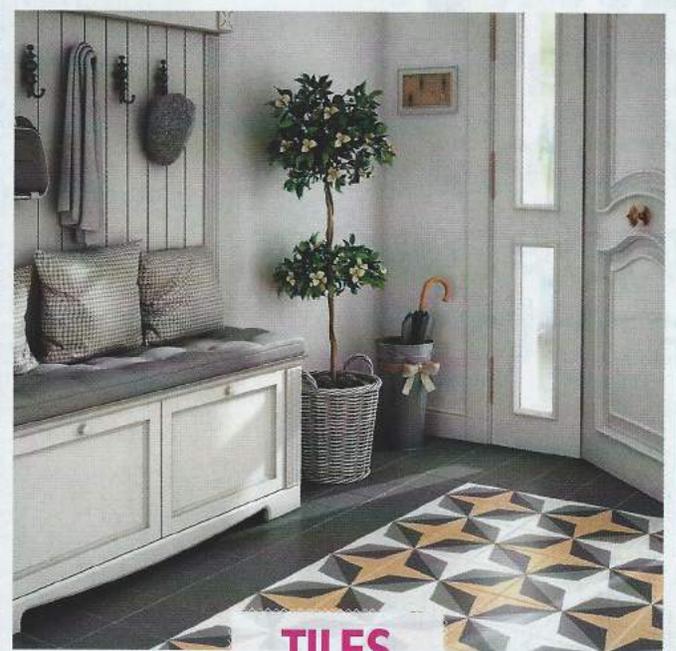




CARPET



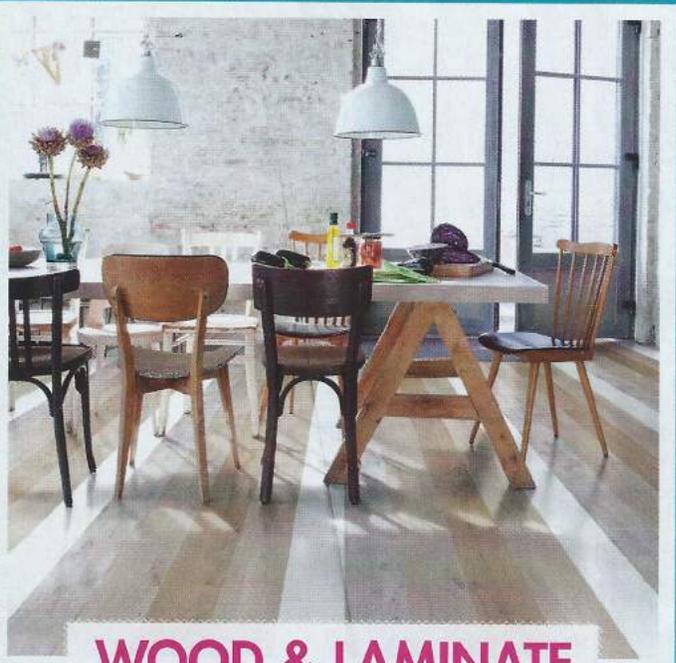
TILES

Your essential GUIDE TO FLOORING

With the latest trends, buying tips and maintenance solutions, we've got all the expert advice you need to make your floors look fabulous



VINYL



WOOD & LAMINATE

THE **CLEAR-CUT** GUIDE TO CARPET

Fitting carpet is a tried and trusted way to make your home cosier, but it can also deliver on durability and design impact when you know how

From the first foot out of bed in the morning to kicking your shoes off after a long day, it's easy to underestimate the feel good factor that comes with stepping into a soft, sumptuous carpet.

There are plenty of reasons to choose carpet, but whatever yours is, first get to know the needs of your home and what different types of carpet can offer in return. Then, plot your room schemes inspired by the latest colour and pattern trends and you'll be all set to feel the bliss of wall-to-wall comfort and practicality under foot.

Know your fibres

• Wool

Made from sustainable materials, wool is the luxurious choice for your home carpet, but its ability to bounce back and outlast manmade materials makes it a worthy investment. It's strong and stain resistant by nature, but is often blended with manmade fibres to enhance these qualities and soften the finish.

• Polyamide

These carpets usually use nylon as a base for a soft, stain resistant finish that's perfect for families with young children and animals.

• Polyester

Largely used in deeper, denser carpeting, you'll find polyester feels super soft to the touch, though it may not have as long a lifespan as other types of carpet.

• Polypropylene

Popular and inexpensive, polypropylene carpets can retail for less than £10 per sq m, while remaining tough and promising to stay completely stain-free.

