

Abrash/Color Variation



Abrash is color change in the face yarns of a rug due to differences in wool, dye lots or mordants used in the dyeing process. The color change occurs in straight lines across the width of the rug, left to right, along a row of knots and parallel to a weft yarn. Close observation at the back clearly shows the color change along a row of knots. Color change due to other reasons such as fading are irregular and follow no particular pattern.

Abrash can vary from subtle differences in shade to dramatic differences in color. Subtle abrash can be obscured by soil and becomes more apparent after cleaning, but a quick look at the back will confirm abrash.

Abrash is a characteristic of hand-woven textiles and does not, in itself, increase or decrease the value. In fact, some manufacturers of both hand and machine-made rugs intentionally weave abrash into their rugs. Abrash can enhance the beauty and desirability of a rug. Many modern rugs are woven intentionally with abrash. As in older, traditional rugs, the abrash can be subtle or quite obvious.



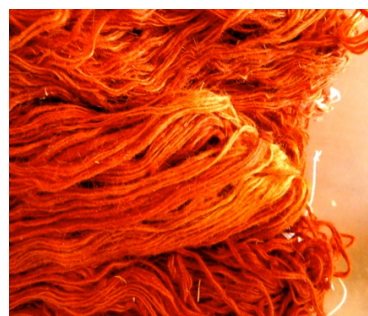
Other Types of Color Variation

Color variation in the face yarns can be a result of the type of wool used. The Afghan traders call it 'Ghazni' wool named after a trading town on the main road half way between Kabul and Khandahar. The per-dyed wool is a mix of ivory and either gray or ginger colored fleece that is carded, spun and plied together to form a variegated/multi-colored natural yarn. These yarns are then dyed a single shade but the outcome is not a solid, uniform color.



Another cause of color variation is uneven dye absorption due to irregularities in spin (tighter and looser twists). When dipped into the dye vat, not all of the yarn is exposed to the dye and areas remain undyed or only slightly tinted. An example of this is similar to the process used to make tie-dye shirts.

Color variation can also be a factor of how densely the dye pot is filled with yarn and how often it is stirred in the dyeing process. Machine spun yarns tend to take dye more evenly which is why they are often less 'interesting' looking.



Animal Stains and Odors



Pet accidents, such as urine, feces and vomit, are the most common stains found on rugs. These stains are generally permanent as the face yarns are discolored almost instantly. This is especially true on natural fibers after just a few minutes of exposure.

Not only does animal urine discolor rug face yarns, it can also break the dye fiber bond and cause color migration. Animal urine is acidic and when it comes in contact with bacteria in the air, the pH shifts to alkaline. Since most wool is acid dyed, this high pH residue can break the dye/wool bond and cause the rug to bleed before, during and after cleaning.

Many pet foods contain red dye, perhaps to make the food look more appetizing to the owners. If an animal becomes ill after eating, the regurgitation can leave a red stain. Your Master Rug Cleaner may or may not be able to remove this stain.

Repetitive pet accidents also cause odor. Urine odors range from localized, occasional mishaps to overall contamination. In addition, animals in continuous contact with rugs can also create an odor from the transfer of fur oils. This "body odor" is very difficult to completely remove. At times, this odor is not discovered until the rug becomes wet during cleaning. The cleaning process and high humidity will exacerbate any existing odors.

When you discover an animal accident on your rug, absorb as much liquid as possible using absorbent cotton or paper towels. If you do not act immediately, the stain will be permanent. Do not attempt stain removal with any consumer spotting products as they will make the stain worse. Contact your Master Rug Cleaner to professionally clean, sanitize, and deodorize your rug.



Animal stains and other spills can remove the tea wash from a fringe or body of the rug.

Backing Separation/Latex Decay



A tufted rug is composed of multiple layers or backing materials held together with latex glue. The face yarns are tufted into the topmost or primary backing and held in place with latex glue. One or two backings are applied with latex to give the rug dimensional stability. Over time, these backings can separate from the face of the rug. This commonly occurs with hand-tufted rugs due to age, environment, heavy wear, pets and water damage.

Latex is a plant based product and is the basis for rubber items such as tires and rubber bands. Like most rubber items, the latex in rugs deteriorates with age. It becomes brittle, dry, and crumbly and loses its ability to hold the multiple backings firmly together. The latex mix contains additives that affect its adhesive and aging properties. One additive is a filler that can be compared to gravel in a concrete

mixture. Marble dust (a filler) is added to latex as an extender but has no adhesive qualities. Increased use of these extenders reduces the adhesive power of the latex and over time results in the separation of the backings from the rug. The filler looks like sand or powder. When the latex begins to breakdown, it leaves a powdery residue on the floor underneath the rug. More expensive latex compounds will better withstand aging as well as cleaning, but even these will eventually deteriorate.

