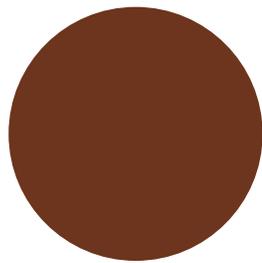
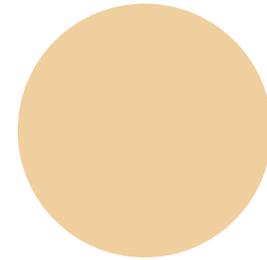
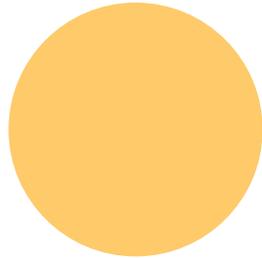


# IMPROVEMENT CENTER



## Guide to Carpeting

# Guide to Carpeting

Carpeting is one of the most popular flooring types. A number of factors are likely to be considered during the carpet selection process, including style, material, cost, comfort, durability, and ease of maintenance. Your lifestyle comes into play as well. Children and pets can be tough on carpet, so if you have them, your prime consideration should be carpeting that's easy to care for and hard to wear out.

## Carpet Styles and Types

There are three main carpet construction types:

1. Loop pile
2. Cut pile
3. Cut and loop pile

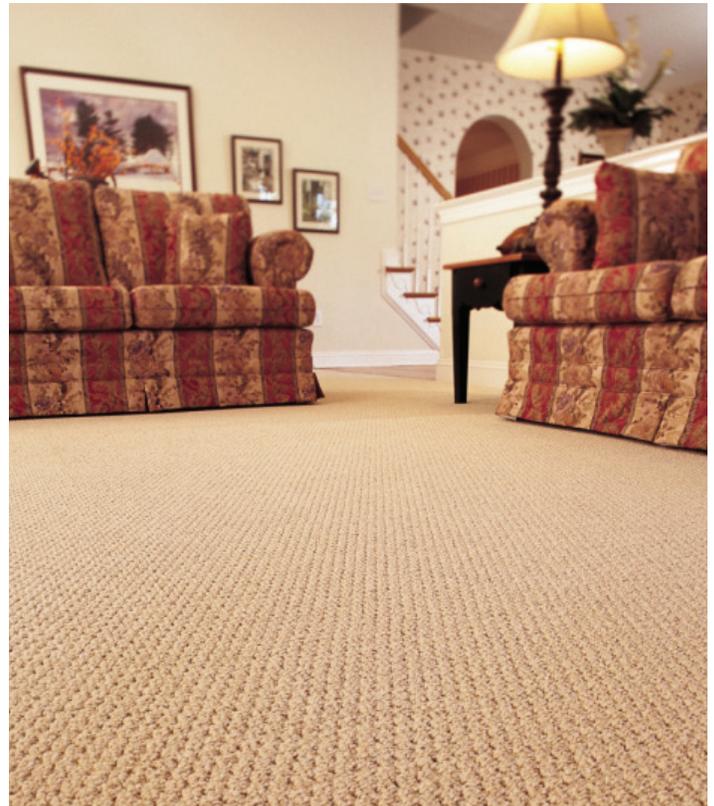
Berber is an example of a loop pile carpet, which has enjoyed increased popularity in recent years. All carpets begin as loop pile and the loops are cut to create loop pile carpet. In cut and loop pile carpets, some loops are left uncut.

Major styles of cut pile carpet include:

- **Saxony.** Manufactured with two or more plies of twisted yarn. This type of pile tends to show footprints and vacuum cleaner marks.
- **Plush.** Has a formal, velvet-like appearance. It can display shade variations called watermarking due to localized pile reversal and shows footprints and vacuum cleaner marks.
- **Textured.** The yarn is exposed to live steam during construction, causing it to curl. It is also called trackless or footprint-free carpet.
- **Frieze.** The yarn has a high twist level, giving a kinked appearance. It does not show footprints, but higher production costs make it more expensive than other styles.

## Carpet Materials

Carpet is manufactured from a variety of natural and man-made materials, with synthetics accounting for over 90 percent of carpet fibers. Each has its advantages and drawbacks.



- **Nylon.** A family of synthetic polymers dating to 1935, nylon is the most durable and resilient of all carpet fibers. It is excellent for homes with pets and children and in high traffic areas, but it is more expensive than most other materials.
- **Polyester.** The most inexpensive material to manufacture, polyester is not as resilient as other materials and wears quickly. Most polyester carpets have a life span of five years.
- **Fiber blends.** A mixture of nylon and polyester, these materials are more durable than polyester, but also more expensive.
- **Polypropylene.** Used primarily in Berber and commercial carpets, polypropylene is durable and long wearing but can be difficult to keep clean.

- **Wool and wool blends.** Wool is a natural material and the most expensive carpet fiber. It insulates well and is fire-resistant. However, it is difficult to clean and is not recommended for homes with pets or children. Wool/nylon blends are less expensive and have better durability.

No matter what the material used, it can be dyed any color desired, including multicolor carpet. Choose a color that will complement your room decor and suit your lifestyle.

## Carpet Prices

Carpet is typically priced by the square foot or square yard. Depending on the material, manufacturer, style, and weight, there is a wide range of prices. When shopping for carpeting, whether in a dedicated flooring store, a big box store, or online, be sure to include all costs. You may get quotes for a complete installation, or line-item quotes with carpet, pad, labor, and supplies like tack strips and carpet tape broken out individually. This can make it difficult to get an apples-to-apples comparison.

Prices can range from \$2 a square foot for polyester carpet to over \$100 a square yard for more expensive materials and styles. You can figure between \$20 and \$30 per square yard for a good quality carpet including pad and installation. By all means, buy a



high-quality pad; it can extend the life of the carpet and make it more comfortable underfoot. Typical padding costs \$2 to \$6 per square yard.

Contractors usually charge a dollar or two per square yard for removing your old carpeting and disposing of it, but in some cases, you can save money by hiring your own contractor to do the installation.

## Carpet Installation

Because special tools and expertise are required, most carpets should be professionally installed. The exception to this rule is carpet squares, which are usually used in informal areas such as basement playrooms and screen rooms. Carpet squares can be installed with adhesive, and some are manufactured with their own adhesive backing for easy homeowner installation.

## Carpet Care and Maintenance

Once your carpet is installed, the care it receives has a bearing on how long it can last and how good it can look. Vacuum at least weekly (more often if you have kids or pets), and have the carpet professionally cleaned once a year. If you purchase a good quality carpet installed over a high-quality pad and keep it clean, your carpet can give you years of service.