

Consumers Guide To Carpet Cleaning

By Chad Bremerman
Healthy Home Carpet Care

Read this guide and you'll discover

- How to avoid four carpet cleaning rip-offs!
- 6 costly misconceptions about carpet cleaning
- Crawlins' critters and crud: a guide to the slime, grime and livestock that's seeping, creeping and galloping Through your carpet
- Which method cleans best?
- 8 mistakes to avoid when choosing a carpet cleaner
- The importance of value and price
- Do you want a clean, healthy carpet?
- A good carpet company's 100% no-risk guarantee
- 4 steps to a fresh, clean, healthy carpet

Dear Homeowner,

Choosing a carpet cleaner isn't easy.

Why? Because you're bombarded with misleading advertising, confusing claims and simply bad information.

From super-low prices and high-pressure sales, to unqualified technicians and near-worthless methods. How do you ever find a qualified, competent, professional carpet cleaner?

You start by reading this Consumer's Guide. In this fact-filled guide, you'll discover how to avoid four carpet cleaning rip-offs, 11 mistakes to avoid when choosing a carpet cleaner, and four steps to a fresh, clean, healthy carpet.

I wrote this guide to help you better understand carpet cleaning. Now, with this information, you can make an informed, intelligent decision.

Cordially,

Chad Bremerman
Healthy Home Carpet Care

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How To Avoid Carpet Cleaning Rip-Offs

Rip-Off #1: UNBELIEVABLY LOW PRICE. To some degree, all of us are attracted by low prices because we want to work within a budget. But some carpet cleaners use price as bait for their false and misleading advertising. They offer a cheap price, usually between \$9.95 and \$15.95 per room. Then, once they're in your home, they pressure you into buying "add ons." It's as if you were buying a car and found that the dealer was charging you extra for the tires and steering wheel. Carpet cleaning is not as cheap as some unethical carpet cleaners would like you to believe.

Rip-Off #2: BAIT AND SWITCH. Dual process carpet cleaning describes the process of pre conditioning followed with hot water extraction cleaning. Unfortunately, unethical carpet cleaners often use dual process as a bait-and-switch technique. Here's how it's done: First, they "bait" you with a basic cleaning (single process) at an unbelievable low price. Then, when you call, they try to "switch" you to more expensive dual-process cleaning. If you don't fall for their switch and choose their basic service, you'll likely receive poor workmanship using little or no detergents and they will not guarantee their work.

Rip-Off #3: UNSUPPORTED CLAIMS. "This cleaning method is the best." You'll read this in almost every ad. You'll hear this from virtually every carpet cleaner. Remember this: the method that's best for you is the method that achieves your goal. If you want a method that dries quickly, then a method that takes a long time to dry isn't best for you. So before you choose a carpet cleaner, identify your objectives. Then select the method that best reaches those objectives.

Rip-Off #4: OUTDATED BELIEFS. “Hot water damages your carpet.” Years ago, many people believed this was true because their carpets were damaged by “technicians” who didn’t know how to properly clean using hot water. But today, we know it’s false. By washing and then rinsing your carpet with hot water, your carpet is thoroughly cleaned, in the same way that the person who showers and then rinses off the dirt and soap will be much cleaner than the person who takes only a sponge bath. Obviously, each carpet cleaner will be biased toward his own method. And each method does have advantages. So I suggest you look to what carpet manufacturers say. Shaw Industries, the largest carpet manufacturer in the world, recommends hot water extraction with a truck mounted unit.

6 Costly Misconceptions About Carpet Cleaning

Misconception #1: “You should wait as long as possible before cleaning your carpet.” No. Dirt is an abrasive, like sand paper. Every time you step on your carpet, you grind dirt into the carpet fibers. This cuts your carpet, just as if you had used a knife. This cutting causes your carpet to wear out faster. A dirty carpet will not last as long as a clean carpet. And while vacuuming helps, by itself it’s simply not enough. The longer you wait to have your carpet cleaned, the more damage you do to your carpet and the faster it wears out.

Misconception #2: “The only reason to clean carpet is to remove the dirt.” No. As you probably know, outdoor air contains pollens, fungus, bacteria, air pollution, cigarette smoke, car exhaust, and hundreds of other chemicals. When you come into your home, you carry those pollens, bacteria and chemicals in your hair and on your skin, clothing,

and shoes. Not surprisingly, all those chemicals and toxins wind up in your carpet. If you have allergies, asthma, emphysema, or other breathing problems, one major source of your problem could be the pollens, fungus, smoke and chemicals in your carpet.

Misconception #3: “One method of carpet cleaning is as good as another.” No. The dry cleaning methods, which are dry foam, dry chem, and dry compound, do not rinse your carpet in any way. Instead, they leave a dirty residue. You might say they clean your carpet only halfway. The most effective cleaning method is hot water extraction.

