

The Care and Cleaning of Oriental Rugs

The beauty and quality of your oriental rug can be maintained for decades to come with proper care and cleaning. The maintenance information reviewed below will assure you years of luxuriant service from your newly purchased rug.

BASIC CARE

Rug wear is inevitable but preventive steps can be taken to greatly reduce the effects of wear. Frequently rotating your rug 180 degrees will help equalize the effects of wear and the elements on your rug or kilim. It is a good idea to occasionally rearrange the layout of the room to alter traffic patterns across the rug.

Moths and dampness are what really threaten the longevity of your oriental rug. A rug in use which is frequently moved and exposed to air and light is rarely in danger of moth damage. Dampness can cause mildew and deterioration of rug threads and fabric. Avoid displaying or storing the rug anywhere that is not dry and well ventilated. Avoid soaking the rug when cleaning spills. Never place a planter on the rug unless an air circulation space exists between the container and the rug. For additional preventive care against moths and dampness refer to the section on storage.

Exposure to sunlight and household fumes should be considered when displaying the rug. Continual exposure to sunlight will eventually cause color fading and increase the rugs brittleness. Fumes from the stove, chimney and furnace create an acidity which will adversely effect the rug. Limit exposure to these elements when deciding on where the rug will be displayed.

Pads

A good quality padding under your rug is essential for rug preservation. Pads stabilize the rug, minimize friction between the floor and rug, provide breathing space beneath the rug and add to sound absorption.

The best pads are made of hair and jute thinly coated with rubber on both sides. If the hair/jute

pads present a problem due to an allergic condition, a sponge rubber pad can be used (foam or ripple rubber pads should not be used). Avoid any pad which is too soft or thick as they cause the foundation of the rug to be stretched when weight is placed on the rug.

Hanging

If you wish to hang your rug or kilim, utilize a strong poster holder. Another alternative is to sew a loop of fabric along the back of the rug, place a rod through the loop and suspend the rug from the rod. Do not use nails or staples to hang the rug, and avoid hanging rugs from the warp threads.

Storage

If your rug or kilim has to be stored for any extended period of time, make sure the rug is clean. It is a good idea to treat the rug with a moth repellent prior to storage. Roll the rug against the lay of the nap to form the tightest cylinder (the direction of the nap can be determined by running your hand across the pile in the direction of the fringe) Wrap the rug with a cloth or a sheet. Do not use a plastic bag as the rug needs to breath. Store in a dry, cool well ventilated area to avoid mildew or heat damage.

CLEANING

Restoring Pile

Pile crushed by heavy furniture can be restored up-right by spraying the area with a little water and brushing with a soft brush (a clothes brush will do).

Vacuuming, Sweeping & Beating

Always vacuum your rug with the nap (the lay of the nap can be checked by running your hand across the length of the rug). Vacuuming against the nap will press dirt back into the pile. Avoid using the vacuum on the fringe of the rug or kilim as the fringe may break or tear.

Sweeping your rug with a broom on a weekly basis is highly recommended. Sweeping removes

loose dirt and brings out the sheen of the rug. If practical, beating your rug is an excellent cleaning method.

Washing

Oriental rugs should be washed on a regular basis. Depending on the type of traffic your rug receives it is a good idea to wash your rug every two to four years. Surface cleaning is all that is usually needed. It is best to have your rug cleaned by a professional cleaner specializing in oriental rugs.

Never steam or chemically clean your rug as these cleaning methods deplete the natural oils of the pile. Do not put your rugs or kilims in the washing machine.

Spills

Deal with spills immediately. Depending on what has been spilled, it is often a good idea to use a spoon to scoop up the spill. Dilute the spill with water and blot, do not rub, the area with a paper towel until all moisture is removed. Always blot from the outer edges towards the center to prevent the spill from spreading.

Stain Removal

If you know what has caused the stain, a treatment is usually available. Common food and beverage stains can be treated with the same mild detergent used to wash delicate clothes. An ink stain from a ball point pen can be removed by spraying the area with hairspray, letting it dry and brushing the area with a water/vinegar solution.

Not every stain should be attacked with water. Oil based stains are best treated with dry cleaning solvents. Any questions on stain removal should be directed to a rug cleaning professional experienced with oriental rugs.

When treating stains always blot and brush stains from the outside edges towards the center. Absorb all moisture by blotting with a paper towel and use a hand held hair dryer to complete treatment.