



Rugs 101



Rugs 101

Area Rug Construction

There is a variety of area rugs constructed from different materials and patterns. Your area rug should perform well in addition to looking great. To find the best area rug within your budget, consider the right combination of density, twist, and fiber.

Density: Refers to the tightness of the tufts, or knots. The denser the weave, the increased longevity of the rug.

Twist: Refers to the amount of yarn spirals. A yarn twist that is tighter provides added durability.

Fiber: Area rugs may be from a variety of synthetic or natural materials, which will help determine performance and appearance. Natural fibers provide soft, low luster colors and long-term performance. Synthetic fibers provide brilliant colors, softness, easy maintenance and value.

Area rugs may be power loomed, hand-hooked, hand-tufted, hand-knotted or a flat weave.

Hand-Made Area Rugs

In addition to traditional hand-made area rugs, Asia and other countries also produce many hand-made contemporary area rugs. There are different types of hand-made area rugs: knotted, tufted, hooked, looped and flat weave. Rug construction alone does not dictate area rug quality. Factors such as density, material and weave should also be considered when selecting an area rug.

Hand-Knotted Area Rugs

Hand knotted area rugs are woven by hand; and depending on size, construction and density, one area rug could take a year or more to complete. Hand-knotted area rugs are secured to the foundation by knotting, versus gluing, producing exceptional density and quality.

Hand-Hooked Area Rugs

Using a pattern and a hooking device, yarn is punched through a canvas cloth creating a looped pile. The yarns are then glued in place in lieu of knotting, and a cloth is attached to the back for added protection.

Hand-Tufted Area Rugs

Hand-tufted area rugs are usually created by punching yarn in a cloth that is attached to a frame, and then gluing the backs with latex after hooking the yarn. The surface loop pile is then sheared to produce a flat surface. This process creates an area rug that is very plush and generally reasonable priced.

Flat Weave Area Rugs

Flat weave area rugs are easier to make and are usually made of wool, cotton, bamboo, or nylon. Because they are looped, flat weave area rugs do not have a pile and are reversible. In this category we offer two wonderful Kilim collections that include throw pillows for added style.

Power Loomed Area Rugs

These area rugs are made on power looms by hand, machine or computer. The loom is strung with a cotton or jute warp, and then woven using nylon, polypropylene, wool or other material. Computer operated machines produce a number of contemporary and traditional designs in various sizes and colors from a predetermined design. More than 40 shades can be achieved in a single area rug using a cross-weaving technique. Power loomed area rugs have become very popular due to the variety of sizes, colors, designs, lower pricing and availability. Power loomed area rugs are woven on Wilton, side-woven Wilton and Gripper Axminster looms.

Wilton Woven

Wilton looms are situated face-to-face and feature computerized electronic heads. The loom needles loop the yarns in two synthetic backings. Loom size and structure vary based on number of color capacities. Two identical area rugs emerge from the loom in a face-to-face position. Once the weaving process is complete and the rug is sheared down the center- revealing two complete pieces.

Wilton Side Woven

The Wilton side-woven area rugs are woven in a similar fashion, but at a 90 degree angle to the above area rugs. On occasion, cotton backing is used to give these area rugs a softer feel.

Axminster

Axminster more commonly refers to a type of carpet rather than a type of loom, although the Gripper Axminster loom was created to mass produce carpet in 1927.

Rugs 101

Information and Facts about Area Rugs

Decorating with Rugs

The area rug pulls all of the design elements of a room together. Here are some hints to pick the right rug for your home:

1. To place a room-sized rug on a hardwood floor, choose a rug that allows eight inches of wood to be exposed around the rug's perimeter.
2. For cozy nooks in large rooms, create small sitting areas by gathering furniture around 4' x 6' or 5' x 8' rugs.
3. For a dining room rug, measure your tabletop. Add four feet to the width and length to find the minimum size of your dining room rug. This extra length and width facilitates pulling chairs out from under the table.
4. Brighten up small areas, like your foyer, bathroom or kitchen with an accent rug using either a 2' x 3' – 3' x 5' – 4' x 6' – or 6' Round Rug.

Keep your family safe by making sure that rug corners do not extend into high traffic areas and that you always use a Spartan Area Rug Pad for extra protection.

We always recommend using a Spartan Area Rug Pad under all rugs – this will help keep your rug in place and also save the life of your rug – Rugs wear from the bottom, not the top. Since the friction is on the bottom when being walked on, using a rug pad will help keep your rug in good condition and last for many years.

Decorating with Patterns

Putting pattern in a room adds color, texture and design to your room without being overwhelming. Unlike solid colors, patterns have a “chameleon” effect: they readily blend with other colors in the room. This makes it easy to decorate from the floor up or match patterned carpet to existing upholstery and wall colors.

