



THE THREAD

Unraveling the Mysteries of Fibers, Fabrics and Floor Coverings

ORIENTAL RUGS NEED SPECIAL CARE... Persians, Chinese, Kilims & Dhurries

Oriental

The term "Oriental Rug" is used by retail marketers and laymen alike to describe a wide variety of floor coverings. Designers and other members of the trade prefer more definitive names such as Persian, Chinese, Kilim, Dhurrie, etc.

Two Basic Constructions

Oriental rugs are either flat woven or hand knotted. For obvious reasons, machine-made rugs are usually significantly less valuable.

The most basic two-dimensional weaving technique produces a crosshatching of only horizontal and vertical threads and is called flat woven. This interlacing, forms both the fabric of this pile-less rug and the basis for its design. Kilims and Dhurries are both examples of flat woven rugs.

The hand knotted rugs are three-dimensional in that the fabric has strands of yarn tied or looped into the foundation that is usually cotton. The cut ends of these knots form the pile of the rug and create its pattern. Persians and Chinese

rugs are two examples of hand knotted Oriental rugs.

Soiling...Flat Woven Vs. Pile Constructions

Flat woven rugs such as Dhurries and Kilims do not have the soil hiding attributes that pile construction offers. In fact, they tend to hold soils at the surface and can become unsightly in traffic areas, especially if not properly maintained.



Oriental with pile constructions (Persian, Chinese, etc.) are possibly the most efficient soil hiding floor coverings of them all. While this is a positive in many ways, it does have its drawbacks. The soils that go unseen can act like sandpaper and can cause premature wear. Unfortunately vacuuming may not be enough to remove all

the dry soils that have worked their way to the backing. The once common practice of beating rugs is not so outdated as it is still an excellent way to remove these unwanted soils. Another more practical way is to turn the Oriental rug upside-down and run a beater-bar vacuum over the back side. This will dislodge much of the soil deep in the pile.

Many professional rug cleaners will use air to blow the dirt out before cleaning them.

When properly maintained, these rugs are excellent for high traffic areas.

Watch Out For Rayon Orientals

There are an alarming number of rayon Oriental rugs being passed off as silk, Persian Orientals. These rugs wear readily, have poor resiliency and do not possess soil-hiding qualities. Furthermore, water-based substances can cause unsightly distortion of the pile that generally cannot be corrected. These rugs should never be wet cleaned because the pile will flatten and never again look the same.

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Staining Can Be A Problem

One of the confusions facing the consumer is the mixed messages heard from different sources regarding the proper care of Oriental rugs. The fact is that wool accepts dyes readily. We like to use the terms “controlled dyeing” and “accidental dyeing”. Controlled dyeing happens when fibers or yarn is dyed to a particular color, which will then be used in weaving a rug.

Uncontrolled or accidental dyeing happens when the family pet chooses the Oriental rug instead of the outdoors or when the coffee cup overturns on the rug. We rarely think of these substances as dyes, but that is exactly how they react on the wool fiber.

The problem is that it can be extremely difficult to remove unwanted dyes without harming or removing the original color (the “controlled dyes”). Prevention is the best way to ensure your Oriental rugs remain stain free.

Moths Can Be A Problem

All too often we encounter a beautiful Persian or Chinese Oriental, which has been damaged by moth larvae (sometimes, even those rugs which have been “moth proofed”).

Moths will lay their eggs in dark areas such as under sofas or skirted chairs. The larva emerges and starts to consume the wool fiber. Because they are under furnishings, the larvae go undisturbed until they emerge again as moths to lay more eggs.

Regular maintenance is the best way to keep your Orientals from being damaged by moths. Periodic cleaning, moth proofing, and rotating rugs are a good way to prevent moth larva from taking hold and damaging the investment you have made in your Oriental rugs.

Proper Care Is Essential

The vast majority of Oriental rugs are made of wool, except for the fringes, which are usually cotton. Wool Orientals can be dealt with just as any quality wool carpeting.

Extending their life by means of promptly repairing damages, proper vacuuming, periodic skilled cleaning and having protective treatments applied is an assurance of continued enjoyment.

Yet, we often hear it said that a true Persian, Dhurrie, etc., must be “left like it is” or “it doesn’t need protection because it has natural lanolin.”

The problem is that lanolin does not prevent staining or soiling and allowing soil and stains to accumulate not only distracts from the appearance, but will seriously reduce the resistance to wear and deterioration.

Oriental rugs can last a lifetime, but only when they are cared for properly.

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