



How to Develop an Effective Carpet Maintenance Program

It's Time to Take a More Proactive Approach to Your Carpet.

No part of an office or commercial building takes more abuse than the carpet. It gets trampled on day after day, week after week, year after year, unrelentingly, by thousands of shoes, heels, boots, and wheels.

For property and facility owners and managers, keeping carpets not only alive and well but looking clean and professional is a continuous challenge. It's an uphill struggle that requires work, planning and strategy.

Of course, cost is also a factor. If you had the budget to bring a professional team in to properly care for your carpet at the end of each day, your carpets might last for decades. Most managers don't have that luxury. Even if they did, it wouldn't be a particularly cost-effective approach.

Instead, you have to weigh the time, resources and cost of an ongoing carpet maintenance program versus a "fix it when it breaks" approach.

Do you want to invest in taking proactive action early on to get the most from your carpet? Or just hope for the best and repair the damage as it comes?

For any seasoned property or facilities manager, the answer is the clear:

You want to take care of your building, keep it looking its best, and employ a smart approach to prolong the life of your carpet.

With this e-book, we aim to help you do just that—providing tips and best practices to help you develop an effective carpet maintenance program.

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What's the Difference Between Carpet Cleaning and Carpet Maintenance?

You may be wondering what the difference is between carpet cleaning and maintenance? Isn't cleaning a carpet the same as maintaining it? It's a good question—and a common misconception.

The answer is they are not the same. Here's how they differ:

Cleaning is the removal of visible soil.

Maintenance is a well-planned, ongoing process of soil and stain removal to help a carpet retain its original appearance and performance attributes over time.

Essentially, the difference between the two is like the difference between washing your car and taking it in to get a tune-up. While washing may make your car look good on the surface, it won't help keep it performing well over time. The tune-up will.

Maintenance is the tune-up of the carpet world, designed to keep your carpet functioning at a high level over the long term. That's why each facility must have its own unique maintenance plan.

Why Should You Make Carpet Maintenance a Priority?

It's easy for carpet maintenance to tumble to the bottom of the priority list. After all, it's not an immediate necessity. The greatest benefits are seen gradually, over time.

So why should you make carpet maintenance a priority? How can you justify the time and resource investment in a carpet maintenance program?

Here are three compelling reasons you need a carpet maintenance program:

1. The longer carpet lasts, the less it costs.

Maintenance costs for a carpeted floor average 20-30 percent less than for a waxed, hard surface. Those are strong numbers. But in order for the math to work, you must carry out a consistent maintenance schedule over the life of the carpet.

Today's carpets are designed to disguise soils and stains. That can also mask the need to vacuum and clean on a regular basis—and those efforts can make a huge difference when it comes to long-term carpet costs.

A consistent maintenance program can extend the life of carpet for several years depending on the facility and traffic patterns.

2. Cleaner carpets mean cleaner air.

Carpet is the largest air filter in a building. It traps and holds contaminants, like mold spores, preventing them from circulating and causing indoor air quality issues.

But like an air filter, your carpet can become overloaded and stop working effectively. At that point, more contaminants will fill the air. By regularly maintaining your carpets, you remove those contaminants from the building.

Cleaner carpet leads to improved air quality, which results in better employee morale and performance.

3. Carpet condition can impact perception of your business.

No one likes to be in a space that seems dirty or unsanitary. Something as simple as the appearance of carpeting can influence people's opinion of not just the building but the business (or businesses) occupying it.

For property and facility managers, the appearance of the carpet can be a reflection of how well you are doing your job. Obviously, you want it to reflect positively rather than negatively.

A proper carpet maintenance program will not only protect your investment, but also create a positive perception of your company to your customers, employees, and the general public.

THINK ABOUT IT

How are your perceptions of a business affected when you walk into a building that's not well maintained? Do you become more or less confident in the services they provide?

The Five Elements of an Effective Carpet Maintenance Program

If you want to keep your carpets looking clean and preserve them for a longer period of time, you need a plan in place. That plan needs to lay out strategy and processes for these five essential areas:

1 Walk-Off Systems/Chair Mats

2 Vacuuming

3 Spot Removal

4 Preventive Cleaning

5 Restorative Cleaning



Walk-Off Systems/Chair Mats

Create a Protective Barrier to Keep Dirt Off Your Carpets

One of the best methods of maintaining your carpet is keeping dirt off it. While it's not possible to keep all dirt off your carpets, there are steps you can take to minimize the amount of dirt that gets on them. Walk-off mats and chair mats are a great place to start.

