

# Consumer's Guide to Carpet Cleaning

By *Gary Syers*

*Clean Living, Specialists in Carpet Cleaning*

Read this guide and you'll discover:

- How to avoid four carpet cleaning rip-off's!
- 6 costly misconceptions about carpet cleaning
- Crawl-in' critters, a guide to the slime, grime and livestock that's sleeping, creeping and galloping through your carpet
- Which method cleans best?
- Mistakes to avoid when choosing a carpet cleaner
- The importance of value and price
- Do you want a clean, healthy carpet?
- 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, professional carpet cleaner?

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

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

And if you have any questions about carpet or upholstery cleaning, you're invited to call us. We've dedicated our business to educating consumers. We'll be happy to help you in every way.

Gary Syers

I'm the owner of Clean Living, I've been in the Cleaning Service Industry for Fifteen years. My *company* is a proud member of the National Carpet Cleaning Association. I have dedicated this business to helping homeowners get the highest return from their carpet investment. I welcome your enquiries and will gladly answer your questions over the telephone.

## **HOW TO AVOID FOUR CARPET CLEANING RIP-OFFS**

### **RIP-OFF No.1:**

#### ***UNBELIEVABLY LOW PRICE***

To some degree, all of us are attracted by low price because we want to work within a budget. But some carpet cleaners use price as the bait for their false and misleading advertising. They offer a cheap price, usually between £9.95 and £25 per room – and then, once they are 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 tyres and steering wheel. Carpet cleaning is not as cheap as some unethical carpet cleaners would like you to believe.

### **RIP-OFF No.2:**

#### ***BAIT AND SWITCH***

Dual process carpet cleaning describes the process of shampooing or heavy preconditioning, 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 unbelievably 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 chemical and they will not guarantee their work.

### **RIP-OFF No.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 is not for you. So before you choose a carpet cleaner, identify your objectives. Then select the method that best reaches those objectives.

### **RIP-OFF No.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 at what carpet manufacturers say. Shaw Industries, the largest carpet manufacturer in the world, recommends only hot water extraction cleaning used by firms that are IICRC Certified.

## **6 COSTLY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CARPET CLEANING**

### **MISCONCEPTION No.1:**

#### ***"SHOULD I WAIT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE BEFORE HAVING MY CARPET CLEANED"***

**No.** Dirt is an abrasive, like sandpaper. Every time you step on your carpet, you grind dirt into the carpet fibres. 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. 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 No.2 :**

#### ***"THE ONLY REASON CLEAN MY CARPET IS TO MAKE IT LOOK CLEAN"***

**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 No.3 :**

#### ***"ONE METHOD OF CARPET CLEANING IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER"***

**No.** The dry cleaning methods – which are dry foam, dry chemicals, and dry compound – do not rinse your carpet in any way. Instead, they may leave a dirty residue. These are good maintenance methods to keep clean carpet clean, but you have to use them every few weeks. The most effective cleaning method is hot water extraction, which is the most popular method used today.

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

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 facility, it's called 'Truck-Mount' extraction. If they use a smaller that can be brought inside, it's called a portable extraction unit. We would only recommend the larger portables such as our 'Twin Vacuum machines which are much more powerful than the item you can hire from stores.

The ALLTEC™ 'Twin Vacuum' portable extraction systems cleans much better because it uses hot water– which breaks up the dirt, bacteria, chemicals and pollens in the carpet. Then the machine

uses high 'Air-Flow' not just suction to draw the dirt and chemicals out of your carpet. This is the method my company uses.

**MISCONCEPTION No.4:**

***"HAVING THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT IS ALL A COMPANY NEEDS TO CLEAN MY 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 cleaning companies are those that have been certified 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 company's IICRC certification and also the certification of the technician who is going to do the job! If they don't have them – don't use them!

**MISCONCEPTION No.5:**

***"I SHOULD USE THE COMPANY THAT OFFERS THE LOWEST PRICE"***

**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 want bacteria, fungus, pollens, Dust Mites and tobacco residues removed also.
- 2) The price you may see advertised might 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 No.6:**

***"ANY HONEST CARPET CLEANING COMPANY SHOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE ME 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 just by the room. Instead, professional carpet cleaning is usually priced by 30 CM<sup>2</sup> (per square foot). But cleaning is not priced just on the size alone. To give you an idea of how we estimate the cost of cleaning, here are three other things we consider before we give you the price:

Firstly, the type of carpet; certain types of carpet are harder to clean than other types.

