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# YOUR GUIDE TO CARPET

Luxurious and inviting underfoot, carpets – whether colourful or neutral, patterned or plain – are making a comeback

More than any other flooring type, carpets should never be picked for their looks alone – yours will need to be tough enough to withstand the wear and tear of the particular room it's to be laid in, and not all designs will be. And even then, it is best to limit carpet to the stairs, upstairs hallways, bedrooms, living rooms, kids' rooms and playrooms, with longer, more luxurious piles kept to bedrooms, and shorter, hardier piles recommended for rooms with more footfall.

## Which carpet fibre?

Wool is durable, good looking, soft underfoot, environmentally friendly and biodegradable, but it can stain. If you need something that is more affordable and stain-resistant, then look at investing in a mix, where wool is blended with manmade fibres. Cheaper and more durable still are 100 per cent synthetic carpets. However, the adage that you get what you pay for often does hold true, as synthetic fibres, such as polypropylene, polyester or nylon, do not always match the quality, either in looks or feel, of natural fibres

## TIP

**When budgeting for carpets, don't forget to factor in the price of underlay and fitting**

and mixes. Other natural fibres include sisal, from an agave plant; seagrass, which is a flowering plant; jute, a vegetable fibre; and coir, which is made from coconut husk. Choose one that has been pre-treated in order to prevent staining.

## Which carpet weave?

Most common is tufted carpet, which is suitable for all types of yarn in a variety of finishes. Then, there's woven carpet, which is either an Axminster or a Wilton. The difference between the two is the method of weaving. Axminster carpets are often patterned with unlimited colour potential. Wilton is less versatile than Axminster for producing patterns.

## Which carpet texture?

Your carpet's surface texture will affect its appearance, feel and performance. Bear in mind that more luxurious surfaces need more care, and shorter piles usually wear better than long piles.

The different styles include: twist pile, which has a coarse, rugged finish; velvet pile, which has a smooth luxurious appearance, like suede; loop pile, which replicates the look of natural flooring such as coir and sisal, but is best avoided with pets with sharp claws; saxony, which has a deep pile, limiting it to bedrooms; and patterned carpet, which usually has a smooth, velvety finish.

## Fitting carpets

A carpet should be laid by a professional fitter and needs a good, compatible underlay for longevity, cushioning and comfort underfoot, heat retention and noise reduction. Check to see which one your carpet manufacturer recommends.

## Installing underfloor heating (UFH)

Carpet will work with UFH, but ensure the underlay and carpet combined have a low thermal resistance (less than 2.5 togs) and that the carpet

## TIP

**Ask whether the price you've been quoted includes the removal and disposal of your old carpet, and fitting of the new one**

is hessian-backed for efficiency. All carpets and tiles act as thermal insulation, meaning carpeted flooring takes slightly longer to get warm initially, but it then stays that way for longer.

## Maintaining carpets

Vacuum your carpet at least twice a week to stop dirt and dust from working its way into the pile. Tackle spillages immediately, blotting liquid with a dry cloth, then clean the stain with a damp cloth soaked in warm water. Dab rather than rub, then blot. Repeat, swapping to clean cloths each time. Don't oversoak the stain and work from the outside of the mark inwards. In instances of a serious or large stain, call a professional carpet cleaner.

