



**WORLD FLOOR COVERING  
ASSOCIATION**

## **Buying Carpet Tips: What you should know before you buy.**

You've decided on buying new carpet, but you want to shop smart. You already know how carpet is made and the difference between carpet styles, but what else is there to know before you buy? Lots. See below also [Choosing The Best Carpet For Each Room Of Your Home?](#)

Here are some buying carpet tips to give you the upper hand on what will soon be under your feet!

### **Carpet Seams**

Unless your room is narrower than 15 feet, you're going to have seams. Most carpet comes in widths of 12 feet and 15 feet — and on occasion, 13 feet. The degree of visibility of your seams depends on the texture and color you choose, as well as the lighting and furniture placement in your room.

### **Bending**

When you carpet your stairs, its backing may show on the bends. And if it's a looped carpet, it can snag — especially at the seams or transitions. Check our [Carpet Care](#) section for information on how to properly care for

looped carpet.

### **Nap (Pile Shading)**

A carpet's nap runs in a single direction, making pile reversal or the shading you see from a vacuum trail, completely normal for most cut pile styles. If you're not a fan of this, window treatments and furniture placement can minimize the effect.

### **Quality**

Let's face it. You get what you pay for. If you want your carpet to have a great pile density and tighter twist construction (which leads to improved durability), then you're going to want to go with a higher quality (and more expensive) product. New carpet adds value to any home, so it's an investment worth making.

### **Color**

Carpet covers a large part of any room, so it's vital that you consider some basic rules when selecting its color. First off, know that once your carpet is installed, it's going to look lighter in color than the sample you saw in the store. Don't ask us why, that's just the way it is — kinda like losing a sock in the dryer.

Next, recognize that color can affect the apparent size of a room. Call it a visual illusion or a trick of the light, but lighter carpet makes a room look larger and darker colors make a room look smaller and more intimate.

If you like to redecorate often or plan to move soon, go neutral. It's much easier to imagine furniture in a room that is decorated with neutral colors.

### **Stains**

It's going to happen, no matter how long you hold out from sipping wine or munching on chips and salsa in your freshly carpeted room. Stain protection is an important consideration when buying carpet. Products come with various levels of protection and warranties. As the quality of a carpet increases, so does its stain protection level and warranty coverage.

## **Carpet Cushion**

Padding or cushion is the layer of spongy material between carpet and floor. It's the padding — not the carpet — that determines whether the carpet feels good or great under your feet.

A quality padding can help preserve a carpet's look and can extend its life and comfort by providing tougher protection against wear and tear.

Padding is sold using quality specifications, not color specifications. The color of the sample you see in the store may not be the same color as what's installed in your home. But as long as it feels good, who cares?

## **Warranty**

It's a good idea to read the product specs and warranty coverage on the back labels of your carpet prior to purchasing. Doing so will give you the information you need to protect your investment — and eliminate any surprises down the road.

## **Cost**

"Cost per square foot" is just one component of the overall price tag for new carpet. Ask your retailer to calculate the total cost of your floor covering project. Here's what he or she may include beyond the cost of the carpet, itself:

- Furniture removal/replacement
- Some retailers or installers may charge to remove (and then replace) furniture in the room to be carpeted.
- Demolition/disposal of old floor covering
- Unless your home is brand new, there's probably an old floor covering that is going to need to be removed and properly disposed of.
- Sub-floor preparation
- Depending on its condition (after removal of the old floor covering), your subfloor may need to be prepped for carpet installation.
- Product delivery
- Delivering your carpet and padding may not be included in the "cost per square foot" price.

- Installation
- There will most likely be a “cost per square foot” or “square yard” to install your new carpet and padding.
- Materials required to complete the installation
- Additional materials, like adhesives, moisture barriers, stairnosings and baseboards may be required to properly install your carpet.
- Financing
- Many retailers offer financing as an option of payment. Be sure to check the interest rate, minimum payment due and any finance charges if you choose to pay your purchase off over time.
- In addition to your total project cost, annual cleanings are also recommended to maintain the beauty and life of your new carpet. Ask your retailer and/or consult the manufacturer’s warranty and care guide for directions on cleaning and maintenance.

See our list of local floorcovering retailers and contractors for a WFCA member near you.