



Choosing THE RIGHT CARPET

MICHAEL BALLARD, DESIGN MANAGER FOR IRVINE INTERNATIONAL FLOORS, SHARES PRACTICAL INSIGHTS ON HOW TO CHOOSE CARPET FOR YOUR HOME

WHETHER IT IS A NEW-BUILD OR REFURBISHMENT project, your purchase of carpet is usually the largest chattel investment you make in your home.

Like most large-ticket purchases, wading your way through the myriad of make and model options can be confusing if you don't have a clear focus. Answering a few simple questions can narrow down the field to ensure you buy carpet that meets the specific requirements of the room in which you are planning to have it installed.

WHAT TYPES OF CARPET ARE THERE?

Different methods of producing carpet result in different surface textures, affecting the way a carpet looks and feels. Carpets can be tufted or woven:

Tufted Carpet

Most carpet sold in New Zealand is tufted, which means the yarn has been threaded through a backing by hundreds of needles to form loops to a desired length. Tufted carpet can then be either cut pile or loop pile.

Cut Pile means the tops of the loops are cut off to create individual yarn ends. Generally this carpet yarn has more twist which is set so the tufts won't flatten.

The harder the twist of the yarn, the more textured it will look and the better wear ability properties it will have. Cut Pile carpet is best suited to areas where underfoot comfort is important.

Loop Pile is generally more durable than cut pile, however it is harder underfoot and less comfortable. The carpet fibre loops are not cut or sheared, so the loops form the carpet surface and this is where the soil tends to stay, making cleaning easier. Level loop pile has a tight, pebbly surface. Multi-level loops produce interesting patterns that have

enhanced soil-hiding capabilities. Loop Pile carpets are best suited to areas where there is high foot traffic.

Woven Carpet

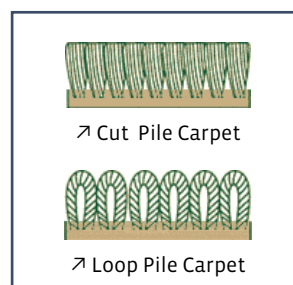
This is made by weaving the yarn and backing at the same time. The best-known types of woven carpet are Axminster and Wilton; their names being taken from the type of loom on which they are woven. Axminster is always cut pile but Wilton can be cut, loop pile or both.

THINK ABOUT YOUR BUDGET

Carpets which ensure high performance are generally more expensive when compared with other carpet types; although they usually far out-perform standard production carpet and the overall life-cycle costs including professional cleaning will be far less.

HOW SHOULD MY CARPET PERFORM?

Most of us want our carpet to wear well and stay looking good for many years to come. However an average household of 2 adults, 4 children and a cat and a dog, demands much more from a carpet than the pet-less owner of a one bedroom apartment!



COMPARING CARPET FIBRE PROPERTIES		Wool	Premium Solution Dyed Nylon (PSDN)	Solution Dyed Nylon (SDN)	Polyamide (Nylon)	Polypropylene	Polyester
	Water Resistance	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Fair
	Resistance to Wear	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Poor	Fair-Good
	Cleanability	Very Good	Outstanding	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Very Good
	Stain Resistance	Poor	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Fair
	Fade Resistance	Poor	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Outstanding	Good
	Shedding & Pilling	Poor	Outstanding	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Very Good
	Flammability	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Good	Poor	Poor
	Resistance to Mildew & Insect Damage	Poor	Outstanding	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

WHICH IS BETTER – WOOL OR NYLON?

Both wool and nylon carpet have various features and benefits which would be better suited to some installation environments than others.

Rather than fixate on what your carpet is made from, we suggest you use the chart above to help you prioritise which qualities you require from its performance.

- ▶ If, like most New Zealanders, your home is infiltrated with sunlight and you are concerned about fading, select a premium-quality solution dyed carpet with a guarantee against UV fading.
- ▶ If you have allergy sufferers in your household, select a man-made-fibre carpet that is guaranteed not to shed or pill.
- ▶ If you have children, pets, accident-prone or incontinent household members, select a 100% solution dyed carpet with a 100% solution dyed backing.
- ▶ If you have underfloor heating, make sure this won't create problems for the carpet or underlay - and that neither will affect the heating.
- ▶ If you desire a highly-coloured patterned carpet, select a woven wool/nylon Axminster or printed nylon carpet.



Michael Ballard has over 25 years experience in the carpet design industry, including the UK, Australia and New Zealand. He works in close association with world-leading manufacturers to bring the most technically-advanced floorcoverings in the latest interior colour trends to the New Zealand market.

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

- ▶ Don't be tempted to buy a cheaper carpet that will look flat and shabby after a year or two, find a carpet with the look you want and at a price you can afford.
- ▶ Check the chart and read the labels for grading and fibre information to make sure it's suitable for your lifestyle and the rooms you want to carpet.
- ▶ Make sure your carpet has a Wear Warranty, as this will signify the product's resilience and durability. Enquire about the suppliers who will implement replacement action, once the reason for failure has been established.
- ▶ Take samples home and observe them in each room and in the various lights at different times of the day and night.
- ▶ Shop around and get several quotes in writing. Carpet comes in various widths, so when comparing prices ensure you compare the "per square metre" prices and not the "per lineal metre" prices. Generally speaking, the wider the carpet; the less number of joins. This usually means less installation costs and less potential for wear and tear.
- ▶ Have your carpet laid by the company you buy it from. Having one company for the whole job will usually be cheaper - and it makes life easier if something goes wrong.

TEST THE QUALITY BY:

- ▶ Brushing cut-pile samples with your foot to see if the effect is acceptable.
- ▶ Vigorously scrubbing loop-pile carpet with the edge of a coin and holding it up to the light to see if fibres start to protrude or form pills on the surface. Loose fibres in cut-pile carpet may be vacuumed up, but in loop-pile they remain anchored and may spoil the appearance.
- ▶ Rubbing a small section of solution dyed nylon carpet between your thumb and forefinger for 10-15 seconds to ensure the nylon polymers do not burst and matt together.