



# down to earth MOTHER

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## ♥ My carpet conundrum solved

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My carpet has caused me all kinds of headaches – not in a VOC-releasing, chemical fuming way, fortunately. See it's old, really old, like most things in my house. The great thing about buying a 70s yellow-brick squat is that the most of the materials are real, rather than synthetic. We have real lino on the floor, wool carpets and the most divine hardwood floors you've ever seen.

So here's the conundrum: with a crawling baby, does one rip up the ancient carpets or leave them where they are?

To leave them means cleaning them for only the second time in four years – the last was when Alfie started crawling. I cross examined the carpet cleaning people about the chemicals used in the process and they assured me they were fine. Afterwards, the fumes lingered for way too long, so I delved further. Solvents, phthalates: you know – all the stuff I love to hate. That was the beginning of my no-tox mission, and now that I know more, I find it hard to trust carpet cleaners again.

The other option is to rip up the carpets. Nanna did this in Alfie's room before Edith came along and the boards only needed the lightest sanding. There's the inconvenience, of course – we'd have to move downstairs for a week and move all the furniture – but again, the problem is chemical. Even though we used a water-based coating in Alfie's room, there were definitely plenty of fumes.

The choice is: let my baby crawl around with her face inches from floor-coating fumes or carpet-cleaning vapours? Hmm, neither really appeals.

And then I met Darren.

Darren is otherwise known as the Duplex 280 (I am probably the only person in the world who calls him Darren, but I tend to anthropomorphise things I like). This bad boy is a carpet scrubber, based on industrial carpet cleaners used in big offices and the like. The reason I love Darren is that he is a teetotaler – he only drinks water. With two rotating brushes, Darren gets down on his hands and knees and scrubs every fibre of your carpet with water (you can add a safe detergent if you wish).

I had the Duplex 280 on loan (thanks Tania!) and took him for a spin around my jam-encrusted, sour-milk smelling, once-was-white carpet and it fluffed up all the fibres and took out some of the stains – there is no way it could have tackled them all. I spot-cleaned as I went along with bicarb paste and a pair of scissors. Yes, there were some food stuffs so ingrained in my carpets I had to cut them out with scissors...



As well as loving the chemical-free nature of the machine, I loved that you could manually control how much water you used as you went along, meaning you can go lightly over the not so disgusting bits and then douse the rest. It was a hot day, so my carpets were dry within an hour, even in the wettest parts. The machine was really easy to use (I did it with Edith on my hip), and here's the best bit – you don't need to vacuum first; the brushes pick up the dust and lint. Actually, if I had a complaint, it would be that the "recovery centre" filled up too quickly, which says more about the state of my carpets than the machine itself.

If you have carpets in your home and want to keep them clean in a chemical-free fashion that doesn't involve scrubbing them by hand, then the Duplex 280 is definitely a good option. It's not cheap though, at \$2290 + GST, you'd want to think about collaborative ownership between a few families. It's built to last, though, and also works on hard and exterior floors.

To find out more about the Duplex 280, visit [www.duplexcleaning.com.au](http://www.duplexcleaning.com.au)