Your Master Rug Cleaner may be able to remove the old latex and re-glue the backing. However, this is a costly procedure because it is time consuming and requires a great deal of latex.

Latex can also off gas, creating an offensive odor. See "Hand-Tufted Rugs."



Browning



Browning is a yellow, brown or red discoloration due to degradation of cellulose in the presence of moisture. Cellulose is a material derived from plants that oxidizes or degrades with age producing a natural dye that causes this discoloration called "browning." An excellent example of cellulosic browning is the yellow discoloration that occurs in a newspaper as it ages. A brown discoloration can also occur when there is incomplete rinsing of high pH detergent residues. Consumer spotters and previous cleanings using inappropriate products usually cause this problem.

Cellulosic fibers such as cotton and various forms of rayon found in rug face yarns or backing materials are a source of browning. The more cellulosic material in a rug, the greater potential for browning. After wet cleaning, the potential for browning depends on the humidity, drying time, materials, and residues from prior cleanings.

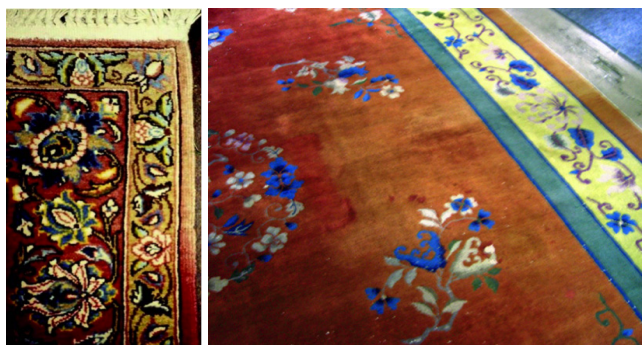
If browning does develop, it may be corrected by your Master Rug Cleaner as it is not always a permanent stain.

Color Change



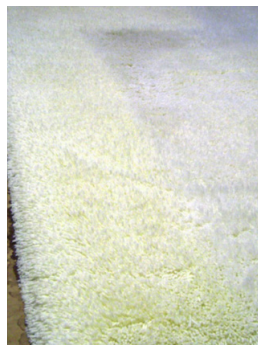
Most dyes used on natural fiber rugs have an acid pH. Sometimes these dyes react with sunlight or chemicals in the environment resulting in a color change.

Sunlight Damage: Almost every textile will lighten in color or fade over time. The extent of damage depends on the rug's location, exposure and intensity of sunlight. Prevention from fading in sunny locations can be achieved by keeping window treatments closed, treating the windows with a protective coating that filters the ultraviolet rays or applying a fabric protector containing a UV filter.



Fume Fading: Gradual change in color is due to a reaction with dyes and gaseous pollutants such as oxides of nitrogen or sulfur in the air. These pollutants are produced during combustion such as automobile engines and wood fires. Fume fading is accelerated by sunlight, heat, and high humidity. The color change starts at the tips of the tufts and moves toward the backing.

Ozone Fading: Ozone gas in the air causes fading and high humidity and heat will accelerate the process. Ozone is a naturally occurring gas that reacts with light and pollutants in the air and can cause rugs to lighten, turn white or change from one color to another.



Indicator Dyes: Dyes are sensitive to different pH levels. The manufacturer generally chooses a dye not knowing it is acid or alkaline sensitive. Sometimes the color can be reversed back to the original color by your Master Rug Cleaner. However, strong chemicals found in supermarket products can permanently damage dyes.



Chemical Wash: New rugs are chemically washed in country of origin to remove some of the cuticle, mute the colors and give the wool more luster. If the colors on the back are significantly darker than the front, this indicates the rug was aggressively washed with chemicals to make it appear older, making the colors more subdued.

Color Migration



Color migration occurs when one or more dyes bleed, run or migrate into an adjoining area and leave a discoloration. There are several causes of color migration or dye bleeding in area rugs. Most wool is dyed with acid dyes. Wool has an affinity for dye-stuffs that react chemically and bond with the acid dye. If the dye-fiber bond is broken by alkaline (high pH) residue build-up or the use of alkaline cleaning solutions, bleeding may occur. Your Master Rug Cleaner uses WoolSafe® products but their use does not guarantee that dyes will not bleed. Most dyes by themselves do not adhere to wool fibers without a mordant, a chemical used to adhere the dye to the fiber. If this step is skipped or improperly executed, the dye will bleed when wet washed, regardless of cleaning solution.



Dry Crocking

Crocking is the removal of dye from a fabric by rubbing. Crocking can be caused by insufficient dye penetration or fixation, the use of improper dyes or dyeing methods, or insufficient washing and treatment after the dyeing operation. Crocking can occur under dry or wet conditions.