Hot water extraction means a hot water cleaning solution, under high pressure, is forced into your carpet and then sucked out. Shaw Industries, the world’s largest carpet manufacturer, recommends hot water extraction as the primary method of cleaning carpets.

Carpet cleaners use one of two types of hot water extraction. If they use a large unit that operates from a van or truck outside your home, it’s called truck-mounted extraction. If they use a small unit that can be brought inside, it’s called portable extraction. Shaw’s first choice is the truck-mounted unit, and they recommend the small, portable unit only in areas where the truck-mounted unit won’t reach.

The truck-mounted extraction cleans much better because it heats the water to a higher temperature, and shoots the cleaning solution into the carpet at higher pressures, which breaks up the dirt, bacteria, chemicals and pollens in the carpet. Then the machine uses high suction to draw the dirt and chemicals out of your carpet. Although we have both, the truck mounted method is what we use most often.

Misconception #4: “Having the right equipment is all a company needs to clean your carpets properly.” Not true. Many companies own hot-water cleaners but very few companies teach their employees how to use them properly. This is why it’s important that you choose your carpet cleaner carefully. The best companies are those that have been trained by the Institute Of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification, known as the IICRC. Before you choose a carpet cleaner, ask to see written proof of the companies IICRC certification.

Misconception #5: “The company that offers the lowest price is the company you should hire.” No. I’ve seen so many problems arise from lowest-bid companies that I suggest you NEVER hire the company that quotes the cheapest price. The two most common problems are:

(1) The price may not be for the services you want performed. The company may be equipped to remove only the dirt from your carpet. But you may want bacteria, fungus, pollens and tobacco residues removed as well.

(2) The price you see advertised may not be the price you pay. Many homeowners have learned that the low price they saw advertised lasted only until the carpet cleaner got into their home. Then they were pressured into paying a lot more for a variety of add-ons. Some carpet cleaners even break the law by using illegal bait and switch tactics.

Misconception #6: “Any honest carpet cleaning company should be able to give you an exact price quote over the telephone.” I wish this were true, but it isn’t. Honest, reputable carpet cleaning companies almost never price carpet cleaning by the room. Instead, carpet cleaning is usually priced by the square foot. So if you’d like me to tell you the exact cost of cleaning your carpet, I need to know the exact

number of square feet that you want cleaned. To get an accurate measurement, I use an Ultra Sonic room measurer to calculate the exact size of the carpet area. To give you an idea of how I estimate the cost of cleaning, here are the three things I consider:

First, the type of carpet. Certain types of carpet are harder to clean than other types.

Second, the amount of soiling. Carpet that hasn't been cleaned for ten years will take longer to clean than carpet that was cleaned within the last six months.

Third, the amount of furniture we have to move. If you move your furniture, you'll save money.

Crawlin' Critters And Crud: A Guide To The Slime, Grime And Livestock That's Seeping, Creeping And Galloping Through Your Carpet.

Asphalt. Bacteria. Car exhaust. Chemicals. Dirt. Dust mites. Dust mite feces. Earth. Food particles. Fungus. Germs. Gravel. Grease. Grime. Grit. Hair. Industrial waste. Lint. Mud. Mildew. Pet stains. Pollens. Pollutants. Rock. Sand. Scum. Spores. Smoke. Soil. Soot. Tar. Tobacco smoke. Urine. Vomit.

Plus, don't forget living creatures such as dust mites and critters that live, hide and breed in your carpet.

Which Method Cleans Best?

Dry Foam: The carpet cleaner applies shampoo to your carpet, allows it to dry, and then without rinsing, sucks the dried shampoo into a vacuum. Can you imagine applying shampoo to your hair, allowing it to **dry and then removing the shampoo from your head with a vacuum?** This leaves a dirty residue in your carpet, which is one reason dry foam is not very effective.

Absorbent pad (bonnet cleaning): This method is similar to dry foam, except that the company sets a large cotton bonnet on your carpet. The rotating motion causes the bonnet to absorb dirt from your carpet. This method is also called bonnet cleaning. Bonnet cleaning is like trying to use a large cotton towel or mop to rub the dirt out of your carpet. It's not very effective.

Dry, absorbent powder: The dry-compound method spreads a moist, absorbent powder through the carpet. The powder is allowed to dry and then sucked into a vacuum. This method leaves dry sponge particles at the base of the carpet yarn. And because the carpet is not rinsed, this method is not very effective.

Hot water extraction: This is a fancy way of saying that a hot water cleaning solution under high pressure is forced into your carpet and then sucked out.

In a recent Technical Bulletin, Shaw Industries, the world's largest carpet manufacturer, "recommends the hot water extraction system, which research indicates provides the best capability for cleaning."