Secondly, the age of the carpet and the amount of soiling. Carpet that hasn't been cleaned for ten years will take longer to clean than a carpet that we cleaned within the last six months.

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

So remember if you'd like me to tell you the exact cost of cleaning your carpet, I need to know the exact number of 30 CM<sup>2</sup> (per square foot) that you want cleaned - Plus Carpets type, It's approximate age, the amount of soil on it and the amount of furniture to be moved or cleaned around. Not as easy as some would make you believe - ***is it?***

## **CRAWLIN' CRITTERS AND CRUD:**

### ***A GUIDE TO THE SLIME, GRIME AND LIVESTOCK THAT'S SLEEPING, CREEPING AND GALLOPING THROUGH YOUR CARPET.***

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

***Plus, don't forget living creatures, such as Dust Mites, Fleas***

***and the Critters that live, hide and breed in your carpet.***

In the average UK home over two million dust mites feed on the protein from your dead skin scales. They live in your carpet, upholstery, curtains, mattress and pillows - the only reason you have never seen them is because they are so small the **human eye cannot see them**. It is not just the mite that is the problem but their harmful faeces, which are so small that when disturbed can stay airborne for over ten minutes.

For the last few years, the number of children suffering in the UK from ASTHMA and other allergies has grown (currently 40% of our 13/14-year-olds have Asthma - the highest rate in the world). The health officials have been pointing the blame at traffic pollution and only recently found it is the dust mite. As mites live mainly in your carpets - it's now the carpet that gets the blame. **MITES DO NOT FEED ON CARPETS. - YOUR CARPET HELP YOU!!!**

*Will you help us? We're trying to find at least one thing that's in your carpet for each letter of the alphabet and we don't have anything for these letters: J,K,N,O,Q,W,X,Y,Z. If you can think of something that could be in your carpet that begins with these letters – or any other letters – please call or write to us and we'll consider including them in our next consumer's guide - If we do we'll offer an reward!*

## 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 method leaves dirty residue in your carpet, which is one reason dry foam is not too effective.

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

**Dry, absorbent powder:** The dry-compound is the driest of all methods. It 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 again. 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 smaller unit.

*"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 extraction cleaning and this isn't surprising. You see, this system cleans much better because it heats the water to a high temperature – and shoots the cleaning solution into the carpet at higher pressures. This breaks up the dirt, bacteria etc. in the carpet. Then the machine produces huge vacuum volume 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. It's the most powerful cleaning machine on the market and the only machine that cleans your carpet of dirt, harmful bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens and tobacco residue and dust mites.

Some people believe that hot water damages your carpet, but this is not 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 rinses off the dirt and soap will be much cleaner than the person who only takes a sponge bath.

## **8 MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN CHOOSING A CARPET CLEANER**

### **MISTAKE No.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 taught is to make sure the cleaner has been certified by the IICRC. Before you choose a carpet cleaner, ask to see written proof of the companies and technicians IICRC certification.

### **MISTAKE No.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. 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-purpose cleaning instead, which costs much more. (3) Low price means the carpet cleaner has cheap equipment which will not effectively clean your carpet.

### **MISTAKE No.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 No.4:**

#### ***Choosing a carpet cleaner who doesn't offer a Full Money-Back Guarantee***

In my view, every carpet cleaning company should be fully accountable for its work. If you are not pleased with the job in every way, you should not 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 in the quotation.

### **MISTAKE No.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 No.6:**

***Choosing a carpet cleaner who is not certified by the IICRC.***

If your carpet cleaner is not 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 is IICRC certified. The carpet cleaner must earn that certification through study, experience and successful completion of formal written examinations. In effect, cleaners who are certified by the IICRC have earned a college degree in carpet cleaning.

