

Carpet buying guide

Carpet is a cosy, comfortable flooring choice.

The true beauty of carpet lies in its versatility; as well as being suitable for almost any room and available in a whole rainbow of colours and textures, it provides the perfect surface to walk, rest or play on.

Carpet is also a great sound absorber that holds warmth, providing much needed insulation during the UK's chilly winter months.



Which room?

When choosing a new carpet, it's important to think about which room it will be installed in and therefore how heavy and regular the footfall will be.

For example, a bedroom doesn't see as much foot traffic as stairs or a living room. Therefore, if you choose to splash out on a more luxurious carpet, you may decide on fitting it in your bedroom, safe in the knowledge that it will retain its good looks for longer.

In high use areas, we would always recommend choosing a heavy domestic rated carpet, and you might also consider one with a lifetime stain warranty, depending on your needs.

Speaking of stains, always use a doormat or rug in front of external doorways to avoid discolouration and damage from dirt being tracked through the home from outside.

What type of carpet do I need?

There are three factors which will each affect a carpet's look, feel and cost. These are the construction type, the carpet weight, and the carpet's fibre composition.

There is no one right answer as to which combination of these factors will result

in the best carpet for you. Much will depend on your personal taste as well as your budget. We always recommend speaking with your independent flooring retailer about all of the carpet options available to you. Retailers often offer a home consultation service, where they will survey your sub-floor, measure the space and offer advice on what carpets would best suit your lifestyle. However, in the meantime, here is some technical information to help you in your buying process.



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Construction - twist, saxony, loop or woven?

Twist, saxony and loop are the three most widely used carpet constructions. Woven carpets are more niche, partly because the traditional construction method used to produce them is slower, making them generally more expensive.

Twist and saxony carpets

Twist carpets, which comprise of twisted yarns that are cut to length, are very popular in the UK. They have a textured surface that feels springy underfoot and is durable thanks to the twist of the carpet fibre.

Saxony carpets are twist carpets with longer fibres, which give a deep pile for a more luxurious finish.

Loop carpets

Loop carpets are made of looped yarns and are perfect for high traffic areas such as stairs as the loops make the carpet hardwearing and durable.

The loops are made from a single strand of yarn, which gives them a beautiful texture and appearance.

There are a variety of loop patterns or variations, and loops may also be used to create a pattern alongside cut yarns (known as cut-and-loop).

We don't recommend loop piles for people with pets as their claws can snag or pull on the loops – but otherwise they are very hardwearing carpets and very popular for high traffic areas.

Woven carpets

In a traditional woven carpet, the pile yarn (the top layer that you see) is woven into the backing, which gives this style of carpet exceptional stability and durability in your home.

Woven carpets can be patterned or plain. Some plain carpets may also use weaving patterns to give them a subtle but interesting design, similar to cut-and-loop pile carpets.

Because of the way they are constructed, woven carpets have a compact finish that is very hardwearing.



[Decades - 60s Peace](#)

Carpet weight

Carpet weight, or pile density, is traditionally measured in ounces per square yard, although nowadays the flooring industry is starting to talk about grams per meter squared (g/m²).

The best way to choose between two similar carpets will always be to feel samples, however weight is another factor that can help you distinguish the best carpet for your needs, and which carpet represents the best value for money.

As a general rule heavier weight carpets will have more resistance to flattening, both from footfall and furniture. However, heavier weight carpets are usually more expensive.

Although it is easy to think that a heavy carpet is a better carpet, don't forget to take fibre, carpet density and backing types into consideration.

Fibre composition

There are many choices of fibres (also known as yarns) to choose from in a carpet, many of which are man-made. Man-made carpets are more cost effective and most are bleach cleanable, which is a great benefit for most households. Wool and wool-mix carpets are more traditional and offer many other benefits to man-made carpets.

The choice of fibre or yarn is a personal one which is best discussed with your local independent flooring retailer. Once they fully understand your requirements and likes and dislikes, they will be able to steer you towards the best carpet for you.

Wool carpets

Made from 100% natural, renewable, sustainable wool fibre, wool carpets have integral strength and innate stain and fire-resistance properties. Wool is naturally breathable and is a great insulator as well as being biodegradable at the end of its life.

Wool blend carpets

These are made from a mix of wool and man-made fibres, often 80% wool and 20% manmade. This allows you to take advantage of the benefits of a wool carpet at a lower pricepoint.

Nylon/polyamide carpets

The first of our synthetic fibres, nylon is known to be hardwearing and long-lasting, with an innate 'bounce back' ability.

Our iLove fibre is a type of supersoft nylon, for the ultimate soft cosy carpet.

Polypropylene carpets (also known as Life-Tec fibre)

The majority of Lifestyle Floors carpets are made from polypropylene. Durable, affordable and stain-resistant, it's very popular with families. Our polypropylene carpets are known as Life-Proof as they come complete with a lifetime stain warranty.



Start off on the right foot

Carpets should always be professionally installed. Lifestyle Floors' carpet retailers will be able to offer expert advice and installation to help you ensure your carpet has a long and happy life.

Choosing the right underlay is vital to prolonging your carpet's life, by providing

the cushioning that keeps your carpet comfortable underfoot, reducing noise and increasing heat retention.

For these reasons, it is false economy to lay new carpet on old underlay. Always invest in the best underlay you can afford, and it will help your carpet look and feel good for longer.

We offer an automatic 3-year extension to the stated wear warranty if you buy and install new underlay with your new carpet. Just register your carpet in the warranty section of our website.



Start off on the right foot

Once your carpet has been professionally laid, you should expect years of faithful service, as long as you care for it appropriately.

Regular vacuuming is important to remove all the dirt that can collect in tufts or loops, helping to retain your carpet's colour and texture.

It is a good idea to give your new carpet a good vacuum as soon as it is laid. Brand-new carpets often look patchy because the tufts have been compressed in different directions during storage and installation. Vacuuming with a power brush attachment will help to restore the fibres to an upright position and give a uniform appearance.

Only use suction vacuum cleaners. This is particularly important if you have a loop pile carpet, as using a vacuum with beater bars can cause it to have a 'felty' appearance.

It's a good idea to deep clean your carpets every so often, either with a steam or carpet cleaner. You can do this yourself (the equipment is easy to hire), or have it done professionally.

Just as with other fittings and furniture, prolonged exposure to sunlight can eventually fade the original colour of a carpet, even though our fibres are resistant to UV light, and some areas of the floor will always be more prone than others. Moving furniture around occasionally can help mitigate this by giving the over-used areas of carpet a rest and help to even up its appearance. As we mentioned earlier in this guide, placing mats at entrances will also help to prevent dirt being tracked throughout your home.

Life's little accidents

We know that spills and accidents are an almost inevitable part of life, but with prompt attention and remedial action the damage can usually be reversed or mitigated.

Some general rules are:

- Absorb liquid spills by blotting – never rubbing – with absorbent white cloths or kitchen roll.
- Hard or crusty stains should be loosened where possible. Soft substances should be scooped up with the edge of a spoon and any loose particles vacuumed up.
- Once the offending material has been removed, sponge warm water onto the spill and blot it firmly using a white sponge or cloth and repeat several times, rinsing the sponge or cloth each time.
- Try not to over-wet the carpet and test a small, unobtrusive area first.
- To dry out the carpet, place several layers of kitchen roll on the affected area, place a heavy book on top and leave to dry for between 2 and 4 hours.
- If your carpet is bleach cleanable, you can use a bleach solution to clean using the technique above. The solution should be 1 part bleach to 10 parts water.



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