoverings, window treatments and, often, floorcoverings.

You should scan magazines and clip out pictures of rooms that appeal to you. Visit show houses and department store model rooms, and make notes of what appeals to you when you visit friends' houses. Finally, make a list of preferences for each room in your house to take with you when you go shopping for paint, wallcoverings, window treatments and floor coverings. In your list, include a description of those things that you plan on keeping the same - the "givens" - such as furniture, accessories or carpeting.

Remember too that professional advice on selection and use of decorating products is also yours for the asking. By reviewing the decorating basics and by patronizing stores that offer a combination of quality products and professional help, you will be able to decorate with confidence.

## Making new storage

Almost every home has some unused area that can, with a little thought, be utilized for storage.

Take for instance the area in the garage over the hood of your car. By building a simple floor-standing or hanging shelf, you can create a good storage area for garden tools and supplies.

Another area in many garages that is not usually utilized is the area under the pitch of the roof. Many people have built very successful storage lofts in their garages and created a sizable amount of usable square footage.

However, if you do build something yourself be sure to use good solid construction procedures as it is very easy for a great amount of weight to accumulate on a shelf of this type. You certainly wouldn't want it to collapse on the hood of the car!

Inside the house there are many corners that lend themselves to conversion to storage areas. In two-storey houses there is often an area under the sloping roof that can be opened up to offer storage for bulky items that are not used on a day-to-day basis. In most cases there is no access to these areas and you will have to cut a small door through from the bedroom.

Another thing to remember is that in most cases the bedroom walls are insulated and the area is

unheated.

Another area in most houses that is wasted is the area under the basement stairs. Although this area is usually only up to 6' high and slopes down to the basement floor it can again provide several valuable square feet of storage area.

This area can be insulated and made into an excellent wine cellar. Because the area is usually situated on an outside wall the insulation will exclude the heat from the basement and keep the area at an even, low temperature that is so important in the storage of wine.

For those who have small children this is an excellent toy storage area with the low headroom no problem to the little people. Built in shelves and bins could almost make the area neat.

Another area that is often overlooked is the space over washers, dryers and chest freezers. This is an ideal spot to hand standard kitchen cupboard upper units that can be bought at building supply outlets and are easily installed. They offer ideal storage areas for hobby and craft items. Over the washer the soaps and cleaning products are easily accessible.

Storage area is where you find it. A tour of your home with this end in mind may turn up more area than you thought possible.

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