



## Household care series - Extending the life of your carpet

The number one way to extend the life of your carpet is to make sure you keep it clean by wiping up spills quickly as well as vacuuming at least once a week. If you have pets and or children your carpet may need more frequent attention.

We asked carpet cleaning expert Brandon Lanza about what you should look for and what questions you should ask when hiring a professional carpet cleaning service. Below is Brandon's response to our inquiry.

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Here are the most frequent questions I am asked about my carpet cleaning services:

- How much do you charge?
- Do you use a steam cleaner?
- Do you have a truck mount?

Believe it or not, although these are good and reasonable questions, none of the answers will tell you how CLEAN your carpet will be when I am finished.

If you pay “only \$89.00!” to have all the carpet in your home cleaned, but the spots remain and the carpet is soaked, I don’t think you are going to say, “I am so satisfied! I paid only \$89.00 to have all my carpet cleaned!”

It’s time to become educated about carpet cleaning.

The carpet cleaning company that charges “only \$89.00!” may try to up-sell you by saying this service or that service is not included in the low price, so another charge is added on. Or the company may zip through your house, getting the carpet wet, then leave in 25-30 minutes, creating the illusion that they have cleaned 2000 square feet of carpet. This kind of thing happens every day.

Think about it. Considering travel time and the cost of gas, in order to charge such a low price, the company would have to use a low-quality cleaning product and take the least amount of time possible to do the job. I don’t know how many times a new client has told me she was not

satisfied with the last several carpet cleaners she hired, because they weren't able to remove a spot, the spot came back, or they said the carpet would have to be replaced.

I offer one type of carpet cleaning: the best. The way I see it is that I am at your home (or office) to do one thing: clean your carpet, and there is only one way to do that: the right way, using the best cleaning solutions in the right combination for the specific type of carpet you have—nylon, polypropylene, cotton, wool, etc.—because it does make a difference.

Perhaps I can give some guidance on the better questions to ask:

- What is the process you use for cleaning carpet? (The answer should be vacuum, pre-spray, groom, use tool of choice to clean, then groom again. I also add several products in my solution tank for a one-two punch.)
- What PSI will you be using? (Anything over 350 is excessive and the carpet will have to be dry-stroked very slowly to remove as much water as possible.)
- At what temperature will the water be coming out at the tip of the wand? (Anything over 110-120 degrees does not work properly with 98% of the products on the market, so be wary of those companies that boast of using water over 200 degrees. Heat alone does not clean carpet—once you go over a certain temperature, the product will not work at its full potential.)
- Do you use a wand or a rotary cleaning tool? (The best is a rotary tool.)
- Do you dry-stroke the carpet after your first few passes with the cleaning tool? (Cleaners must go over carpet again without any water in order to remove as much water as possible. If water is left in your carpet, what else is left with it?)
- Do you use any surfactants, natural brighteners, deodorizers, or encapsulates? (At minimum, I always use these products, and add others when necessary. There are thousands of products to choose from.)

Good carpet cleaners are out there, but you must do your due diligence to find the right one. And remember that being certified through the IICRC does not guarantee the company can clean your carpet properly.

So many factors must be considered beyond “How much do you charge?” or “Do you have a truck mount?”

If you have more questions about carpet cleaning please call Brandon Lanza from Certified Services 248-818-7657.

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