Choose colour

While neutrals will give you a blank slate to design your home around, those braver in their style choices are choosing coloured carpets as a starting point for bold, beautiful rooms



This luxurious heather, a key colour for the new season, proves the perfect foil for a grey painted room

South Pacific in Tahiti, from £45.99 per sq m, Kersaint Cobb



Rich, botanical greens bring the outside in to make for a calming atmosphere in a bedroom

Westex Carpet in Pine & Christie Bed, £45.99 per sq m, Carpetright



Dusky pink works wonders for this year's terracotta trend, as well as a base for a feminine floral room scheme

Bell Twist Dusky Rose, £39.99 per sq m, Brintons

ONE TO SWATCH

The majority of carpet retailers will let you take away or order by post a limited number of swatches. Compare them to potential paint, wallpaper and curtain samples in your home during the day and at night as the colour is sure to take on a different life in different lights.

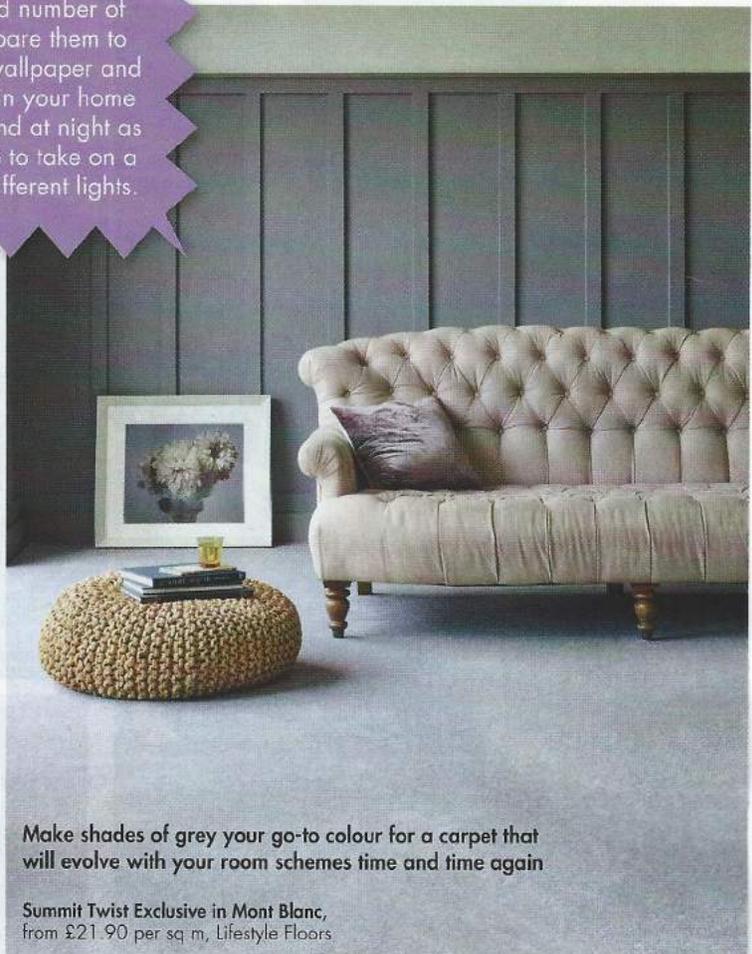
PET PROOF

While hard-wearing carpets might be a no-brainer for homes with pets, you also need to consider how the carpet you choose is constructed.

Twist pile and Saxony carpets are a much better fit for those with four-legged friends about the house



Love Carpet, Enticing in Impulse, from £37 per sq m, Lifestyle Floors



Make shades of grey your go-to colour for a carpet that will evolve with your room schemes time and time again

Summit Twist Exclusive in Mont Blanc, from £21.90 per sq m, Lifestyle Floors

Inga Morris-Blincoe, Commercial Manager at Lifestyle Floors says: 'Loop pile carpets are made of looped yarns. If you have pets, their claws can snag and pull at the loops.'

▼ Traditional patterns in carpet are on the up, including tonal tartans for honing your country home style to perfection

Braeburn in Estuary, from £55 per sq m, Ulster Carpets



TOP TIP

Rupert Anton of The Carpet Foundation, says:

'If buying the same carpet and colour throughout, and it comes in different weights, there is no need to have the same weight of carpet in bedrooms. It takes much lighter wear and may be less expensive.'

▲ Choosing a multi-coloured striped carpet is an easy way to begin a harmonious colour scheme for your room. Colour match one shade from your carpet choice for wall paint or furniture and you're left with an instant, easy-to-follow palette for picking furniture and accessories

Beach Hut Stripe, from £35 per sq m, Kersaint Cobb

4 of the best patterned carpets

Condo Wilton Carpet in Slate Hexagon, £39.99 per sq m, Carpetright



Essentials Fire Line, from £9.99 per sq m, Hillarys

Casablanca in Light Grey, £6.99 per sq m, Carpetright



Glendevon Tartan in Pebble Heap, £22 per sq m, Crown Floors



Use a striped carpet on your staircase which complements the colours of your hallway carpet. The stripes will help to visually lead the eye up the stairs. They'll also disguise scuffs and marks better, making them a great choice for high traffic areas

Penrose in Greyscale, £25 per sq m, Crown Carpets

Carpet SOS

Worrying about spillages shouldn't put you off carpeting your home – with a tough enough carpet and the right stain-removing tips at hand, that catastrophic spill won't seem so much like the end of the world.

