Rug Shrinking & Ripples

Dimensional changes in hand woven rugs are a natural and expected occurrence. Rugs are woven under tension, and in some cases uneven tension. When these rugs are trafficked and washed these foundational tensions can change sometimes resulting in shrinking or rippling.

What Causes Rug Shrinking

A more densely knotted rug typically has less shrinkage. However, some modern rugs are woven with low density and may show significant shrinkage in both the length and the width. One reason for this is virtually every rug is washed before it goes to market.

After the wash the rug was blocked, a process where the rug is stretched then wet on the back and fixed under tension often with a sizing agent such as starch or latex applied to the back. So, now when the rug is washed for cleaning it simply rebounds to its previous state.

What Causes Rug Rippling

Rugs that either have uneven tension or irregular warp and weft yarns (often the case with hand spun foundation yarns), the rug can develop ripples. We see this most often with rugs from Afghanistan which have hand spun wool foundations. Ripples can also occur due to environmental happenings in the home such as heavy furniture where the rug has been pulled or in some cases rugs that were folded in storage for extended periods of time. Your ARCS cleaner can usually re-block the rug to a satisfactory result.

Effects of Rug Anatomy

- The foundation of a hand-woven rug is comprised of warp and weft yarns mostly made from cotton, wool, or silk. The warp yarns run the length of the rug top to bottom and are placed on the loom under great tension. The weft yarns travel side to side going over and under the warp yarns. When the rug is wet the foundation yarns swell. This means the weft yarns must travel more distance to go over and under the swollen warp yarns.

- The same reaction occurs in the other direction, especially if the rug has thick weft yarns, and the warp must likewise travel further to accommodate the swollen weft yarns. Most of the time, this is not noticeable.

ARCS
ASSOCIATION OF RUG CARE SPECIALISTS

Rug Ripples

Irregular Warps