Dye Bleed Caused by Animal Stains

Animal stains can also break the dye-fiber bond. Urine is deposited in an acid state and as the bacteria attacks the urine stain, the pH shifts to alkaline. Since most wool is acid dyed, this high pH residue can break the bond and cause the rug to bleed before, during or after cleaning.

"Painted foundation" refers to rugs that have been "cosmetically repaired" by applying a pigment or ink (not a dye) to the foundation of a worn rug.

See Rug Facts "Painted Rugs"

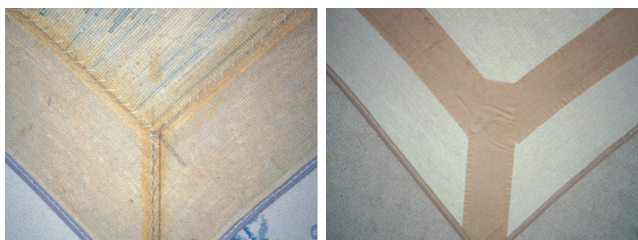


Dye Bleed Caused by Painted Foundation

Custom Rugs



Custom rugs are sold in a variety of traditional and contemporary designs, colors and sizes, and produced by a variety of firms. They are made of synthetic materials or combinations of natural fibers. Some custom rugs are manufactured by joining together the rug field with four borders. The material can be machine-woven or tufted and the components may be hand-sewn or joined together using a hot melt adhesive tape. Hand-sewn seams are more durable and withstand cleaning better than hot melt tape, which deteriorates as it ages.



The two most common cleaning problems with custom rugs are shrinkage and rippling. The separate components are prone to differential shrinkage due to the inherent properties of each section of the rug, especially when natural fibers are part of the construction. This requires your Master Rug Cleaner to use special cleaning methods to preserve the original dimensions of the rug. Invasive cleaning meth-



ods may be required to restore the appearance of extremely soiled rugs; however, the problems described above will be exacerbated. Therefore, custom bordered rugs should be maintained with regular vacuuming and professionally cleaned before they become visibly soiled.

In addition to the two problems listed above, some custom tufted rugs can soften with the application of heat, cleaning or spotting products if they have a latex backing. If latex is applied on the back over the hand-sewn seams, latex oxidation can migrate to the front, leaving discoloration along the seams. Face yarns can also come loose along the seams and "peaking" can occur where the rug is seamed.



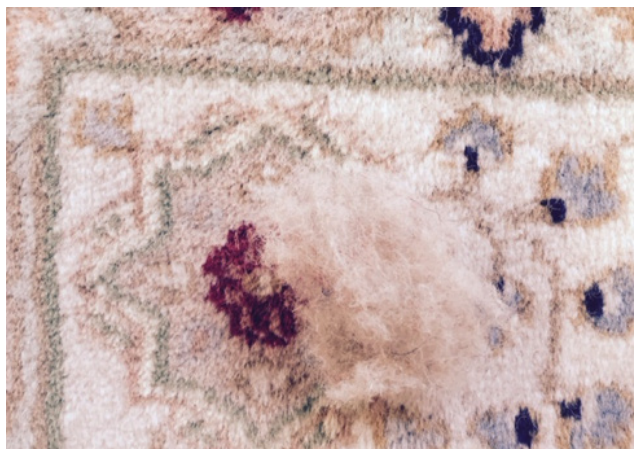
Consumer Spotters



Though advertised as “safe”, rug and carpet spotters sold in super markets or retail stores are not formulated for use on natural fibers. The use of these products can cause color loss and/or re-soiling. The color loss is often permanent, as these products contain reducing agents and optical brighteners. Many times the bleaching effect will not show until the rug is wet and the excessive detergent residue is thoroughly rinsed out.



Your Master Rug Cleaner offers WoolSafe approved spotters that have been tested as safe to use on wool and other natural fibers. In addition, it is best to avoid powdered carpet fresheners. Overuse of these masking agents by homeowners leaves excessive amounts of powdered material in the rug and over time, becomes hardened and impacted in the foundation yarns. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to remove.