Choosing a dark carpet will deliver on drama in the style stakes, but be drama-free when it comes to households which are prone to spills

Dimensions Heather in Black Magic and Black Stripes, from £30 per sq m, Brockway

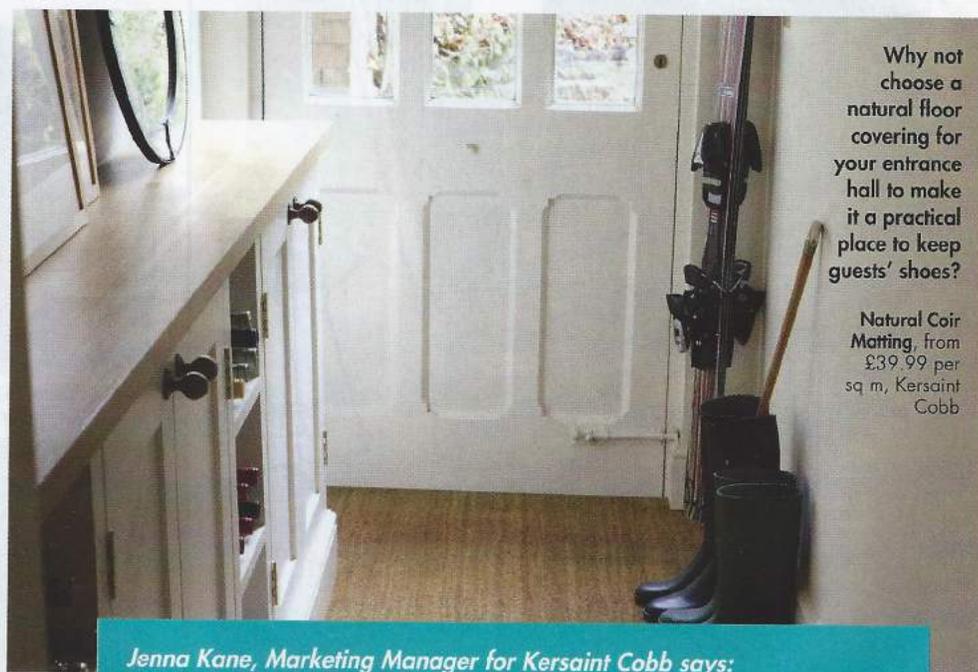


Sarah Quilliam, head of product design at Hillarys, has these top tips for stain removing:

1 First and foremost, blot any excess liquid with a clean cloth. Never rub your carpet as you risk damaging the fibres and even making the stain worse. If the stain is dried on, you'll need to apply a little water to bring the stain back to life and make it easier to work with.

2 To tackle spilt coffee, mix a 2 tbsp. each of washing up liquid and white vinegar with two cups of lukewarm water. Use a sponge to apply the solution and dab.

3 Try rock salt to remedy red wine spills. Cover the area and leave until totally dry – overnight if possible. Scoop up the excess salt and vacuum the area. If the salt leaves a residue, dampen the area slightly and vacuum again.



Why not choose a natural floor covering for your entrance hall to make it a practical place to keep guests' shoes?

Natural Coir Matting, from £39.99 per sq m, Kersaint Cobb

Jenna Kane, Marketing Manager for Kersaint Cobb says:

'Regular vacuuming is important as it is easier to remove surface dirt rather than ground-in dirt. Suction-only vacuum cleaners should be used on natural floor coverings, as beater bars and revolving brush heads can cause damage to the fibres.'

Know your carpet types

What's in a name? Find out with this handy guide to deciphering carpet styles

Loop pile

The tufts of this carpet are made from uncut loops, making it a particularly hard-wearing choice. Whether you choose a flat (level loop) or textured (multi-level loop) finish, it's favoured in areas with a lot of footfall.

Twist pile

This carpet has a short pile, but its highly twisted nature means that it has both clearly defined tufts and a durable nature.

Velvet

With a loose twist on this short pile carpet, the tufts bloom for a velvety finish. Less hard-wearing, but beautifully soft.

Saxony

The twist on this deep pile carpet is heat-set, meaning that luxurious softness underfoot isn't at the cost of long-lasting practicality.

Plush

Comparable to a Saxony carpet in terms of pile depth, but loosely set like velvet for an extra-soft finish in areas with limited footfall.

Berber

The irregular loop pile of this traditional carpet, named after the North African tribe that originally produced the popular rugs, gives it a distinctive texture.

