

## What Causes Those **MYSTERIOUS DARK** Lines?

**You** may have noticed it in your own home, or the home of a neighbor or friend – **dark, dirty-looking lines** in the carpet around the baseboards, under doors and on stairs. **What is it? Can it be removed? Will it come back?**

The dark greyish or black discolorations that occur around the perimeter of rooms and in the doorways of some houses can be a source of embarrassment and frustration. Our customers rely on us not only to clean their carpets, but also to educate them about how to maintain their carpet. Before we explain what these mysterious dark lines are, we'll talk about what they are not.

Contrary to what you may think, it has absolutely nothing to do with accumulated dust from poor house-keeping. It is not a defect in carpet. And although some believe it to be mold, it is not. Even pest control companies have been wrongly accused of causing these unsightly lines with their treatments. **So, what IS it?** It's called **filtration soiling**.

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### Understanding Filtration Soil

Although it can happen in any home, filtration soiling is most common in homes that have forced air HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) systems. At certain locations in the carpet, air is being forced through the fibers by pressure and temperature differentials. The carpet fibers act as a filter, trapping pollutants that are in the air.

Some of these pollutants are the product of combustion and contain carbon. Common sources are automobile exhaust, industrial air pollution, tobacco smoke, and even natural gas or oil furnaces. This carbon, combined with oily residues from cooking and other sources, adheres to the carpet with very powerful electrostatic and chemical bonds.

The particles themselves are extremely small and very difficult to remove. The best course of action is prevention. Here are a few tips to prevent gray edges appearing on your carpet:

- Make sure that any means of combustion in your home including gas or oil heating systems, cooking appliances and water heaters are operating properly. Incomplete combustion caused by improperly functioning appliances contains higher levels of carbon. This can cause rapid soiling.
- Have heat exchangers, flues and chimneys checked by an HVAC professional for leaks or improper function.
- If you like to burn candles, limit how often you use the heavily scented ones. The oils used in these candles do not burn completely adding to the pollutants in the air, accelerating filtration soiling.
- Install high quality air filters in your heating and air system. This may require modifications to the system. Check with a qualified HVAC contractor.
- Consider using air purifiers, especially if smokers are present in the home. Tobacco smoke produces among the most difficult residues to remove.
- When using a fireplace or wood stove, ensure that there is adequate fresh air entry so as to create enough of an updraft for the fireplace. Otherwise some of the smoke may get into the air and contribute to soil filtration. You may need to open a window a little. Don't turn on ceiling fans in areas where you have a fireplace burning. Air currents may pull smoke into the living space.

**A-Town/Hi-Tech** uses specialized cleaning agents and techniques to treat soil filtration lines. Although complete removal of the discoloration may not be possible, we can usually improve the appearance. Of course, prevention is always your best line of defense.

### The Good Life



### Good Clean Funnies

**What musical instrument is found in the bathroom?**

A tuba toothpaste.

**Where would you find an elephant?**

The same place you lost her.

**What's worse than finding a worm in your apple?**

Finding half a worm.



### BACON Wrapped Smokies

#### Directions

Preheat the oven to 325°F.

Refrigerate 2/3 of the bacon until needed. It is easier to wrap the wieners with cold bacon. Wrap each cocktail wiener with a piece of bacon and secure with a toothpick. Place on a large baking sheet. Sprinkle brown sugar generously over all.

Bake for 40 minutes in the preheated oven, until the sugar is bubbly. To serve, place the wieners in a slow cooker and keep on the low setting.

*Time consuming but it is well worth it!*

#### Ingredients

- 1 pound sliced bacon, cut into thirds
- 1 (14 ounce) package beef cocktail wieners
- ¾ cup brown sugar, or to taste

**Prep:** 45 minutes

**Cook:** 45 minutes

**Total:** 1 hour 30 minutes

**Servings:** 16

*Recipe courtesy allrecipes.com*





## Plants Improve Mental & Physical WELLNESS



**Flowers and plants are staples in many American homes, adding to the style and aesthetic of virtually any space.**

While the visual benefits of plants are widely embraced, many people are unaware of the ways plants can support our mental and physical well-being.