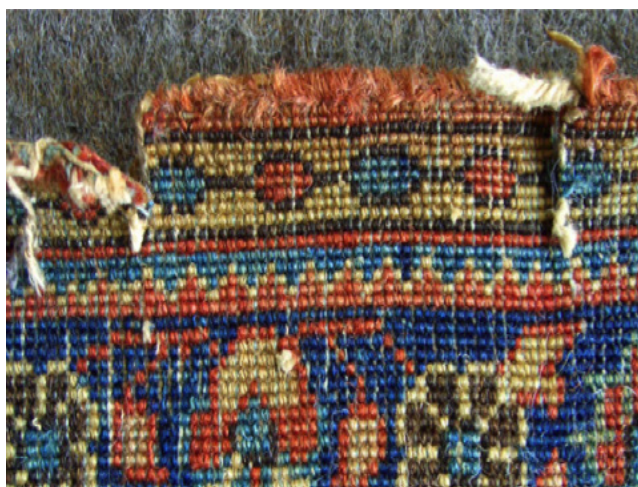
Dry Rot/Wet Rot



Dry rot occurs when cellulosic materials such as cotton, linen, or jute decay over time. The causes of this cellulosic decay include moisture from pot plants, urine stains, humidity and a variety of other environmental conditions or household accidents. The decaying process can take years or can happen in shorter time.

The term "dry rot" is misleading in that it indicates that rot occurred in the absence of moisture. Dry rot is actually caused by a type of airborne spore that feeds on cellulosic fibers. While the rot may have been first noticed before, during or after cleaning, there was preexisting moisture in the past that over time rotted the fibers. The weakened fibers are brittle and break with handling, cleaning, folding, rolling or can occur on the floor without any additional agitation. There is no way to reverse dry rot.

Tightly knotted, older rugs that have not been cleaned properly for decades are also susceptible to dry rot. The cellulosic fibers in the rug absorb moisture from normal humidity in the air. Because the rugs are tightly woven, the moisture is trapped in the impacted soil and tight foundation and cannot dry. Periodic cleaning removes dry particulate matter and properly dries the rug so that dry rot is less likely to occur.



Dry Rot

Animal stains are a major cause of dry rot. Urine is hygroscopic (moisture attracting) and keeps the contaminated areas slightly damp for long periods of time. The areas with urine contamination may not be damp to the touch, but a hygrometer (moisture detector) will register that the area is wet.

Pot plants watered and left on rugs also cause all the fibers to rot. The cause and effect of this common occurrence is obvious. A rotten rug may be repaired or restored depending on the cost of repair, the value of the rug and the needs of the customer.



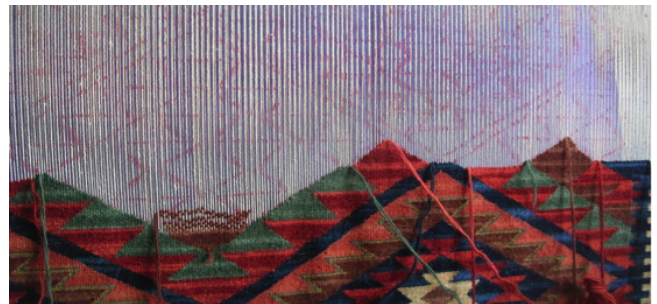
Pot Plant Rot

Flatweave Rugs



Flatwoven rugs are rugs made without a pile. Flatweaves are made in a variety of ways and some are reversible. Examples of flatwoven rugs are dhurries, kilims, Aubussons, Navajos, Zapotecs, rag rugs and soumaks. In these flatwoven rugs, the warps serve as the foundation of the rug and the wefts generally create the design. In addition, pile and flatweave techniques can be used in the same rug.

Because these textiles lack dimensional stability found in hand-knotted rugs, they have a tendency to curl, ripple and lose their shape. Also, some flatweaves may have stencil markings on the warps that can wick to the surface during or after cleaning and there is no way for the rug cleaner to determine this inherent problem in advance.



Another problem with flatweaves is that their colors are often bright and bold and may bleed when cleaned due to improperly processed dyes, animal stains or water damage. Flatweaves also do not hide dirt as well as pile rugs and should be vacuumed and cleaned more often.

Fringe



The Achilles heel of many hand-knotted and other area rugs is the fringe. On hand-knotted and hand-woven rugs, the fringe is an extension of the foundation warps. The loose fringe is finished in a variety of ways to prevent the rug from raveling. Machine-made rugs may have fringe attached to each end.

Fringe begins to deteriorate from the time the rug comes off the loom. Most hand-knotted rugs are chemically washed in their country of origin to give luster to the wool and/or to mellow the colors. This treatment involves the use of chlorine bleach and caustic soda, which causes the cotton fringe to slowly rot and lose its spin. Chemical washing combined with vacuuming, foot traffic and periodic cleaning, can take a toll on the appearance level of the fringe.

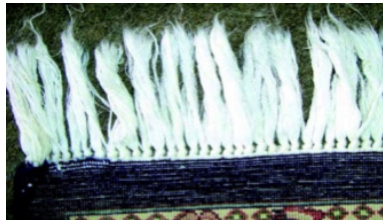
Over time, fringe becomes worn, rotten, and bloomed. Extremely soiled and tangled fringe requires more aggressive cleaning and grooming. Water, fire and animal damage also contribute to fringe deterioration. One expects a certain amount of textile fiber attrition from everyday use and cleaning. A good example of this is cleaning the filter on the clothes dryer to remove lint and fibers that come off during the cleaning and drying cycle.

