

## **Carpet Information**

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A characteristic of some new carpet and rugs, frequently misunderstood by consumers, is shedding or fluffing. When a newly installed carpet or loose rug is vacuumed, a large amount of fiber may be found in the vacuum. The consumer may become alarmed as there may be a feeling that the carpet is defective; or the concern may be due to loose fibers which are picked up on the shoes, or balls of fiber on the surface of the carpet or rug. The consumer may contact the salesman who states it is normal, just to keep vacuuming the carpet and it will stop. This does not always alleviate the fears of the consumer.

Some yarns used in carpet are spun from staple fibers. Staple refers to fibers in the natural, unprocessed state, usually in short lengths, which must be spun or twisted into yarn.

Carpet yarns were spun first from wool. The wool fibers varied in length from two to eight inches. Many of today's man-made fibers are also cut into short lengths and spun into yarns. Different types of texture or appearance can be obtained by using staple yarns. The carpet made with the staple fibers will not have all of the fibers anchored into the back or tightly held in the yarns. Mechanical action will work some of the fibers loose. As the carpet is vacuumed, some of the loose fibers will be removed.

Many styles of carpet and rugs are sheared as one of the final steps in manufacturing. Accompanying the shearing are large vacuums used to remove loose fibers; however, some of these sheared fibers will fall into the carpet pile. These fibers will be removed during vacuuming.

The amount of fiber which is removed during vacuuming will depend upon a variety of factors. The shorter the fiber and the longer the tuft, the greater the number of loose fibers in the yarns. The yarns with less twist will not hold the loose fibers as tightly; therefore, they are easier to remove. The more mechanical action which is applied to the carpet pile by the vacuum will, in turn, remove more loose fiber. A deep brushing action produces the maximum removal. The greater the movement of air through the pile, the more fibers which will be picked up in the air stream. The thoroughness with which a carpet is vacuumed will have a big factor on the amount of loose fiber which is removed.

The length of time a carpet or rug will shed will depend upon the amount of loose fiber in the yarns, traffic level, the type of vacuum used, the vacuuming procedure, and the frequency of vacuuming. If the carpet pile is short and an upright vacuum is used industriously several times a week, most of the loose fiber will be removed in the first couple of months.

The other extreme would be a long pile carpet made with shorter fibers and vacuumed occasionally with a vacuum with air suction only. Loose fibers may be removed for the entire life of the carpet. Usually, it slows down within the first couple of months and almost stops within six months. After a carpet has been cleaned, the shedding may begin again. The mechanical action of the machine will work some of the loose fibers from the tufts. The cleaning will remove some of the oils and greases which may be holding some the loose fibers. Normally, a small amount of loose fiber will be in the carpet at this time, so it will be removed with a couple of good vacuumings.

The fiber lost due to shedding or fluffing is to be expected with carpets and rugs made with yarns containing staple fibers. The loss of fibers should not affect the durability as the amount of fiber removed is small compared to the total amount of fiber. It may look like a lot of fiber in the vacuum bag, but the fibers in the bag have no orientation and are fluffed up. It really is not as much fiber as it may appear. The more thorough the vacuuming, the quicker the loose fibers will be removed.