By using cleanable or replaceable walk-off mats in doorways and vestibules, you can reduce the amount of dirt that enters your facility. Meanwhile chair mats can protect areas of carpet that receive constant foot and chair abuse, keeping them from marring or fading long before the rest of the carpet.

While preventive mats require an investment, it pales in comparison to the price of restoring or replacing carpets.

Remember: It's much easier to keep dirt out than remove it—and far less expensive.

Use Properly Sized Entrance Mats



Performing additional maintenance in entry areas and other wipe-off regions can reduce the amount of maintenance in other parts of the facility

How to Use Mats to Protect Your Carpets

Walk-Off Mats

- A walk-off area, normally doorways and or vestibules, must be at least 12-15 feet long to effectively scrape and/or dry the soles of shoes.
- Mat placement needs to be outside, in the vestibule, and inside the building for best results.
- Mat selection should consist of scraper mats located outside, scraper/drying mats in the vestibule, and drying mats inside.

[Click here to learn about different walk-off systems available](#)

Chair Mats

- Chair casters will grind soil into the carpet and break down the appearance of the carpet.
- Chair mats will extend the life of carpet under chair casters and reduce cleaning frequencies.
- Some carpets have caster warranties. Caster warranties only cover the backing and do not cover the wear of fiber and the appearance of the carpet.

DID YOU KNOW?

Up to 24 pounds of dirt can be tracked in by 1,000 people coming through an entrance over a 20-day work period.

One pound of dirt inside a building can cost more than \$500 to remove.



Vacuuming

Increase Your Vacuum Effectiveness for a Higher Level of Clean

Vacuuming is the most effective method of removing soil from carpet—and the most economical. While vacuuming your carpets sounds easy enough, there’s actually a little more to it if you want to do it right.

How you vacuum (method), how much you vacuum (frequency), and even the vacuum you choose (equipment) can make a big impact on the upkeep of your carpet. It’s possible you may be vacuuming your carpets without doing an effective job of removing dirt from them.

Make Sure You’re on the Right Frequency

The frequency that you vacuum specific areas can have a significant effect on the long-term condition of the carpet. See the chart below for recommended vacuuming frequency guidelines:

AREA	TRAFFIC CONDITION	FREQUENCY
Entry	Heavy	Daily
Ground Floor Halls	Heavy	Daily
Above Ground Halls	Medium	Daily
Administrative Offices	Medium	3-4 times per week
Classrooms	Medium	Daily
General Office Areas	Medium	Daily
School Corridors	Medium	Daily
Boardrooms	Light	Weekly
Conference Rooms	Light	Weekly
Executive Offices	Light	Weekly

Have a Method to Your Maintenance

Vacuum method should be slow passes instead of several quick passes. Quick passes don't do much to remove the soil ingrained in your carpet. Heavily soiled areas will require multiple passes both east/west and north/south.

Choose the Best Vacuum for Your Space

When buying or specifying vacuuming equipment for your facility, you should put yourself in the shoes of the person operating the vacuum. A common mistake is buying a vacuum cleaner that is not appropriate for the space being vacuumed.

FOR EXAMPLE:

If you are using a vacuum cleaner that only covers 12 inches in one pass (upright or backpack), how effective is it to clean a large area?

It is not effective at all. If you are vacuuming properly, it will take a long period of time to effectively clean the area.

In most cases, human nature leads to speeding up and/or vacuuming partial areas of the space. Large area vacuum cleaners should be purchased for large, open areas like corridors, aisles, and large rooms.

Recommended Vacuums

Small Areas

- Upright Two Motor Vacuum with Rotary Brush and Beater Bar HEPA Filter
- Backpack Vacuum w/ High Performance Power Head

Large Areas

- Ride On or Wide-Area Vacuum
- Periodically check brushes for wear
- Dispose of vacuum cleaner bags when half full.
- An 80% efficiency loss occurs after half full.

[To find the best vacuum for your needs, click here to check out the certified vacuums from The Carpet and Rug Institute.](#)



Spot Removal

Remove Carpet Spots with Speed and Proper Technique

You need to have a set program in place to ensure spots are removed on a scheduled basis. Spot removal is key to keeping the day-to-day appearance of the carpet. Spot cleaning can be provided by occupants of the space, your in-house staff, or an expert team of carpet-cleaning professionals.

You also need a plan for removing spots as they happen. When it comes to spot removal, speed is definitely a factor. The quicker you get to a spot, the better. Act quickly to remove new spots using the method below.