Since the late 1990s, a process called "tea wash" has been used to give the fringe an antique look. Methods used to apply the tea wash vary from country to country and rug to rug. A common method of tea wash application is spraying the wash on top of the fringe which leaves the surface of the fringe dyed but the twisted areas are untouched by the spray. When the fringe begins to ravel, these white or undyed areas begin to show. The tea wash may be reapplied by your Master Rug Cleaner; however, color match is difficult if not impossible to match. The yarns used to

create a fringe on machine-made rugs is more likely to be permanently dyed prior to being made into fringe.

Certain bleaching agents damage the integrity of the fringe. Therefore, it is the practice of Master Rug Cleaners to clean fringe, not bleach it. Fringe repair is also available.

Animal stains and other spills can remove the tea wash from a fringe or body of the rug.



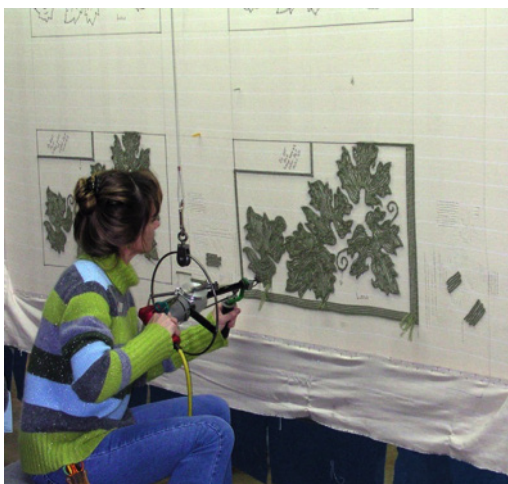
Mottled Tea Washed Fringe



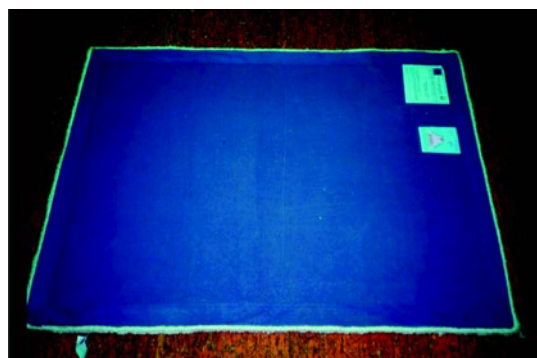
Hand-Tufted Rugs



Unlike hand-knotted rugs, the face yarns of hand-tufted rugs are hand "gunned" into a backing and held in place by a layer of latex and a secondary backing. These rugs have been produced in a variety of countries for 50+ years. Since the 1990s, hand-tufted rugs from India and China have become extremely popular. Indian and Chinese tufted rugs are less expensive than oriental rugs and provide a modern decorative look at a much lower price point. Because of their construction, tufted rugs have several inherent problems.



The latex used to hold the layers of face yarns and foundation together has an unpleasant odor that is not correctable. Oftentimes the latex smells when the rug is new but may not be obvious until after cleaning. If the rug's owner is bothered by this odor, they should contact the company where they purchased it, as many retailers are replacing the rug or refunding the purchase price. Over time, latex oxidizes, becomes stiff, and powders causing the backing materials to delaminate and crack. As the latex decays, it loses its adhesive qualities, the rug becomes very limber and the secondary backing starts to separate from the body of the rug. The backing can be reapplied but the cost may exceed the value of the rug. Your Master Rug Cleaner will advise you if the rug is worth repairing.



The secondary backings applied to hand-tufted rugs from India may be dyed blue or green. These dyed backings can bleed during washing. In addition, the design that is stenciled in red onto the primary backing can bleed and wick into the face yarns and or the back.



Because of the bleeding issues and the multiple layers of foundation held together with latex, it is more difficult to address cleaning and urine decontamination without potentially damaging these rugs. Hand-tufted rugs are not designed to last a lifetime like authentic hand-knotted rugs.

Irregular Shape



Rugs are not always uniformly square or rectangular. Because of the precision of a machine-loom, machine-made rugs are more likely to be square or rectangular (corners at 90° angles). Handmade rugs are most often irregular in shape and can vary in length and width. An irregular shape can mean the sides and ends have a concave or convex shape or the ends and sides are not perfectly straight. Blocking these rugs is not always effective or permanent and usually not recommended.



Hand-tufted rugs have less dimensional stability than other more rigid rugs. As the latex that holds these rugs together decays and the rugs become more pliable, they can lose their shape. In most cases, tufted rugs can be blocked back into shape.