Woven

The weaving technique, used in Axminster and Wilton carpets, produces a uniquely hard-wearing finish into which patterns can be woven, rather than being 'printed' on top.

Cut and loop

This carpet, made of both cut and loop piles, was extremely popular in the 70s and 80s for its intriguing texture and unique pattern.

TOUGH CHOICE

You can identify your carpet needs by the amount of footfall you could expect in an area of your home. While you may opt for something less hard-wearing and more luxurious for a bedroom, hallways and your living room will need to be tough enough to cope with everyday family life.

Soften industrial features in your home like exposed brick or stone walls with a loop pile carpet in a contemporary colour

Beachcomber carpet, £40 per sq m, Brockway

Tough materials, such as sisal, seagrass or coir, would be a great carpet choice for a dining room, where feet and chair legs can cause wear and tear

Coir Boucle in natural, from £21.60 per sq m, Sisal & Seagrass



I'VE CRACKED A FLOOR TILE. CAN I REPLACE IT MYSELF?

'Remember to wear eye protection. Start by taking a grout saw or rotary tool and cut as deeply as you can to remove the grout surrounding the affected tile. Remove the pieces of grout and wipe down the surface as you go to get rid of any dust.

Next, use a scouring tool to draw a diagonal line across the tile and repeat until the line is around a sixteenth of an inch deep. Do the same across the second diagonal line and then strike the centre with a centre punch to break up the tile. Take a chisel across each of the diagonal lines and hit with a hammer until the tile breaks away and can be removed. Continuing to use the chisel and hammer, take away as much of the mortar left under the tile as possible.

Mix some fresh mortar and spread across the area you have just cleared and the back of the new tile. You're now ready to place the tile. When fitting, twist the tile left and right to spread the mortar evenly and then tap it down with a flat board and mallet. Remove the excess mortar that squeezes into the joints and leave the mortar to dry, then grout and seal.'

Sian O'Neill, head of marketing and online at Topps Tiles



Image: Topps Tiles

MY LAMINATE FLOORING KEEPS RISING UP. HOW CAN I FIX IT?

'During humid periods you might find flooring rises because moisture can expand or shrink laminate boards and if they are too close to the wall they will start to rise. You can fix this in a few easy steps and the only things you'll need are a chisel, a hammer and a multi-tool. Some surplus laminate board will come in handy too.

Start by taking the extra board or a straight slat and put it over your floorboards. By doing this, you can figure out which of the floorboards is elevated. When you've found the rising board it's time to work out which wall the board has moved towards, this will help you determine which skirting board to pry loose. Remove the skirting board with a hammer and chisel by putting the chisel between the wall and board and knocking on the top of the chisel with the hammer. As soon as you've removed the skirting board, you'll see which board is too close to the wall.

Get out a pencil and a slat and draw a sawing line onto the bulging board. The line should be drawn at the same height as the boards next to the misplaced board. Use the multi-tool to saw along the line you just drew, and remove the piece of wood before vacuuming the sawdust. Check whether your floor is flat again and if it is you can put the skirting board back where it belongs.'

Lee Thompson, Technical Manager, Quick-Step

Image: Kersaint Cobb



HOW CAN I CREATE A SEAMLESS STEP FROM CARPET TO HARD FLOORING?

'It's becoming increasingly normal to see hard flooring and carpets used together, particularly in open-plan living spaces or where kitchen-diners meet living rooms. We recommend joining the two with a Z-section doorbar as it provides a seamless finish for flooring of different heights. It's called a Z-section because it is shaped like a Z and it uses the simple two level nature of the Z to accommodate the different levels of flooring. They come in seven different finishes so you can choose the look that best matches your home.'

Jemma Dayman, Assistant Buyer at Carpetright

HOW DO I CHOOSE AND FIT A NEW CARPET?

'Start by considering the colour and design, the floor is like a fifth wall and it will have an impact on the overall scheme. Plain carpet tends to open up a room whereas heavily patterned carpet can do the reverse but it will help to hide signs of soiling and general wear. It's a good idea to bring samples of carpet home so you can see them in situ and in natural lighting.

When you come to measure the room, leave it to an expert as there's so much to take into account, especially on tricky areas like stairs, and experts can work out how to minimise wastage. Make sure you invest in a new underlay, too. Experts will also ensure the sub-floor is prepared, with things like papering over draughts to avoid updraught soiling.

Fitting is a skill and should be done in accordance with the British Standard for the installation of textile floor coverings, so check your fitter understands this. Buying carpet online can be a false economy because you may be on your own if things go wrong. Retailers will take up the problem or complaint for you and if your retailer is a member of the Carpet Foundation, they adhere to a Trading Standards Institute-backed Code of Practice.'

Rupert Anton, The Carpet Foundation