

How to Select the Best Carpeting for Your Home

By Joyce Jackson

The variety of styles, colors and textures available today makes it easier than ever to choose the perfect carpet for your home. Carpeting is a major purchase so it is important to understand the basic elements of construction and style to determine the best choice for your needs. Higher durability and density ratings mean enhanced comfort and better performance.

Manufacturers have made important improvements in carpeting construction, which makes the carpeting you buy today more stain resistant, odor resistant and long wearing than what you may have bought in the past.

The tightness of the yarn twist and the height of the nap are the two major factors that determine how well a carpet will perform over time. A tight yarn twist combined with a shorter nap will help ensure that your carpet is crush and mat resistant. Carpet that has more stitches per inch will also perform better. Higher quality padding can also extend the life of your carpeting.

Think about which areas of your home are high and low traffic and make a list of things that could affect carpet wear and tear such as pets, children, exposure to sunlight, proximity to outdoors, etc. Certain types of carpet, such as saxony, work better in dining rooms or living rooms. Saxony has a smooth, soft cut pile surface and is available in a wide range of colors to fit with any decorating scheme. Velvets have a fine, tip-sheared surface and are better suited for an elegant master bedroom or a formal living room. Textured carpets are constructed with twisted yarn tufts. They don't show footprints, are highly stain resistant, and easily adapt to high traffic areas or casual room settings.

Rather than choosing one color for the entire home, some people are using a variety of carpet styles, textures and colors in different rooms. Modern decorating styles are inspiring people to become more daring in their choice of carpet colors. Darker hues like navy, chocolate, burgundy and jewel tones are catching up to neutrals in popularity. Geometric patterns are also making a comeback.

Light colors can make small rooms appear larger while dark colors work well in living rooms with high ceilings or large master bedrooms. Neutral tones and textured styles in earth tones are usually the best choices for minimizing dirt and lint. They also lend themselves to most decorating schemes and compliment all styles of decorating.

Check the Performance Appearance Rating on the back of carpet samples. Carpets are rated on a scale of one to five with five being the most durable. The ratings rank the carpet's ability to maintain a like-new

appearance under normal use. To retain your carpet's new appearance longer, look for carpeting constructed from continuous filament nylon (CFN.) Carpets made of staple nylon or BCF are more prone to pilling on the surface.

Buy the highest quality carpet you can afford, but don't forget to budget in the cost of padding and installation fees. (Installation may add 15 to 30 percent to the final cost). Don't skimp on padding. The cushioning layer you place underneath the carpet will affect comfort and performance. You may pay more initially for thicker, mildew and water-resistant padding, but it can add years to your carpet's life. (Some carpet manufacturers require a certain type of padding in order to honor the warranty.)

Ask for carpet swatches to take home. Keep in mind that any color you choose will be covering a large area. Be careful in trying to match carpet colors to existing upholstery. Lighting also has a major impact on carpet color. Take the time to view your sample in natural light, under an overhead light and with the indirect light of a lamp to determine if the color you're considering is the best choice for your home.

Pay close attention to the manufacturer's care instructions for your new carpet. Maintaining your carpeting properly can be a major consideration in how long it lasts.

Copyright © 2005 Publishers-Edge

The logo for Publishers-Edge features a large, light red triangle pointing downwards on the left side. To the right of the triangle, the words "Publishers-Edge" are written in a large, bold, grey, sans-serif font. The hyphen between "Publishers" and "Edge" is slightly larger than the other characters.