Chinese needlepoint rugs are stitched on the bias or diagonally causing the rugs to be in the shape of a parallelogram. These rugs are blocked prior to sale but will eventually return to their original irregular shape from humidity and wet cleaning. Blocking must be done on Chinese needlepoints after every cleaning to ensure a square or nearly square rug.



Moth Damage



Case making clothes moths can do substantial damage to textiles. Adult female moths lay their eggs almost immediately after they emerge from the pupal case. Moth damage occurs when the moth is in the caterpillar/larvae stage and feed on protein fibers such as wool. If left undisturbed, they will eat until the food source is gone.

Moths are usually found in dark, quiet rooms and places where the vacuum cleaner cannot easily reach, such as under chairs and sofas. They prefer to feed on soiled/stained rugs, so it is best not to store rugs without first cleaning them. Clean rugs are less susceptible to insect infestation since important vitamins and minerals necessary to complete the moth's development may be lacking.

Indications of a moth infestation are small, flying adult moths. These flying insects indicate the infestation is considerable. Look for loose pile yarns on top of the rug, small depressions and voids on the surface of the rug and/or missing yarns on the back of the rug. Damage apparent before cleaning will get much worse after cleaning as the loose tufts will fall out from handling and agitation.

The most effective way to prevent an infestation and inhibit growth is to keep rugs clean. Routine vacuuming/cleaning of the rug and home are necessary to help prevent moth infestation. Some new rugs come into the U.S. with moth eggs and it may be a few years before the owner realizes their rug is moth damaged.

After cleaning and removing as many of the larvae as possible, your Master Rug Cleaner can offer to spray the rug with an insect deterrent. This product is not "bullet proof" but is an additional step to prevent infestation. The customer should understand that none of the above treatments is a guarantee that the moths will not return.

If moths are found in a rug, other home furnishings are likely infested. Consulting an exterminator may be advisable.



Moth damage on the back



Larva feeding on wool face pile



Moth damage on the side/serging

Painted Rugs



"Painted foundation" refers to rugs that have been "cosmetically enhanced" by applying a pigment or ink (not a dye) to the foundation of a worn rug. This treatment is usually done to cover or conceal wear or even out abrash (color variation) on full pile rugs and usually without the knowledge or consent of the buyer.

Painting is quicker and much less expensive than re-knotting low pile, worn rugs. If the material used to paint the rug is made for wool, then when it is used on the cotton foundation, it will not chemically bond and will not be colorfast. The unscrupulous may charge the consumer for these rugs as if they were in better condition. Painted rugs bleed profusely when wet cleaned and ruin the entire rug. Liquid spills also cause these rugs to bleed where they are painted.



When purchasing a rug, our best advice is to test for painting with water and a white towel. Test suspicious areas by wetting the cloth and rubbing the rug. This may be done on both sides of the rug. If color comes off on the towel, the rug has been painted and should not be purchased.

Some new oriental rugs are painted on the back of the rug, usually over the outside guard border, to cover the wefts. When the rug is washed, these non-colorfast painted backs of the rug will run into the fringe and body of the rug.



Pile and Texture



Pile distortion occurs when there is a change in a rug's original pile direction. Foot traffic, soil accumulation and inappropriate spotting materials and procedures are the most common causes of pile distortion. Many times it can be improved or corrected during the cleaning process. Thick wool pile, silk face yarns and soft wools are subject to texture distortion. Fuzzy, crushed or bloomed pile is also considered pile distortion.



"Shading" or "pooling" occurs when the pile of a rug is not uniform and lies in various directions and is an inherent condition in many rugs. When this happens, light is not reflected uniformly and creates light and dark areas. Cleaning and grooming can help but do not always fully correct shading.



Your Master Rug Cleaner makes every effort to correct pile distortion, texture distortion and shading during and after the cleaning process. However, many times the distortion cannot be corrected to near original appearance. Some especially sensitive rugs, such as silk, have unavoidable texture issues even after careful, less invasive cleaning methods.

Ripples and Shrinkage



Dimensional changes of rugs during the cleaning process can occur when natural fibers are used to make the rug, borders are attached at 90° angles to the body of the rug and the weaving process creates a propensity for an irregular shape.

Natural fibers used in a rug's backing or foundation absorbs moisture during wet cleaning and from humidity in the home. The fibers swell with moisture and as the rug dries it can shrink in overall length and width as much as 10%. Overall dimensional shrinkage is most pronounced after the rug's first cleaning.



Borders attached at 90° angles to the body of the rug have a propensity for differential shrinkage during or after wet cleaning. When the warps and wefts shrink in different directions, the rug buckles along the seams. Humidity in the home can also cause differential shrinkage.