**MISTAKE No.7:**

***Choosing a carpet cleaner who is not a member of the National Carpet Cleaners Association (NCCA).***

NCCA is the largest trade association of carpet cleaners in the UK and they are dedicated to:

- 1) Honest, ethical business practices
- 2) Staying current on the latest methods for carpet and upholstery care, cleaning and restoration
- 3) The highest possible level of customer service. You're making a wise decision when you have your carpets cleaned by a member of the NCCA

**MISTAKE No.8:**

***Choosing a carpet cleaner who doesn't use Twin Vacuum, 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. Smaller portable hot water extraction systems are good, but they are not as good as the powerful twin vacuum systems. Compared with hot water systems you can hire, our systems use hotter water, higher pressure and stronger suction. So all the way around you get a much better job. No two ways about it they leave your carpets cleaner, fresher and healthier than ever before.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUE AND PRICE

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 and here's why: A twin vacuum system unit cleans much better than a hire (or DIY) machines for three reasons:

- 1) It heats the water to a higher temperature. For every 10 degree increase in temperature above 50 degrees C, you double the water's cleaning ability. So if the water temperature is 60 degrees C, it will clean twice as well as water that is 50 degrees C, and so on.
- 2) It shoots the cleaning solution into your carpet at higher pressure, which breaks up dirt, bacteria, pollens and chemicals. 7 to 14 Bar (100 to 200 pounds per square inch) is the optimum pressure for hot water extraction – Hire machines only run at 2 –3 Bar (30 40 psi).
- 3) The machine uses stronger suction to draw the dirt, chemicals, pollens etc. out of the carpet.

Not surprisingly, having your carpet thoroughly cleaned with hot water extraction costs more than renting a shampooer at the corner 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 out some of the dirt – but the key word here is 'some'. It will not get out many of the pollens, chemicals, bacteria and dust mite residues.

On the other hand – if you want your carpet to look good and give you years of dependable service – then you need to take extra 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. And you need to have it cleaned thoroughly and disinfected, as only a hot water extractor can do.

## **DO YOU WANT A CLEAN, HEALTHY CARPET?**

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

Each carpet cleaning method has advantages and disadvantages. Some methods will get out only the dirt. Other methods will get out dirt and grease. Still others will get out virtually everything. And, 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 that you 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 dust mites that reside in your carpet, then you're invited to call me.

The hot water unit we use is the most effective portable cleaning system available today. Likewise, it's one of the most expensive portables 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 trousers get when he plays outdoors? If you have, then you know you can brush off his trousers and make him think they're clean. The same is true for your carpet.

You can hire someone for -£50 who will brush off your carpeting and make you think it's clean. Or, if you want the job done right I'll wash your carpets with hot water and detergent using my state of the art cleaning machine and you'll KNOW they're clean.

So if you want a thoroughly clean carpet – if you're willing to invest in your family's good health – you're invited to call us. You'll receive a written estimate, at no cost or obligation. And if you give us the go-ahead, you're further protected with our ...

## 100% NO-RISK GUARANTEE



We want you to be super pleased – in fact, absolutely delighted – with every carpet and upholstery job we do. So every job comes with our iron-clad, risk free guarantee.

What does this mean? Simply this: if you aren't pleased, you pay nothing. Not one Penny. Many companies don't guarantee their work – but we feel nothing is more important than your complete satisfaction. We stand behind every job 100%.

If you ever have any questions or concerns about any of our technicians work, please call me right away:

01352 730 555

## **4 STEPS TO A FRESH, CLEAN, HEALTHY CARPET**

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

**STEP No1:** 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 No2:** 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 etc. removed which will require a hot water 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 the lowest price – knowing the company might not be in business tomorrow.

**STEP No.3:** Ask questions. The way you learn about a company is to ask specific questions and listen carefully to the answers. Here are eight 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 carpets?
- 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 cleaning carpets?
- 6) Are you a member of the NCCA?
- 7) Are you certified by the IICRC and will you show me your certification certificates.
- 8) Are all your cleaning technicians certified by the IICRC and can I see their certificates?

**STEP No4:** 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 the phone book 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 and healthily cleaned – removing the bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens, tobacco products – then we invite you to call us. We'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 obligation of any kind.

THANKS AGAIN!

...for reviewing our new **CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO CARPET CLEANING**, I hope you found this information helpful. If you have any questions or comments – or if you'd like us to give you an exact written quotation to clean your carpet or upholstery – please call us at: 01352 730 555

We've dedicated our business to consumer education and service.

We'll be pleased to help you in every way. We look forward to your call.

Thanks!!

*Gary Syers*

*Clean Living, Specialists in Carpet Cleaning*