How to Properly Remove a Spot

Follow these steps to quickly remove a fresh spot from your carpet:

- 1 Identify the spill.
- 2 Blot or scrape up the substance (DO NOT SCRUB).
- 3 Rinse with a small of water or club soda. Apply a cleaning solution based on the type of stain. If the type of stain is not known, use a ph neutral, all-purpose spotting solution like DPM Care's Banish or Banish Plus Spotter.*
- 4 Agitate gently using a nylon brush. Work from the outer edges and work inward to prevent the stain from spreading.
- 5 Use a clean towel to blot or extract the stain.
- 6 Final rinse with small amount of water.
- 7 Blot or extract the stain one last time.

NOTE

It is easy to set a stain permanently if the wrong chemical is used. Consult your maintenance provider or janitorial supply provider for recommended spot removal chemicals, training on their applications, and to ensure that spotting chemicals do not react with other chemicals used to clean the carpet.

When to call in the pros

Some stains require expert help to get the job done. Although spotting on your own can help remove some of the stain, professional carpet cleaning may be needed to return the carpet to its original state.

Here are some stains that may require professional help:

- Ketchup
- Mustard
- Glue residue
- Dyes



Preventive Cleaning

Employ a Regular Cleaning Process to Extend Carpet Life

One of the best ways to maintain your carpet and extend its life by years is through a preventive cleaning program. With the right preventative cleaning program in place, you should never need restorative cleaning.

Why does that matter?

If restorative cleaning is needed, it typically means permanent damage to the carpet has occurred. Restorative cleaning costs more, uses more water that can lead to temporary indoor air quality issues, and takes considerably more time to clean and dry.

A preventative cleaning program will save you time, money and keep your carpets cleaner, longer.

An Effective Preventive Cleaning Process

A proper preventative maintenance program will include these steps:

- 1 Remove soil and stains from the carpet.
- 2 Deodorize and neutralize bacterial contaminants.
- 3 Use FiberShield™ Anti-soil and Anti-stain Protection, ScotchGuard or Teflon
- 4 Advanced Carpet Protector based on manufacture's suggested frequencies.
- 5 Pile lift carpet fiber to restore matted carpet and loosen embedded dirt.
- 6 Move and replace furniture as needed.

Suggested Preventive Cleaning Schedule

Your preventative maintenance program should include a carpet cleaning schedule based on the traffic patterns and use of various areas in your business. More trafficked areas of your office will require more frequent cleaning, while less trafficked areas may only require cleaning once or twice a year.

Every building is different. That's why you need a custom cleaning schedule to fit your unique needs. However, here is a suggested cleaning schedule to give you an idea of what your building might need:

AREA	TRAFFIC CONDITION	FREQUENCY
Entry	Heavy	12 - 24 Times /year
Ground Floor Halls	Heavy	12 Times /year
Ground Floor Halls	Medium	4 Times/year
Above Ground Halls	Medium	4 Times/year
Administrative Offices	Medium	2 Times/year
Classrooms	Medium	4 Times/year
General Office Areas	Medium	2 Times /year
Boardrooms	Light	2 Times/year
Conference Rooms	Light	2 Times/year
Executive Offices	Light	2 Times/year

Chemical Requirements

The best preventative cleaning programs use a low-moisture system with chemicals that don't leave any residue behind. A low moisture system, like DPM Care's patented process, will prevent microbial growth and reappearing stains that can occur with extraction cleaning.

Whether you use DPM Care's low-moisture process or another provider, here are the chemical requirements you should look for:

- Must have pH between 7.0 – 8.0 in diluted form
- No volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- Does not leave a sticky or oily residue when dried (must dry in undiluted form, with no tackiness to the touch)
- Contains no optical brighteners
- Must be safe and non-toxic
- Meets or exceeds green cleaning standards
- CRI Approved Chemicals
- CRI Approved Service Provider (Outsourced Cleaning)

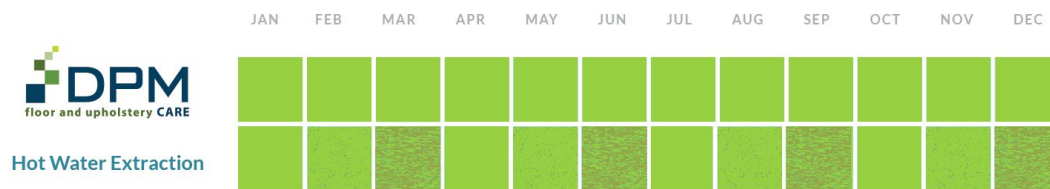
Following these chemical requirements will give you the best possible preventative cleaning program for your carpet.