You can choose from two different types: Truck-mount extraction, which is done with a large machine mounted in a truck or van. Or portable extraction, which is done with a small, hand held unit. On which type to choose, Shaw's Technical Bulletin states: "Cleaning can be done from a truck mounted unit outside the facility with only the

hose and wand brought inside, or where a truck mounted unit cannot reach, by a portable, self-contained system brought into the facility.

As you can see, Shaw recommends the truck mounted unit first. And this isn't surprising. You see, the truck mounted unit cleans much better because it heats water to a higher temperature, and shoots the cleaning solution into the carpet at higher pressures. This breaks up the dirt, bacteria, chemicals and pollens in the carpet. Then the machine uses high suction to draw the dirt and chemicals out of your carpet. This is the method my company uses.

No question, the most effective way to clean carpeting is with a hot water unit mounted in a truck. It's the most powerful cleaning machine on the market and the only machine that cleans your carpet of dirt, harmful bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollen and tobacco residue.

Some people believe that hot water damages your carpet, but this isn't true. By washing and then rinsing your carpet with hot water, we clean your carpet completely, in the same way that the person who showers and then rinses off the dirt and soap will be cleaner than the person who takes only a sponge bath.

8 Mistakes To Avoid When Choosing A Carpet Cleaner

Mistake #1: Choosing a carpet cleaner based on equipment alone.

No question, your carpet cleaner needs first-rate equipment. But he also needs something else. He needs employees who are skilled at operating that equipment. Many companies own hot-water extractors, but very few companies teach their employees how to use them properly. The best way to know that the carpet cleaner's employees have been properly trained is to make sure the cleaner has been

certified by the Institute Of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration (IICRC). Before you choose a carpet cleaner, ask to see written proof of the company's IICRC certification.

Mistake #2: Choosing a carpet cleaner based on low price. Low price could be a problem in three ways: (1) Low price can be the bait that attracts your phone call. But once the cleaner gets into your home, he pressures you into a much more expensive job. (2) Low price can be for single-process cleaning. Rarely does the consumer know what this means and, when told, asks for dual-process cleaning instead, which costs much more. (3) Low price means the carpet cleaner has cheap equipment and detergents, which will not effectively clean your carpet.

Mistake #3: Choosing a carpet cleaner based on a single telephone call. Instead, invite the person to your home and ask for a specific written quotation. Then you'll know exactly what the carpet cleaner recommends, and you won't be the victim of high pressure tactics when the technician steps into your living room.

Mistake #4: Choosing a carpet cleaner who doesn't offer a money back guarantee. In my view, every carpet cleaning company should be fully accountable for their work. If you aren't pleased with the job in every way, you shouldn't have to pay for it. Period. Not all carpet cleaners offer a guarantee. Or, if they do, the guarantee may be "limited." Ask the carpet cleaner if he offers a money-back guarantee and then make sure the carpet cleaner includes his guarantee on his written quotation.

Mistake #5: Choosing a carpet cleaner without getting comments from his other clients. Any carpet cleaner can say anything about his past jobs. And, sadly, some of what he says may not be true. Make sure you ask for references or read comments from current customers so you can depend on the carpet cleaner and his work.

Mistake #6: Choosing a carpet cleaner who hasn't been certified by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration Certification (IICRC). If your carpet cleaner isn't a close friend, you may not know whether he

has the knowledge or experience to clean your carpet well. If you want to be sure you're hiring a competent professional, make sure he has been IICRC certified. The carpet cleaner must earn that certification through study, experience and the successful completion of formal, written examinations. In effect, cleaners who have been certified by the IICRC have earned a college degree in carpet cleaning.

Mistake #7: Choosing a carpet cleaner who doesn't use a truck mounted, hot water extraction system. You might expect this from me, since my employees and I use this type of system. But there are several good reasons. Portable hot water systems are good, but they aren't as good as truck-mounted systems. Truck-mounted systems are the Rolls Royce's of carpet cleaners. Compared with portable hot water systems, truck-mounted systems use hotter water, higher pressure and stronger suction. No two ways about it.

The Importance of Value and Price

Price is what you pay. Value is what you get.

When you select a carpet cleaner, you'll choose from a wide variety of cleaning methods and prices. Shaw Industries, the world's largest carpet manufacturer, recommends hot water extraction from a truck-mounted unit, and using a portable unit only in areas where the truck-mounted unit won't reach.

Here's why: A truck-mounted unit cleans much better than a portable unit for three reasons:

(1) It heats the water to a higher temperature. For every 18 degree increase in temperature above 118 F, you double the waters cleaning ability. So if the water temperature is 136 degrees F, it will

clean twice as well as water that is 118 degrees F. 154 degree water will clean four times as well as 118 degree water, and so on until you reach a water temperature of 250 degrees F.

