

Today's Carpets Offer Consumers Many Choices

Today's consumer has many decisions to make when purchasing carpet, from the method of manufacturing to the type of fiber and style of carpet. Below are explanations of a few terms a consumer needs to know when choosing carpet.

Most carpet is made by one of four methods:

Tufted carpet is made on a machine that stitches loops of yarn through the backing, then coats the backing with a latex coating that locks the loops in place. A secondary backing, usually "action back," is applied for strength. The majority of carpet manufactured today is tufted.

Woven carpet is similar to fabric that is woven on a loom.

Needle-punched carpet is made by carpet fibers that are punched through a fabric back by thousands of needles. This process is used in most indoor-outdoor carpets.

Hand-knotted carpet is a method that was used for centuries before modern-day equipment was invented, and is now a very expensive procedure.

There are four basic types of carpet fibers:

Nylon is the ideal carpet fiber, capturing nearly 75% of the carpet industry. It provides outstanding durability, performance, resilience and appearance, particularly the advanced generation nylons such as Dupont's Stainmaster series, Monsanto's Wear-dated carpets and 3M's Scotchgard Stain Release.

Olefin or polypropylene is most used in commercial carpets and berbers because of its superior resistance to stains. A tight short pile carpet is recommended in this fiber because the resilience is not as great as nylon. The advanced generation olefins are practically "stain proof," making them a great choice for playrooms, offices and apartments, or where budget is a factor.

Polyester carpets are very soft to the touch, but not as stain-resistant as olefin. They are best used in low-traffic areas where color and style are the most important

features.

Wool is the oldest fiber for carpets and the only "natural" fiber in the fiber group. It provides a beautiful carpet, but is not as durable as the "man-made" fibers, and its cost is out of reach for many consumers.

There are several styles of carpet:

Saxony is level-cut pile carpet with close yarn tufts, giving a smooth, soft, formal look.

Textured carpet has level coarser pile with yarn tufts, not as close as a Saxony and giving a less formal look.

Trackless carpet has curled or twisted alternating tufts that help hide footprints.

Cut-loop carpet is referred to as sculptured, with its cut pile and loop construction resulting in a high-low pattern.

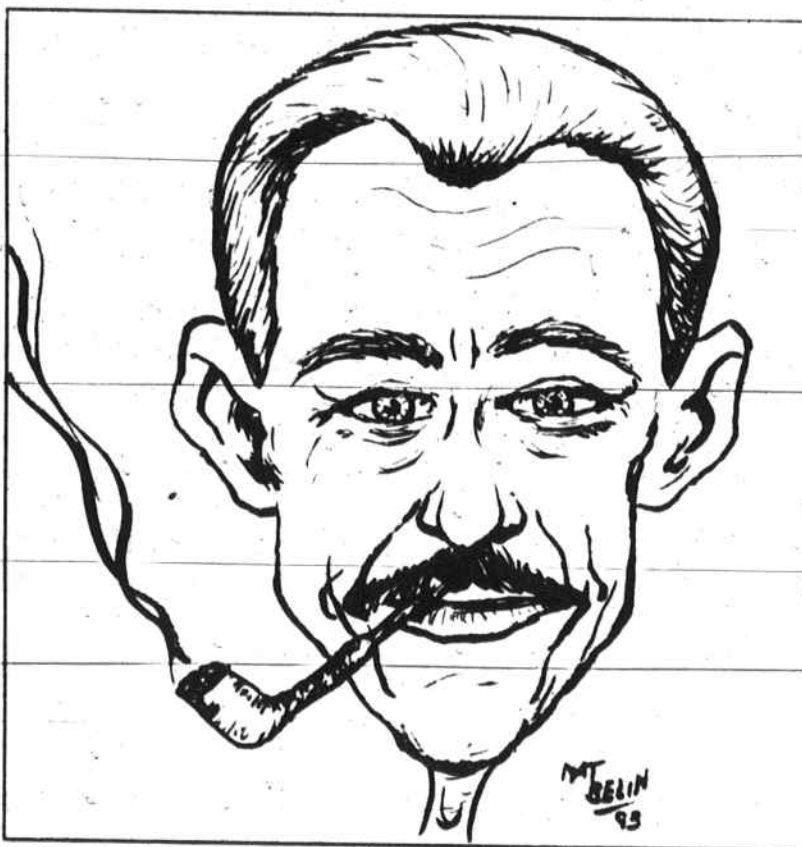
Level-loop is referred to as a commercial carpet with short, tight loops, making a smooth, level, hard finish carpet.

Berber is similar to a level loop, but the yarn tufts are much larger. Berber is a very tough, decorative carpet.

Multi-level loop carpet has loop pile of two to three levels of tufts, creating a distinctive pattern or random sculptured effect.

Random shear or tip shear is a mix of cut and loop pile of the same height creating a textured surface with a tracery sculptured appearance.

Carpet durability depends on three factors: the type of fiber, the pile density, and the yarn twist. Nylon is the strongest, most resilient fiber produced for carpets today. The density of the pile, or the closeness of the tufts, is critical for wear, resilience and appearance. The denser the pile, the better the carpet will perform. Yarn



padding. The padding is just as important as the carpet, if not more so. Different carpets require different pads, depending on the construction of the carpet and the type of area in which it is used. A dense firm pad will perform better and make your carpet last longer than a thick soft pad.

Basic care and maintenance of carpet is essential to extend a carpet's lifetime. Spills should be cleaned promptly. Frequent, thorough vacuuming should be done, particularly in high traffic areas. Periodic professional cleaning (about every 18 months) will help to maintain a carpet's beauty and extend its lifetime.

Before investing in new carpeting, consult a floor covering specialist to help you choose the right fiber, construction and style for your home.


twist is also important for resisting wear, matting and crushing. All cut pile carpets have a heat set "twist" in the yarn. The tighter the twist, the better the carpet will last.

To help your carpet stay attractive and wear longer, don't cut corners by "scrimping" on


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