- Geometric with Floral
- Floral patterns provide pleasing contrast with geometric designs
- Simple style combined complex patterns
- Large patterns and small patterns couple well.

If you are starting your decorating project from scratch, set the tone and design of the room by selecting a patterned carpet. Then find complimenting upholstery and wall colors by following the Opposites Attract guidelines.

If you are redecorating, take a swatch of the most visible pattern in the room to the carpet store. Using only color as a consideration, match the swatch to samples of patterned carpet. To narrow down your alternatives, use the Opposites Attract guidelines to choose the right pattern. Then simply choose your favorite.

Rugs 101

Selecting an Area Rug

A number of considerations surround area rug selection including design, comfort, construction, size, materials and price. We offer a variety of area rugs that provide endless possibilities to fit any decor and personal taste.

Area Rug Selection Tips

Design: An empty room may be designed around any area rug, just as the right rug can put the final touches on an existing room. When designing a room around an area rug, use the rug colors to decide upon furniture, paint or wallpaper color. A well-chosen area rug can coordinate patterns, furniture, and wall prints to complete a room's design.

Color: Furniture may be selected around rug colors and design. Area rugs are an effective method to mix patterns that have the same color palette. Deep colored area rugs provide warmth and intimacy, while light colored rugs can open a room and provide a more spacious feeling. When selecting an area rug around existing furniture, bring a swatch of the predominant pattern in the room.

Size: Evaluate the size of the space and the area to cover. Larger area rugs provide comfort and benefit acoustics in a large space. Area rugs also enhance areas in bedrooms, kitchens and other smaller spaces that may require a splash of color or warmth.

Material: There are a variety of area rugs made from synthetic and natural yarns. For more information, see our 'Area Rug Construction' section.

Construction: There are a variety of different types of construction. Once your needs have been determined it is easier to decide what fabrication best fits within your settings. For more information, see our 'Area Rug Construction' section.

Shape: Circular and other uniquely shaped rugs can present a design alternative to rectangular or square shapes.

The Space: The type of light and amount of traffic in a room will affect the choice of area rug material. Some hand-made fibers resist fading better than natural fibers, so consider the amount of direct sunlight an area rug will receive.

Durability: An area rug with the right combination of pile density (closer stitches or tufts) and fiber will resist wear.

Area rug pads will reduce wear on the area rug and provide additional noise absorption.

- Do not extend area rugs into high traffic areas.
- Divide a large space into more intimate sitting areas by placing furniture around 4' x 6' or 6' x 9' area rugs.
- Floral patterns can accentuate and blend with more contemporary geometric designs if the color palettes are similar.
- Pair less complicated designs with more intricate patterns.
- Small and large patterns pair well.

Rugs 101

Frequently asked Questions

Q: What are the different fibers in area rugs?

A: Wool fiber is available in both power loomed and hand made rugs. Wool is the traditional fiber used in fine hand made Oriental rugs. Wool not only wears longer, it also keeps its good appearance and stays new-looking longer. Wool resists dirt, retains its appearance, and stays cleaner longer. Its ability to absorb moisture prevents a build up of static electricity and therefore wool does not attract lint and dust from the air. Furthermore, the crimp in the wool fiber and the scales on the outside of the fiber assist in keeping dirt from penetrating the surface – the same qualities also make it easier to clean - Each wool fiber is made up of millions of “coiled springs” that stretch and give rather than break, and so wool is extremely durable. Wool rugs absorb dyes differently than synthetic rugs giving them a more authentic look.

Wool There are many grades of wool. Long staple wool from New Zealand is considered to be most effective for area rugs.

Worsted Wool An extra step in wool processing that combs out shorter fibers resulting in durable and lustrous yarns.

Synthetic fibers are used exclusively in power loomed rugs. One of the greatest advantages of synthetic rugs is a byproduct of the fiber being non-porous. This means that it is inherently stain proof and resists soiling and staining from almost any chemical. A very durable fiber that feels soft and still easy to maintain.

Cotton Cotton is a natural fiber of great durability and strength – This natural fiber is arranged in a way that gives cotton unique properties of strength, durability, and absorbency. Each fiber is made up of twenty to thirty layers of cellulose, coiled in a neat series of natural springs. When the cotton boll (seed case) is opened the fibers dry into flat, twisted, ribbon-like shapes and become kinked together and interlocked. This interlocked form is ideal for spinning into a fine yarn.

Polypropylene or Olefin Polypropylene or Olefin fibers are petroleum products, derived from propylene and ethylene gasses. The polypropylene fiber is characterized but its resistance to moisture. It is strong, abrasion resistant, quick drying, colorfast, mildew resistant and soil and stain resistant. Its fibers have the lowest density of all manufactured fibers giving olefin textiles a very lightweight quality.