(2) It shoots the cleaning solution into your carpet at a higher pressure, which breaks up the dirt, bacteria, chemicals and pollens. 300 to 400 pounds per square inch is the optimum pressure for truck mounted hot water extraction.

(3) The machine uses stronger suction to draw the dirt, chemicals, bacteria, pollens and tobacco smoke out of your carpet.

Not surprisingly, having your carpet thoroughly cleaned with truck mounted hot water extraction costs more than renting a shampooer at the grocery store. If you bought the cheapest carpeting you could find, then renting a small shampooer might be all you need. No question, it will get some of the dirt out, but the key work here is "some." It will not get out many of the pollens, chemicals, bacteria and tobacco smoke residues. On the other hand, if you bought high quality carpeting, if you want it to look good and give you years of dependable service, then you need to take care of it. This means you need to have it cleaned by a skilled, qualified technician at least every six months to one year, depending on the amount of soiling and foot traffic it receives. You need to have it cleaned thoroughly and disinfected as only a truck-mount hot water extractor can do.

Do You Want Clean, Healthy Carpet?

Which is more important to you: a clean carpet, or a healthy carpet? Yes, I assure you there is a big difference.

Each carpet cleaning method has advantages and disadvantages. Some methods will get out some most of the dirt. Other methods will get out dirt and grease. Still others will get out virtually everything. To be sure, some are more expensive than others.

If all you want is a cheap, rinse-the-dirt-off-the-top cleaning, which you might find for around \$9.95 per room, then I respectfully ask you to call another company. But if you want to protect your health, if you want to protect your investment in carpeting, If you want to protect your family from the countless bacteria, fungus, pollens and tobacco smoke residues in your carpet, then you're invited to call me.

The truck-mounted hot water unit we use is the most effective cleaning system available today. Likewise, it's one of the most expensive units on the market. But we bought this unit for a good reason: More and more families want the good-health benefits that come from having a fresh, clean carpet.

Have you ever seen how dirty a little boy's pants get when he plays outdoors? If you have, then you know you can brush off his pants and make him think they're clean. Or, if you want the job done right, you can machine wash them in hot water and detergent and you'll know they're clean.

The same is true for your carpet. You can hire someone for \$25 who will "brush off" your carpeting and make you think it's clean. Or, if you want the job done right, a good carpet cleaner will wash your carpets with hot water and detergent using a state of the art cleaning machine

and you'll KNOW they're clean. So if you want a thoroughly cleaned carpet, if you're willing to invest in your family's good health, you're invited to call a good hot water extraction carpet cleaner. You'll receive a written estimate, at no cost or obligation.

4 Steps To Fresh, Clean, Healthy Carpet

If you're thinking about having your carpets cleaned, I encourage you to follow these four steps:

Step #1: Make a commitment to yourself to get your carpets cleaned. The longer they remain dirty, the sooner they'll wear out. Plus, the longer you have to breathe all the pollens, fungus and chemicals that hide in your carpet.

Step #2: List your objectives. Do you want only the dirt removed, something you could do with a rented shampooer? Or do you want all the bacteria, fungus and chemicals removed, which will require a hot water truck-mounted cleaner, as we use. Do you want to work with an honest, reputable company? Or are you willing to risk working with the company that offers you the lowest price, knowing that the company might not be in business tomorrow.

Step #3: Ask questions. The way you learn about a company is to ask specific questions and listen carefully to the answers. Here are seven tough questions to ask a carpet cleaner before he begins to clean your carpet.

1. What method of carpet cleaning do you recommend?
2. What type of equipment do you use to clean carpet?
3. What will your equipment remove from my carpet?
4. How often should I get my carpets cleaned?

5. What training have you had in carpet cleaning?
6. Have you been certified by the IICRC and will you show me your certificate.
7. Do you guarantee your work?

Step #4: Once you're satisfied that you're working with an honest, competent professional, invite him into your home and ask for a specific quotation in writing. A written quotation gives you the assurance that you know exactly what your job will cost, no surprises.

By following these four steps, you'll gain all the information you need to make an informed, intelligent decision. If you want a quick, cheap carpet cleaning job, many companies in town can help you. Or you can rent a shampooer from the grocery store and do the job yourself.

But if you want your carpeting to be completely cleaned and healthy, removing the bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens, and tobacco products, then I invite you to call a good hot water extraction cleaner. They'll be happy to answer your questions, provide you a cost estimate over the telephone, or come into your home and give you a free written quotation. Without cost or obligation of any kind.

Thanks again for reviewing my Consumer's Guide To Carpet Cleaning. I hope you found this information helpful.

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