Not only can hand woven rugs shrink in overall width and length, they can also shrink in isolated areas. If a section of warps or wefts is not pre-shrunk before the weaving process, then it will shrink in those areas and create bad puckers and ripples throughout the rug.

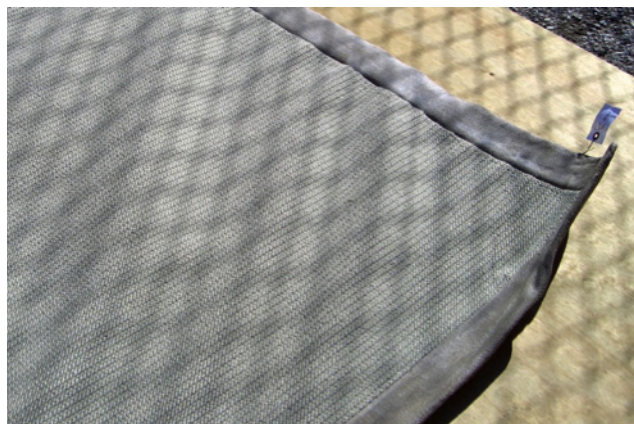


Ripples down the side of a hand-woven or hand-knotted rug are usually an indication of a weaving defect. During the weaving process, warps and wefts should be under even tension on the loom. If there is uneven tension during the weaving process or too much material on the ends or sides, the rug will have ripples that are difficult if not impossible to permanently correct. Blocking may help but after washing or exposure to humidity, the rug will most likely return to its original shape.



Cotton Bordered Rugs

The cotton binding on the four sides will shrink when wet cleaned and cause the rug to buckle.



Silk



Synonymous with luxury, silk has been woven into tapestries, rugs, fine fabrics and accessories for over 4000 years. Sericulture, the cultivation of silkworms for silk, has remained virtually unchanged over the years. Recently, mercerized cotton and rayon are used in place of silk to mimic its luster and feel.



There are problems associated with cleaning silk, cotton and rayon rugs that are not generally encountered with rugs made from other natural or synthetic fibers. These face yarns are subject to pile distortion when cleaned or spotted that many times is permanent. In addition, some of the dyes are not colorfast. Silk and artificial silk are prone to shading, water marking, sun fading and discoloration. Modern Persian silk rugs are almost never colorfast.

To minimize the problems associated with cleaning silk textiles, your Master Rug Cleaner will choose the method most suitable for your individual rug based on age, colorfastness, condition, spots, stains and degree of soiling. Invasive cleaning methods may be required to restore the appearance of extremely soiled rugs; however, the problems described above will be exacerbated. Therefore, silk rugs should be maintained with regular vacuuming, professionally cleaned before they become visibly soiled and ideally used in low traffic areas.



Previous Repairs



Previous re-weaves can be seen from the front and back and are commonly found in older, worn rugs. When these repairs are performed in the country of origin, the dyes used are most often not light fast and fade over time. These repairs are done in country of

origin because the cost is considerably less than in the United States.

Many times these repairs are not noticeable before cleaning because of soil, size and quality of execution.



Front



Back

Stencil Bleeding



Manufacturers of rugs such as Chinese needlepoint, Chinese-tufted and Indo- tufted rugs will often stencil the design onto the canvas foundation material prior to inserting the face yarns. This stencil can bleed through to the front and back of the rug during wet washing.

On some Tibetan and Chinese hand-knotted rugs, the entire length of 1-2 warps, spaced 1-1.5 inches apart, will be stenciled in blue, red or green to help the weaver maintain the uniformity of the rug. When stenciled rugs are washed, if the dye used to mark the foundation is not colorfast, the stencils will bleed to the back and face of the rug almost instantaneously. There is no way to determine prior to cleaning if stenciling is present and that it is colorfast.



Chinese Rugs with Stencil Bleed

Many times importers will print stock numbers on the back of the fringe kelim and this will bleed through to the front of the rug during the wash process. It is difficult if not impossible to remove.



Tibetan Rug with Stencil Bleed

Non-colorfast stenciling is considered a manufacturer's defect. The rug should be returned to the retailer.



Sprouts/Pilling/Shedding



Sprouts are individual face yarns that appear above the level of the rug pile and are an inherent condition of modern rugs from Pakistan, India and other countries. The wool used in these rugs is machine spun with a very hard twist. The yarns are twisted so tightly that they curl down into the pile. When the rug is sheared, the yarns curled into the pile are not cut. Cleaning, vacuuming and foot traffic uncurl these longer tufts, creating thousands of sprouts above the level of the rug's surface.