Heat- Set Polypropylene Heat Set Polypropylene is a man-made fiber that is created by a process called extrusion. Extrusion involves the pre-dyeing of pellets that are then melted down and extruded into continuous fibers. As a man-made fiber, polypropylene has several built in features that make it attractive for use in rugs.

The Heat-set twisted yarns are treated with heat to retain their “permanent wave” for better performance and appearance retention.

BCF Bulk Continuous Filament

BCF: BCF or Bulked Continuous Filament yarns are synthetic yarns processed by a mechanical means to fluff them out before tufting or weaving.

Nylon Nylon is a durable synthetic fiber which also has good dyeing characteristics. Nylon yarns can be solution dyed, skein dyed and/or space dyed.

Rayon Rayon is made of cellulose, which is in the walls of all plant cells, and is the main substance of wood.

Faux Silk “False silk” is usually a synthetic, such as polyester or viscose/rayon on occasion mercerized cotton will be used. Also called art silk, faux silk is usually used as small accents or in a short, dense pile construction.

Q: What is a Tufted Rug?

A: Hand tufted area rugs resemble more expensive hand knotted rugs in intricacy of design, detail and coloring. A hand tufted rug is constructed by pushing yarns through a heavy canvas backing, then shearing the face of the rug to create a cut pile. These rugs are very heavy and extremely dense in weave. Hand tufted rugs are not recommended for anyone with radiant heat floors.

Rugs 101

Frequently asked Questions

Q: What is a Hooked Rug?

A: Rug-making process by which craftsmen insert yarn – which can be any fiber - into a backing with a hand held needle tufting tool. The machine is often called a “gun.” The rug’s pattern is stenciled on primary backing material. After the tufting is complete, a latex backing is attached to protect and anchor the stitches. The pile of a hand hooked rug is made up of loops. Rugs may also combine cut and loop techniques.

Q: What is a Hand Knotted Rug?

A: A Hand knotted rug is made by weavers who knot pile yarns around the warp fibers that run the length of the rug. Generally, the more knots per square inch, the more valuable the rug.

Q: What is a Tibetan Hand Knot?

A: Tibetan Knot is a distinct rug-weaving technique now used in other regions as well as in Tibet. A temporary rod, which establishes the length of pile, is placed in front of the warp. A continuous yarn is looped around two warps and then once around the rod. When a row of loops is finished, then the loops are cut to create the pile. This method produces a slightly ridged surface.

Q: What is a Power Loomed Rug?

A: A Power loomed rug is constructed on an electrically powered machine, now usually computer controlled.

Q: What is a Needlepoint Rug?

A: A needlepoint rug making technique, made with wool yarns worked on canvas using the same method as a needlepoint pillow.

Q: What is a Flat Weave Rug?

A: A Flat weave is weaving in which no knots are used. The weft strands are simply passed through the warp strands. Dhurries are flatwoven rugs that originate in India and are usually made of cotton or wool. Kilims are generally finer, tapestry-like flat weaves.

Q: What is Warp and Weft in an Area Rug?

Warp: Vertical strands of fiber, which stretch from the top to the bottom of the rug. Knots are tied to the warp yarns to create face pile.

Weft: Horizontal strands of fiber that are woven through the warps. The weft anchors and secures the knots.

Q: How long will my area rug last?

A: Area rug durability is generally determined by the material, construction, and amount of traffic in a space. By carefully considering where the area rug will be placed and how it will be used, you can anticipate its longevity. View our expected longevity chart and remember using a Spartan Area Rug Pad will be a tremendous help in prolonging the life of your area rug.

Q: Do some countries produce better area rugs than others?

A: Every type of area rug from different countries has the potential for excellent quality as well as problems.

Q: What area rug size do I need for my room?

A: There are no precise guidelines for selecting an area rug for a room, other than a dining area. A good method to determine the right size is to spread bed linens as a substitute to approximate the size, take measurements, and choose the closest size available. In a dining area, measure the table and provide at least four additional feet to the length and width. In this manner, the chair legs remain on the area rug when pulled away from the table.

Q: Will my area rug fade?

A: Synthetic dyes last longer than natural dyes. In areas with high sun exposure, some fading may occur, so consider the space in which you will place the area rug. Most area rugs will provide years of vibrant color that do not fade under normal light conditions.

Q: Is an underlay (rug pad) necessary?

A: We strongly encourage the use of an area rug underlay to protect your area rug from abrasion, impact and cleaning. A quality underlay, such as our Spartan products, can add years to the life of your area rug while providing additional safety and acoustic benefits.

Q: My area rug just arrived, and it appears to be creased. Do I have a problem?

A: During shipping many area rugs develop creases or the pile gets compressed, which usually disappears within two weeks