Restorative Cleaning

Bring Your Damaged Carpet Back to Life

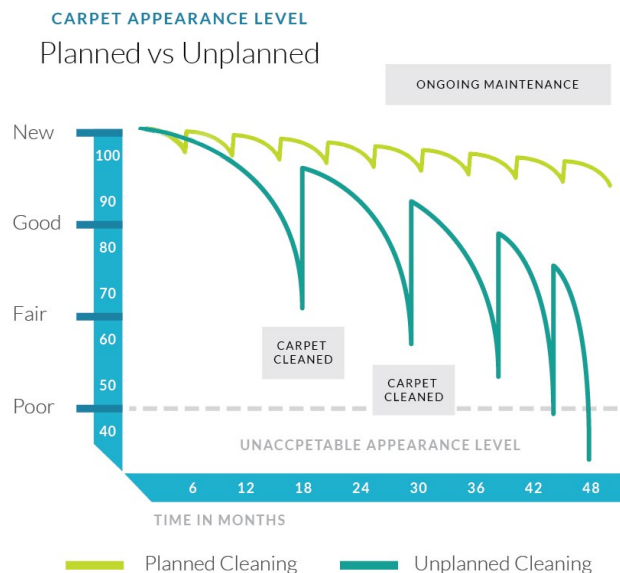
Restorative cleaning is typically a last resort before replacing your carpet. It's not something you necessarily want to do unless your carpet is damaged. But it's something you should have a plan for just in case the need arises.



What Is Restorative Cleaning?

Restorative cleaning is used on areas that will not get clean with any of the methods previously discussed. The carpet is visually dirty and, in some cases, has worn to some degree.

Restorative cleaning is typically required in areas where the carpet was not properly maintained, the cleaning frequencies were too low or severe soiling has occurred—such as oils from kitchens or manufacturing, or seasonal wear.



While restorative cleaning can give your carpet a temporary boost, it will not have a positive long-term impact. Preventive cleaning is always the better choice, maintaining the appearance of your carpet over a period of time.

An Effective Restorative Cleaning Process

If your carpet requires restorative cleaning, follow these steps:

- 1 Remove soil and stains from carpet.
- 2 Deodorize and neutralize bacterial contaminants.
- 3 Apply FiberShield™ Anti-soil and Anti-stain Protection, ScotchGuard, or Teflon Advanced Carpet Protector based on manufacturer's suggested frequencies.
- 4 Pre-spray approved chemistry on the carpet and allow 5-10 minutes of dwell time prior to agitation.
- 5 Agitate the carpet using a pile lifter to restore matted carpet fiber and to loosen embedded dirt.
- 6 Rinse with a Low Moisture Hot Water Extraction (500 PSI Max).
 - Maximum dry time of 2-3 hours (to help prevent bacteria/mold growth)
 - Water temperature of at least 120 degrees
- 7 Move and replace furniture as needed.

Put Plans and Processes in Place to Preserve Your Carpet

Getting the most from your carpet requires an effective maintenance program. Developing a carpet maintenance program will help you:

- Save money by extending the life of your carpet;
- Improve indoor air quality by reducing pollutants; and
- Build positive perception of your business and property management.

THE FIVE ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE CARPET MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

To develop your carpet maintenance program, establish in writing plans and processes for these five essential areas, making sure to answer these key questions:

Walk-Off Systems/Chair Mats

- Will they work for your facility?
- How many will you get?
- Where will you place them?

Vacuuming

- How will you vacuum?
- How often?
- What vacuum will give you the greatest efficiency?

Spot Removal

- How will you remove spots on a scheduled basis?
- Who will be responsible for spot removal?
- How will you share best practices?

Preventive Cleaning

- How often will you perform preventive cleanings?
- What are your heavy traffic areas?
- Do you meet the chemical requirements?

Restorative Cleaning

- Do you have a restorative cleaning plan in place?
- Who will execute your restorative cleaning if it's ever needed?

Thinking proactively about your carpet and having a plan in place to maintain it will pay off in the long run. It can literally mean the difference in years of extended carpet life and thousands of dollars in savings.

Thanks for Reading!

Get Your Free Carpet-Cleaning Demo Today

DPM Care is a family of carpet and floor-cleaning experts who develop and deliver innovative technology to bring you a cleaner, more welcoming work environment. We keep your carpet, floors and upholstery cleaner, longer thanks to our patented technology and highly trained technicians.

Think your carpet can't be cleaned? Have a stain that won't come out? DPM Care is up to the challenge. Request your FREE demo today and see how our proven process gets your carpet cleaner than you've ever seen it before. And, we'll help you build the proper maintenance program to help you keep it that way.

[Click here to request your free demo.](#)



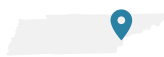
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