

The following is a report how I addressed the backing of the floor mats on our 1993 300SL disintegrating and turning the floor carpet black.

I regret not taking photos immediately after taking up the floor mats. I was so stunned and horrified, I ran to get the vacuum immediately to see if it would vacuum out. Photos were not on my mind.

The passenger side was much worse than the driver's side, probably because passengers move their feet around more than the driver. The driver's side was still really bad.

I first used the house vac and the upholstery brush attachment. The disintegrated backing material was really sticky, so the vac brush fibers would get caked up. Some Dawn detergent and hot water removed the residue. Maybe half the black residue came off the carpet but half of a lot is still a lot.

I did the next steps of cleanup, to be described below, on the passenger side. The process worked well and it was only then that I thought, "I should document this" (since it looks like it'll be successful).

This is a photo of the driver's side after the aforementioned house vac scrubbing session but before any further cleaning.



Below is the secret sauce. The Griot's cleaner worked incredibly well. The [Griot's brush](#) has silicone bristles and was very gentle on the carpet. I didn't want to destroy the carpet, with a heavy scrub brush, to save it.



Spray, scrubscrubscrub and then use a supply of white cloth washcloths to rub the carpet. This is really time consuming. Rub, refold cloth, rub, repeat until cloth isn't stained grey. Reapply cleaner as needed on places where the black remained. It was working. I started feeling much better.

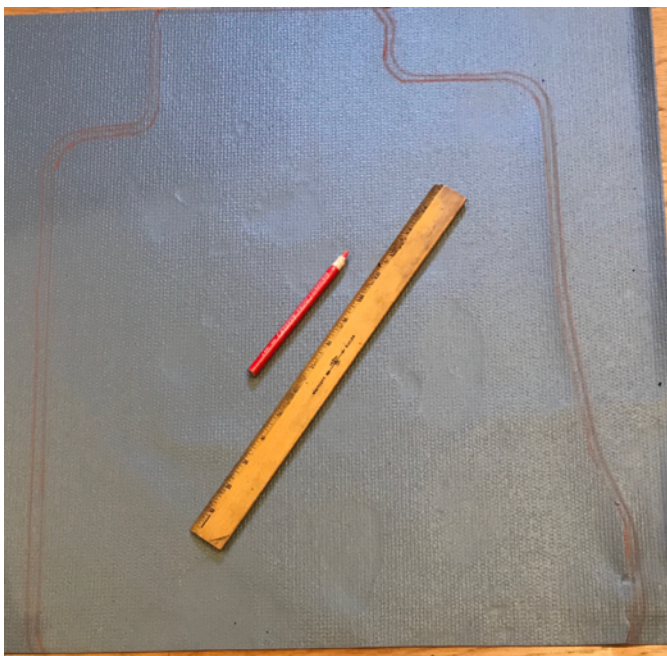
I noticed I was still leaving some residue in the rug. The washcloth rubbing really transformed the apparent color of the carpet, but I could see I wasn't deep cleaning. So I rented a Bissell cleaner from the local ACE hardware. The floor carpet machine came with the all important upholstery cleaner. I filled the supply tank with 180F water and the rug cleaner solution and really wet the carpet. I sprayed more Griot's cleaner (sparingly, I was running out) and used the silicone brush to scrubscrubscrub.

The upholstery attachment suction wasn't super strong, so I got my shop vac to really suck out the water/residue. I also rubbed with a washcloth to test cleanliness. Good as new.



For those wondering, I'm selling the car and it is in phenomenal condition. I think the market values originality, so I wanted to save the carpet.

The next challenge was the floor mats. I hunted about but couldn't find OEM replacements in the beige/275A color. The dealer didn't list replacements that far back. I couldn't reuse the mats as-is because what was left of the backing (I scrubbed off as much as I could... what a mess) would just transfer back to the carpet. I'm glad I lifted the mats to vacuum (many months ago) because I would have hated to sell such a pristine example only to have the buyer hit with the problem. The disintegration was completely invisible since the floor mats were stuck in place.



I saw a posting somewhere about someone using shelving mat. Instead, I bought a [1/8"-thick yoga mat](#) (3 mm). I couldn't find a 1/8" mat I was happy with in beige, so settled on grey, thinking that black was just asking for trouble. The yoga mat worked perfectly because it was big enough to create a backing in one piece.

I used a grease pencil to outline the floor mat, then free-handed another line inside to represent the stitching line. Cut with scissors, test fit on back of the mat and trimmed as needed. Making it too small is bad since that would expose the black backing to the carpet (again).

Gluing foam requires special adhesive (most glues dissolve foam). I found a great table on the 3M website, and this #74 is the bomb. You have to be persistent to buy this if you live in California. Light bulbs, garden equipment, pesticides, adhesives... the State never gives up on ways to make things more expensive.

Before spraying the adhesive, you first have to mask the backside of the floor mat with some 3M blue tape. (action item: buy 3M stock?)



Use the adhesive outside with no wind. Have enough newspaper or cardboard to lay out **both** the mat and the trimmed yoga mat. Once you spray, you can't reuse that spot to spray the next thing or to do any assembly.

Make sure you spray the correct side of the yoga mat (the one without the grease pencil marks). I waved the spray back and forth parallel to the edges before doing the middle. Overspray is waste, but getting to the edge is really important. The adhesive bubbles, so I had pieces of straight cardboard to "knock it down" (like you do with drywall texture), and then respray/knock-down places I missed.

Once you have both the floor mat backside and the yoga mat sprayed, you have one chance to place the new backing. You need another spot to move the floor mat for assembly since you want to get it away from the overspray. I practiced a couple times before applying the adhesive. Once placed I just rubbed it out from the center to smooth as much as possible. You can't move the backing at all once the two surfaces touch. The driver's side is smaller, so do that first to get practice.

Your fingers will get sticky since the backing has adhesive, so it's just a matter of being quick and precise. Wipe your fingers off and pull the blue tape off working from the front of the mat. The blue tape shouldn't be much under the new backing, so it should pull out.



I confess I had a very thin strip of black backing visible on the passenger floor mat, so I laid a bit of blue tape over it to be safe. No one will see it and it'll last forever. I could have skipped this I think, but didn't want to fumble the ball on the 1-yard line.



So much happiness. I have original mats (rug side also cleaned, as were the floor mats of all our cars and all the rugs in the house... makes the rental fee easier to swallow.



Ta-dah!