



# FIBERSEAL

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## STORING WOOL & SILK RUGS... Timely Tips From The Professionals

Everyone knows that certain insects damage articles made of wool or silk (protein fibers) by using the fibers as a food source. Clothing is a very common “prey” for these fiber-chomping critters, primarily because it is often kept in dark, little-disturbed areas like closets and storage containers.

Equally appealing to certain hungry moths and beetles (actually, the larvae of these insects) are the various types of wool and silk rugs which have become such common accessories in today’s interiors. The proper protection and storage of these rugs is the subject of this article.

### **An Ounce Of Prevention**

Follow these simple steps to help assure trouble-free storage for rugs.

**Clean.** Any rug about to be stored should be thoroughly cleaned. There is evidence that dirty fibers are much more attractive to insect pests. Also, ground-in soils can cause significant damage if left in a rug over long periods of time.

**Treat.** It is a good idea to make rugs less attractive to pests before they are stored. Most rug care professionals recommend treatments that cause rug fibers to be “less palatable” to insect larvae, lessening the chances of damage.



*Moth larvae have caused extensive damage to this wool Oriental rug. The larvae can remain in this destructive stage for as little as five weeks or as long as two years.*

**Roll.** Folding rugs is sometimes done for short-term storage, but never for longer periods. Folding causes stress

on the foundation yarns and can lead to weakening of these critical elements.

Rugs should be rolled face side in and starting at the bottom. When you run your hand over the rug *with* the direction of the nap, it will take you to the bottom. Roll the rug from this end.

**Wrap.** While it’s very commonly available, plastic is not appropriate for storing wool rugs. Wool can sometimes “sweat” during storage, releasing moisture that is stored in the fiber. This moisture needs to be able to dissipate, so a barrier that is semi-permeable is the best alternative. Heavy Kraft paper is suitable for short-term needs, but Tyvek® is a stronger – yet still breathable – wrapping material. Clear wrapping tape works well to seal the loose edges.

**Store.** A clean, dry storage area is important. While not always possible, climate-controlled storage prevents extremes in temperature and humidity. Flooding and other moisture problems can be

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avoided by storing rugs on an elevated surface. Also, stacking heavy items on top of rugs should be avoided.

**Inspect.** Rugs that are clean, properly wrapped and stored are in good shape, but must still be monitored. If possible, rugs should be visually checked at least annually to make sure the wrapping is secure and that there are no obvious signs of problems.

### **Rugs On The Floor Need Special Care, Too**

Rugs that are being stored need detailed procedures to keep them safe from pests, but so do rugs which are in use.

Good housekeeping is important in preventing carpet beetle and clothes moth problems. Your vacuum cleaner is your best pest management tool.

Periodically clean areas of a home that may harbor clothes moths to prevent or control infestation. Those areas include many seldom-cleaned spots, such as:

- under heavy pieces of furniture;
- under the edges of rugs
- along baseboards and in cracks where hair and debris accumulate;
- closets, especially those in which woolens and furs are kept; and
- heaters, the areas behind them, and vents.

Remember to get rugs cleaned on a regular basis. Those that receive light to moderate traffic should be cleaned at least every 18-24 months. If there is heavy traffic, the recommendation is at least once a year.

### **We Can Help!**

Part of our job at Fiber-Seal is to stay in touch with trends in the fabric and carpet industries. Because fibers and fabrics are ever-changing, it's even more important to work with professionals who know the industry and can offer the best possible aftercare in both residential and commercial interiors.

### **Designer's Corner**

Have you visited [www.FiberSeal.com](http://www.FiberSeal.com) to see what's new? Lots of great information can be found in Designer's Corner.

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