

Beare Flooring's Carpet Purchasing Guide

Choosing the right Carpet for your home can seem like a daunting task. With so many variations in fibre types and assorted styles available, you, the consumer, may be left wondering if you are really choosing the best product for my needs.

Well, the good news is that Beare Flooring is here to help. We have created a detailed yet easy-to-read guide to provide you, our valued clients, with the correct information.

Pure Wool

Pure Wool is a beautiful addition to the home. It is a heavy fibre, making it an excellent hard-wearing base that will withstand heavy foot traffic within the family home and retain its shape and appearance for a long time. Being a natural product Wool comes with its own level of stain resistance, but it is not stain proof, especially when compared with other human made fibres.

Being a naturally fluffing fibre means the product will shed over its lifetime and while Wool is not a common allergen this means it may not be the right choice for anyone who suffers from allergies or asthma. Investing in a good quality vacuum will assist with removing the excess fibres that Wool sheds over time.

Nylon

Nylon is a heavy weight human-made fibre, meaning that Carpet produced in Nylon will over time retain its shape extremely well and hold up to heavy foot traffic. The fibre itself is marginally more expensive than the likes of Polyester.

If you are shopping for your personal house, Nylon ideally needs to be at the top of your list. Often coming "Solution Dyed" this gives the product an advanced durability to fading and staining.

These characteristics combined with the products easy care is why Solution Dyed Nylon has undisputedly been the most superior fibre in the carpet industry for some time.

Polypropylene

There are not a lot of cut pile Polypropylene carpets on the market. Traditionally Polypropylene is made in a loop pile, it is specifically designed and produced for large commercial spaces, rental properties, and much alike.

Polypropylene feels more brittle than most fibres, it is one of the cheapest fibres on the market. Often also used in lower-end "Carpet Tiles."

Polyester

Polyester is a lightweight fibre producing a luxurious soft feeling carpet. It is often a popular choice for young families, homeowners, and developers as it is economical in price. Being a lighter weight fibre, it can be prone to flattening out over time and showing wear patterns faster than other fibres. However, a "Solution Dyed Polyester" which goes through a specific dyeing process can be the perfect solution for a family home, as now this economical fibre has the added benefits of being fade & stain resistant.

A Polyester "Loop Pile" is ideal for an economical hard-wearing carpet in situations such as rental properties. Developers often use thick-cut pile Polyesters in their builds to give a luxurious feel without spending too much money. If you are selling your property, this can be a good option for you also.

Dyeing Processes

There are various dyeing processes which fibre manufacturers use, some more beneficial than others. For example, some fibres have to be dyed using particular dyeing processes, like Wool for example. This fibre comes off the sheep a certain colour and due to its construction, it requires a specific dyeing process "bath dyed" which means Wool products cannot be dyed/coloured right the way through to the fibres core, like a human-made fibre such as Nylon can.

We explore "dyeing processes" further below.

Bath Dyed

Once a fibre has been spun into yarn, it is then run through a bath of dye. This means that only the outside of the fibre is covered with dye. Which is why fibres like Wool overtime can fade when exposed to excessive sunlight. The exterior of the product fades exposing the "uncoloured" centre of the yarn. Think of a radish. It appears purple or red on the outside, but when you cut into it it's actually white in the centre. This will help you understand the term "bath dyed". The colour sits on top of the yarn and does not go through to the yarn's core. This process is applicable to both human-made fibres and natural fibres such as Wool.

Solution Dyed

Solution Dyed is by far the most superior dyeing process. This specific dyeing process can only be achieved on human-made fibres not natural fibres. The process is very different from bath dyeing. The fibre is actually coloured when it is still in a liquid state. From here the fibre is extruded and produced into a tangible product "yarn".

An example of this is a carrot. A carrot is orange on the outside and all the way through to its core. This is true for "solution dyed" products also, the fibre appears on the outside as it is on the inside.

Being Solution Dyed results in the fibre also becoming fade and stain resistant which are fantastic qualities for durability. Some manufacturers may even allow you to spot clean stains with an aggressive cleaning agent, like turpentine or methylated spirits or bleach.

Always check the manufacturers guidelines prior to this.

The Importance Of Underlay

Regardless of which type of Carpet you decide is best suited to your needs, selecting a good quality underlay is also a very important part of the process. Underlay determines the comfort of your carpet and the durability of it. There is nothing worse than spending your hard-earned money on a quality carpet only to put it over a thin or second-hand underlay. The two main factors to consider when purchasing underlays are the product's height (the mm rating) and the product's density (the kg rating). Due to various combinations available, choosing underlay can be confusing. Suppose you go for a low mm rated underlay with a high kg rating; you will be left with a hard underlay that doesn't move much underfoot. To explain it simply, this product may be ideal for places where you want the carpet to last a long time, much like rental properties. If you go for a high mm rated underlay with a low kg rating you will have an underlay which moves a lot underfoot but will be left with Carpet prone to flattening out and staying flattened. To explain it simply, this product may be ideal for places you want comfort and places that you don't mind your flooring flattening out over time.

Our suggestion is to opt for a higher mm rated underlay with a medium to high kg rating to ensure your carpet lasts longer while still remaining comfortable underfoot. We suggest that you physically feel a few different underlay options. This can be achieved by putting your chosen Carpet sample over the top of one of our underlay samples to determine the feel. After all, you wouldn't buy a car without driving it, so don't buy a carpet without walking on it.

Planning & Join Placement

While most carpets come 3.66m wide, not every room is under that width, meaning you may have unavoidable joins in your carpet. Ensuring the joins are in good places and left out of eyesight is an essential part of completing a flawless installation. Planning the job is important; it is what determines your overall meterage and cost. Sometimes shortcuts can be taken to prevent joins, but in turn, this adds metres. Often, joins can be added to reduce your meterage, and this is a conversation that you have the right to be involved in. We suggest asking for a join plan before accepting a quote.

When it comes to joining, different types of carpets join better than others. Factors that come into how the joins will look are primarily based on the installer's skill level. Many tradespeople are highly skilled at joining carpet, and in most cases, can achieve almost invisible joins but there are a few factors to consider here. In the daytime and direct sunlight, joins are most visible. If you have a sun-drenched room, checking your join placement is going to be a top priority.

Caring For Your Carpet

Different manufacturers have various specific caring instructions. However, there are a few basic guidelines for a general overview of what you should and shouldn't do. If you don't already have a decent vacuum, we suggest purchasing one. If dirt is left in the carpet, it can become like sandpaper, and as you walk back and forth over time it slowly pulls the carpet apart. A "turbo head" vacuum nozzle where the end of the vacuum spins is highly recommended for proper Carpet care. Depending on your carpet fibre and how it was dyed, the care instructions can vary. Anything Solution Dyed can be cleaned quite aggressively as long as you adhere to the manufacturer's spot cleaning or cleaning instructions.

Warranty

Most manufacturers have their own specific product warranty. However, all products have general guidelines for the installation and aftercare. Some manufacturers stipulate that an annual or bi-annual shampoo is required to uphold the product warranty. Make sure to ask questions and clarify that before making a purchase.

Disclaimer

When it comes to caring for your carpet fibre, we suggest clarifying the best way to clean and remove stains with the manufacturer before doing so. Not all fibres are the same, and not all require the same cleaning agents, so make sure you keep hold of your carpet's care guide and manufacturer's number to ensure that your carpet lasts a lifetime!