The sprouts may appear as light spots all over the rug. Shearing may help this inherent condition, but this treatment is only available at a small number of specialty rug cleaning plants and does not guarantee to shear all buried sprouts.



Pilling is found in rugs made with natural fiber, short staple face yarns but can also occur with short staple acrylic face yarns. As the short staple fibers work loose from the yarn, they can become entangled and form a fuzz ball called a "pill" (commonly associated with wool or acrylic sweaters). Pilling can be removed with shearing but will recur over time.

Shedding is the release of short staple fibers, as opposed to continuous filament fibers, from wool, cotton, linen and other natural fibers. Not all rugs made of natural fibers shed significantly and this minimal fiber loss will not appreciably reduce the life of the rug. Short staple fibers are spun into yarn, twisted, plied and set with heat to hold the twist. Generally speaking, excessive shedding occurs on rugs with short staple face yarns for which the above referenced process was inadequately executed. Shedding is most often associated with cheaper hand-knotted rugs but can occur occasionally on expensive wool broadloom carpet. Excessive shedding will shorten considerably the life of the rug.

Yellowing



Yellowing is a common condition usually found on lighter colored rugs. This discoloration can occur for a variety of reasons indicating a pre-existing problem. Sometimes the yellowing will not cover the entire rug, but becomes noticeable in areas of the rug. Browning, spills, watermarks, etc. can cause discoloration or yellowing. Correction will depend on the cause of the yellowing. The yellowing may not be noticed until after the rug is cleaned because of soil covering the color change. Yellowing is usually not correctable and must be considered a preexisting condition and can occur because of:

Anti-Oxidants

Anti-Oxidation chemicals such as BHT are added to carpet cushioning and some latex preparations and can off-gas during the life of the rug and cause the pile to yellow.



Photobleaching

In the early life of a rug, exposure to sun or UV light can cause the natural yellow color component of wool to bleach. Photobleaching is most obvious when part of a rug is exposed to sunlight and part is not. Exposing the entire rug to sunlight will ultimately cause the yellow to disappear.



Dyes

Light colors such as beige, tan, or cream can have dyestuffs that fade, altering the color of the pile of the rug to yellow.

Cleaning Agents

Some consumer spotting and cleaning agents contain florescent brightening agents that can yellow with age and exposure to UV light. Silicone based protective sprays and insecticides can also yellow with age.

Oxidation

Over time natural fibers, particularly wool, yellow with age. This is due to sunlight and atmospheric conditions.



White Knots



White knots are an inherent characteristic of hand-knotted rugs. When the rug loom is setup, the white, cotton warp yarns are under tension. During the weaving process, pounding the comb between each row of knots weakens the warp yarns and some eventually break. The broken warp yarns are spliced together by knotting in a small length of warp yarn, producing two knots in the foundation. There can be hundreds of these splices in a single rug. Over time, the pile wears down to the point where these knots become visible.

White knots can be obscured by soil and then “appear” after cleaning.

In some cases, the warp may be made of a material other than cotton and a color other than white or ivory, so the “white” knot may not be white.

White knots can also be observed in the pile of new rugs. These knots are sometimes dyed the color of the pile before they are sold. The dyes used are ones used to dye wool which are not permanent or “wash fast” when used on cotton. Therefore, white knots in new rugs may also become more apparent after cleaning.

Your Master Rug Cleaner may offer to dye these knots the color of the surrounding pile as an additional service. Warning: Do not cut out the white knot as this will damage the foundation of the rug.



How To Select a Professional Rug Cleaning Company



Before having your rug professionally cleaned, ask a few questions.

All Rug Cleaning Companies Are Not The Same

- Never select a rug cleaning firm based on price alone. Price is not the best measure of quality service.
- Rugs should never be cleaned in your home unless there are extenuating circumstances. Reputable rug cleaners pick up and deliver rugs or have a location for drop off.
- The most qualified rug care specialists distinguish themselves by their experience, in-depth knowledge of rugs, training, methods, processes, and customer service.

Education

- Are they active in an industry association?
- Your rug cleaner should be committed to the highest level of education and training.
- Are they certified under the Master Rug Cleaner® program, the benchmark of industry training?

Experience

- Area rugs can be a considerable investment. How long has the company been in the business of cleaning rugs?
- Are the rugs cleaned at their facility or subcontracted out?
- All rugs are not alike and therefore should not be cleaned the same. Your Master Rug Cleaner tailors the cleaning process to each rug depending on origin, age, pre-existing conditions, fibers, dyes and construction.

References

- Check out your rug cleaning company with the Better Business Bureau.

Systems and Process

- The system and process used by a rug cleaning company is extremely important. Be sure they are using the most advanced, state-of-the-art equipment on the market today for maximum dry soil removal and thorough immersion washing that does not leave behind sticky detergent residue.