



## Beaulieu Residential

### Tek Newsletter

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### Vacuuming Tips

Because more than 80% of all soils are dry, tracked-on substances the need for routine and effective vacuuming cannot be understated. In fact, vacuuming is considered to be the single most important aspect of the end-user's carpet care and cleaning regime.

Today's makes and models of vacuum cleaners include upright models, canister models, backpack models and central units. While each of these type vacuums has their own advantages, upright vacuums equipped with beater bar, either fixed or retractable are the most popular. These type vacuums offer a wide range of use and can be used to vacuum carpet constructions that include loop-pile, most cut-piles, cut-loops and Berbers. And, because of their beater bar and brush action they are very effective in removing deeply embedded dry soils and litter. However, if the beater bar and brush attachment is not retractable or cannot be removed it can actually cause damage to cut-pile carpets designed with longer pile yarn constructions (longer than one inch). Of primary concern here are Shag and Frieze carpets. Despite the use of tightly twisted heat-set yarns, the pile agitation associated with beater bar and brush can cause the pile yarns of these carpets to burst open (bloom) excessively, thus changing their texture.

Although canister, backpack and central vacuums lack the advantage of the beater bar and brush, unless the upright vacuum model allows for their retraction or detachment, these vacuums are best suited for Shag and Frieze carpets.

The purpose of vacuuming is to allow enough lift (airflow, often expressed as "lift" and measured in inches of mercury). While some consumers may be under the incorrect assumption that their vacuum setting must be adjusted so that their vacuum sets firmly on the carpet, a too deep vacuum setting tends to "seal" the vacuum, thus restricting airflow. Without adequate airflow a vacuum won't vacuum! If unsure, one way to determine proper vacuum height setting is to watch the carpet as you begin to vacuum. If the setting is too low the vacuum may have a tendency to lift the carpet. A similar scenario can occur when attempting to vacuum heavy (pile weight) carpets. In these cases, an improper vacuum height setting chokes off the airflow required to create suction. When this occurs the consumer may call the carpet manufacturer to question why they can't vacuum their new expensive carpet when the same vacuum they've used for many years works well when vacuuming their less expensive lighter weight carpet.

Another concern consumers occasionally encounter when vacuuming heavy grade carpets occurs when the carpet has a tendency to move slightly with each vacuuming stroke. Because heavier grade carpets are a little more difficult to stretch during installation, this could be an indicator that the carpet was not adequately

stretched and/or the pad beneath it shifts during vacuuming because it was not properly secured to the subfloor. In either event, vacuum strokes will tend to chatter (i.e. vibrate or jump noticeably).

Vacuum chatter can also occur even when every aspect of the carpet installation is in order. As an example, vacuums tend to chatter when vacuuming heavy textured loop carpets due to the tendency of the vacuum to bounce between the high and low pile yarns (which also causes the vacuum to lose suction as a result of this). In addition to this, vacuum chatter can occur when vacuuming dense cut-pile carpets. In both circumstances, vacuum chatter can be avoided and the vacuum will work best when the carpet is vacuumed at an angle to the carpet's tufted direction, and when overlapping vacuum strokes are employed.

Another vacuuming concern worth mentioning here pertains to the perceived amounts of carpet fibers obtained when vacuuming carpets made from spun staple yarn. The loose yarns obtained during vacuuming these carpets are lint and yarns that were cut during manufacturing that were not removed from the carpet's surface. These shed yarns do not account for the carpet's specified pile weight and therefore, this condition does not indicate excessive fiber loss. Because vacuuming is the most effective means to remove shed yarns, and because these shed yarns are agitated and fluffed when vacuumed, the amount of shed yarns obtained appear to be significantly more than aggregate amount they actually represent. As a result of this, vacuum bags require more frequent changing than what is typically expected until the shed yarns are removed from the carpet's surface pile.

For information on vacuum makes and models that have obtained the Carpet and Rug Institute's Green Label certification visit the CRI's website at [www.carpet-rug.org](http://www.carpet-rug.org).

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