**Stress reduction** – Have you ever noticed that when you visit a garden or park, you instantly feel at ease? Greenery has an innate ability to calm and reduce stress. The sights and smells promote calm and a feeling of escape, which is particularly important during times of stress.

Plants in the workplace (wherever that may be) have been said to reduce depression, anger, tension, anxiety, and even confusion.

**Improve air quality** – Plants can improve air quality by decreasing the levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) by up to 89%, according to a report by NASA. VOCs are

commonly found in many household items and paints, and include formaldehyde, benzene and trichlorethylene, among others.

Many green houseplants also have the ability to reduce carbon dioxide levels, control humidity, reduce airborne dust, and add oxygen to the air in a home.

**Healing and health-promoting** – Plants are believed to calm and promote healing in people of all ages. In fact, just looking at pictures of plants can have a positive impact. The reason? Scientists believe that the calming effects of nature images can reduce cortisol levels and improve mood, effectively speeding up the healing process.

For overall wellness, consider placing plants throughout the most-used spaces in your home or workplace and reap the benefits.

## How to Shop, Save & Make MONEY Online



Online marketplaces have seen a major increase in activity over the last six months as some outfit their home office or gym - while others clean house and sell things they don't use. Whether you're offering a bargain or hunting for one, here are the tips for selling or buying online.

**If you are selling, search first and maximize** – Search for the item you plan to sell to see what popular prices are before you list it to maximize your profit.

**Establish credibility** – Whether you're buying or selling, there are few ways to make yourself stand out as credible. If the app you choose to buy or sell on offers a profile, fill it out. The more complete your profile is the more trustworthy your account appears.

**Beware of super-low prices** – Watch out for red flags. If a price seems too good to be true - such as a \$20 diamond ring or a \$100 brand-new phone - it likely is. Before you make an offer or commit to buying, check prices of similar items and make sure you're able to see several photos of the item and research the seller.

**Check shipping before you buy** – Stay safe by choosing to ship your bought or sold items. Make sure the app you are using offers nationwide shipping. When buyers see an item they like, they can choose to receive the item by mail, make their offer and pay through the app. Sellers receive a prepaid shipping label and both parties can track the shipping process.



**If a meet-up is necessary to complete the sale, opt for a well-lit public location with video surveillance - and keep a safe, social distance. Search on safetradespots.com for a location that works for everyone.**



## Traveling With Your FURRY Friends



**Have pets, will travel? Check out these pro tips on traveling with your furry friends.**

There's nothing like hitting the open road with your best friend, especially when they happen to have a furry face, four legs and a tail. While dogs and cats love being around their favorite humans 24-7, travel can be stressful for pets, especially if they're out of their routine and staying overnight in an unfamiliar place.

**Keep pets contained:** When traveling by car, dogs need to be harnessed or leashed while cats need to be in a carrier. Bring a collapsible kennel or carrier for the hotel to ensure the safety of the pet and the house-keeping staff when you're not around.

**Scope out pet-friendly stops:** Do your research before you leave to find pet-friendly

pit stops. Confirm that any hotels you book are pet-friendly.

**Beat the heat:** Never leave your pet in the car, even with the windows cracked! Heat strokes can be fatal to animals within minutes. If heading to the beach, know that sunburns can occur in dogs with light or white-colored fur, so take special care.

**Don't pack light:** Bring your pet's own food, water (if possible), and toys when traveling, to ease anxiety. Travel with an assortment of entertainment to keep your pet's mind busy such as catnip toys for cats, and tug toys, ice cubes or a frozen Kong with peanut butter inside for dogs. Additionally, make sure to pack any of your furry friend's medications, light bandage material, roll gauze, medical tape, topical triple antibiotic ointment and eye wash for emergencies.





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