

January NEWSLETTER



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

PLEASE BE SURE TO CHECK YOUR FURNACE FILTERS. REGULAR FILTER CHANGES CAN SAVE YOU MONEY ON YOUR HEATING BILL AND PROLONG THE LIFE OF YOUR FURNACE.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED COOPERATION IN KEEPING YOUR HOME MAINTAINED PROPERLY.

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How to care for your carpet.

The Lost Art of Vacuuming.
By Veronica Steers
News Gazette

Like most other household investments, carpet ages. It loses color and luster long before the individual carpet fibers begin to wear down, and the carpet appears "old" or "worn out."

One way to slow the carpet aging process is through proper care and maintenance.

Soil and stain-resistant treatments, such as Scotchgard Carpet protectors, add durability. Combined with proper cleaning techniques, these treatments enhance the lifetime of the average residential carpet.

Carpet sweepers are good for occasional spot cleaning. Sweepers pick up strings, crumbs, paper or

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TODAY'S PROMPT PAYMENT, BUILDS TOMORROW'S CREDIT

other loose, dry litter from the carpet's surface. But to really prolong the life of your carpet, regular, thorough vacuuming is needed. These cleaning tips will help.

- Vacuum cleaner with a motor driven brush and a beater bar raise the carpet's pile, and can more effectively remove dirt and soil.
- Carpet experts recommend that you DO NOT use a beater bar vacuum for wool carpeting because it will loosen and weaken the individual fibers. Experts suggest using a suction vacuum instead.
- For maximum results, use either an upright or canister-type vacuum cleaner set at a height that gives slight resistance to pushing and pulling over the carpet.
- Lightly vacuum heavy traffic areas, such as entrance ways and hallways daily. Vacuum the entire carpet thoroughly at least once a week, being sure to reach areas underneath furniture.
- To avoid "spot crushing" or indentations caused by heavy furniture, periodically shift the positions of larger items in the room.
- Household traffic causes cutpile carpet fibers to assume different angles, making the carpet appear darker in places. For a uniform appearance, vacuum all final strokes in the same direction.

Don't be afraid to vacuum too often. According to the Association of Specialists in Cleaning and Restoration, an organization for carpet cleaning professionals, daily vacuuming does not weaken carpet fibers. In fact, clean carpet wears longer because soil particles can wear down and damage carpet yarn.

Fireplaces need more than logs to glow

By James Cummings
Cox News Services

The thought of flames dancing on logs in a fireplace is enough to make many of us feel more comfortable and relaxed.

But like just about everything else, before you relax you have work to do.

If you have a wood-burning fireplace, getting it ready for the burning season can be a fairly big job. But with a gas fireplace, the regular maintenance is minimal.

Before you build the first fire of the season in your wood-burning fireplace, hire a professional to inspect and clean your flue, fireplace, fireplace insert or wood-burning stove.

It's not a do-it-yourself project. The job requires specialized tools and know-how, and working on the roof around your chimney can be dangerous.

A quick survey of companies offering inspection and cleaning services through the Yellow Pages indicates the job probably will cost about \$50 to \$100. Open fireplaces are cheapest, and fireplace inserts and high chimneys (tree stories or more) bring higher fees.

Every time you burn wood, it produces a material called creosote that builds up on the inner walls of your chimney. Creosote eats away at the masonry and can clog the flue.

And if creosote builds up heavily, it can burn. Chimney fires usually are confined to inside the chimney, but they occasionally escape and spread through the house.

Some fireplace inserts may be more prone than open fireplaces to create thick, tar-like creosote deposits that are hard to clean and prone to ignite. Cleaning a

chimney packed with hardened creosote can cost several hundred dollars.

Of course, if a chimney inspector says your chimney needs extensive work, get a second opinion before contracting for repairs.

If you burn wood only occasionally, you may be able to skip a year between inspections and cleanings. But if you're burning a cord or more each year, and an annual inspection is necessary.

Your chimney should have a cap and screen to keep leaves, debris and animals out. Visually inspect the chimney periodically through the burning season to be sure the cap is in place and the chimney isn't cracked, chipped or leaking.

The best source for tips on using and maintaining gas fireplaces and gas logs is the owner's manual that came with the system you are using.

Review the manual before using the fireplace for the first time each year, and follow its suggestions exactly.

In general, the amount of maintenance you'll need to do depends on the type of gas fireplace or gas logs you have.

The big seller now are ventless fireplaces. These devices have gas flames that burn in an open fireplace. They can be installed anywhere in a room because they don't have to be connected to a chimney or vent.

Lois Day, manager of a fireplace and patio store, said the heating elements of ventless units should be vacuumed about once a year to remove pet hair and dust.

Carefully remove the artificial logs to get at the metal gas tubes, and clean the small holes that emit the gas.

Day said a ventless fireplace should produce an even blue flame, and the presence of any soot is indication of potentially serious problems.

Vented fireplaces are usually positioned against an outside wall so that combustion products can be vented outside. These products are primarily decorative,

and most of the heat they produce is lost through the vent.

Day suggests occasionally checking the outside vent for damage or obstruction.

Do-It-Yourselfer should keep children's safety in mind.

By The Associated Press

An important aim for every do-it-yourselfer is to avoid building anything that might be hazardous for children.

Here are some of the areas recognized as posing risks to children:

- A child's head can become entrapped in openings between slats, railings and other spaces that young children are likely to peek through. To avoid that hazard, keep those spaces to less than 3 1/4 inches wide.
- Small parts can be a choking hazard for children under the age of 3. Make sure that no toy or removable part of furniture (such as a knob) is less than 1 3/4 inches in size.
- Sharp corners and thin, sharp edges on drawers, coffee tables and other furniture can cause more than scratches and bruises. Remember that children are short = a hazard that might jab you in the thigh is at a child's head and eye level. Round all exposed corners and edges that children may encounter or pad and tape them.
- Pinch and crush points can cause painful injuries. These are tricky to assess because adults don't have tiny fingers and wouldn't think of grabbing things the way children often do. To prevent finger pinching, enlarge any opening that might admit a 3/16 diameter rod so that it is enough for a 1/2 inch rod. Example of a pinch point to avoid; a wagon with wheels

mounted close to the wagon bed, where tiny fingers could be caught when the rider grabs the side of the wagon.

- The leading causes of child injury from toy chests and boxes are falling lids, pinching hinges and entrapment leading to suffocation. Always equip a lid with a positive support mechanism - and never with an automatic locking device. Drill ventilation holes so that a trapped child can breathe. Make the gap between the front edges of the box and the lid at least 1/2 inch wide, so small fingers can't be crushed by a closing lid.
- Children can pull a large piece of furniture over on top of themselves. A child, for example, may try to climb up the front of a dresser using the drawers as steps. Bolt large pieces such as dressers, chest of drawers and bunk beds to the baseboard or the studs in the wall.
- Because children place toys in their mouths, make sure the finish on the toy is nontoxic. On wooden toys, no finish is safest, followed by a coat of mineral oil. The grade sold in pharmacies is safe for human consumption. Raw (not boiled) linseed oil, fresh shellac and waxes containing either carnauba or beeswax are also considered safe.