## Carpet trends

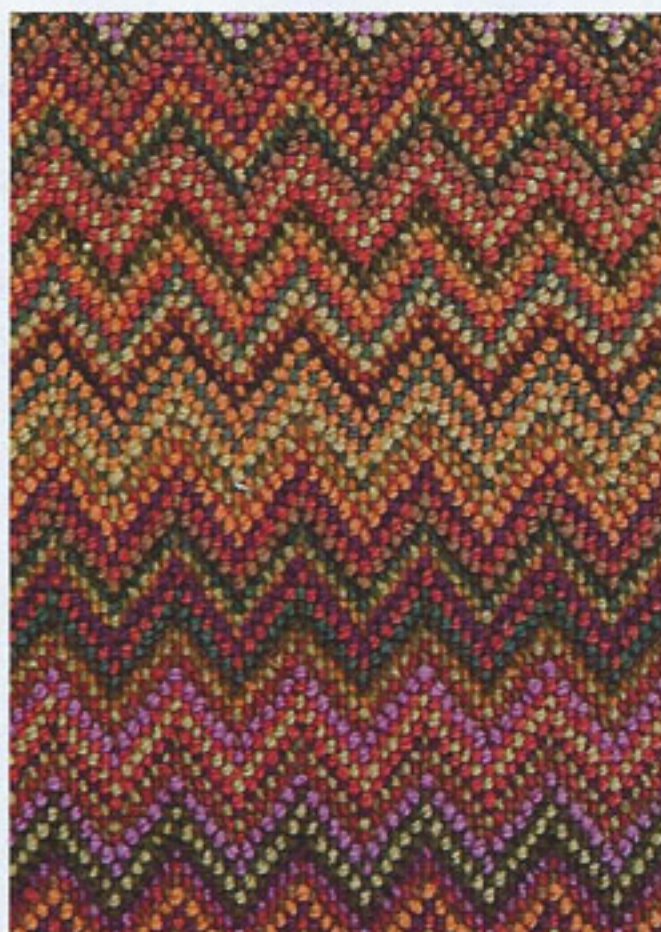
Plain, neutral carpets are the safest option and easiest to redecorate around, however, there are ways to introduce both colour and pattern. If you decide to do this, ensure a cohesive whole-house scheme by picking carpets that either match or at least complement each other from room-to-room. For example, putting a striped carpet up the stairs that coordinates with those of your hallway and bedrooms will add interest and variation without looking overly busy. ➤



£50 UPWARDS

£32-£50

UNDER £32



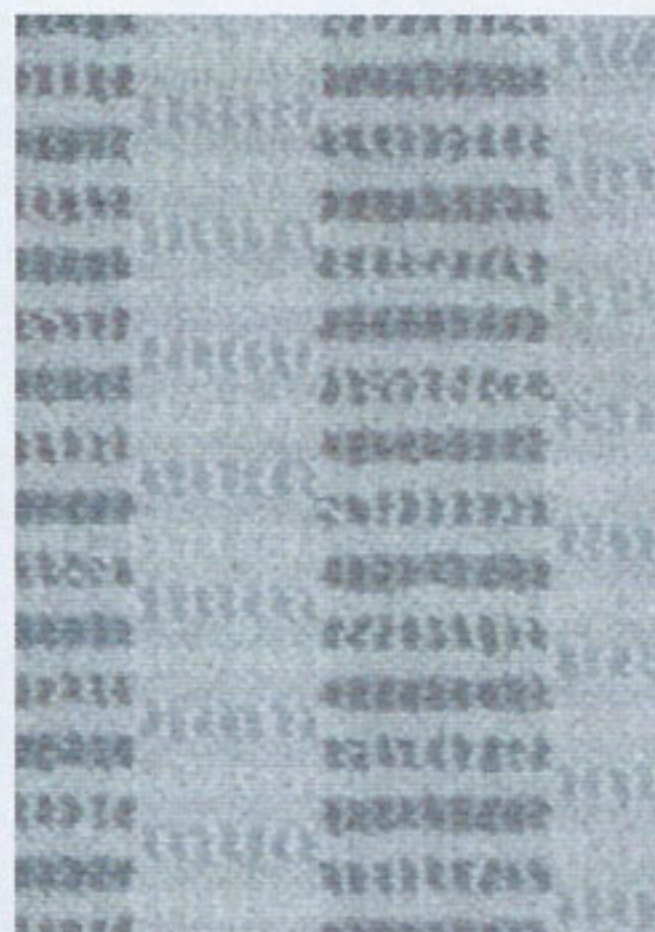
Fabulous in WFN503 Ruby, wool, available in five colours, £154 per m<sup>2</sup>, Crucial Trading



Wool Rich Heather in Blackthorn, wool mix, comes in 11 colours, £34 per m<sup>2</sup>, John Lewis



Sherwood in red, polypropelene, available in three colours, £15.99 per m<sup>2</sup>, Hillarys

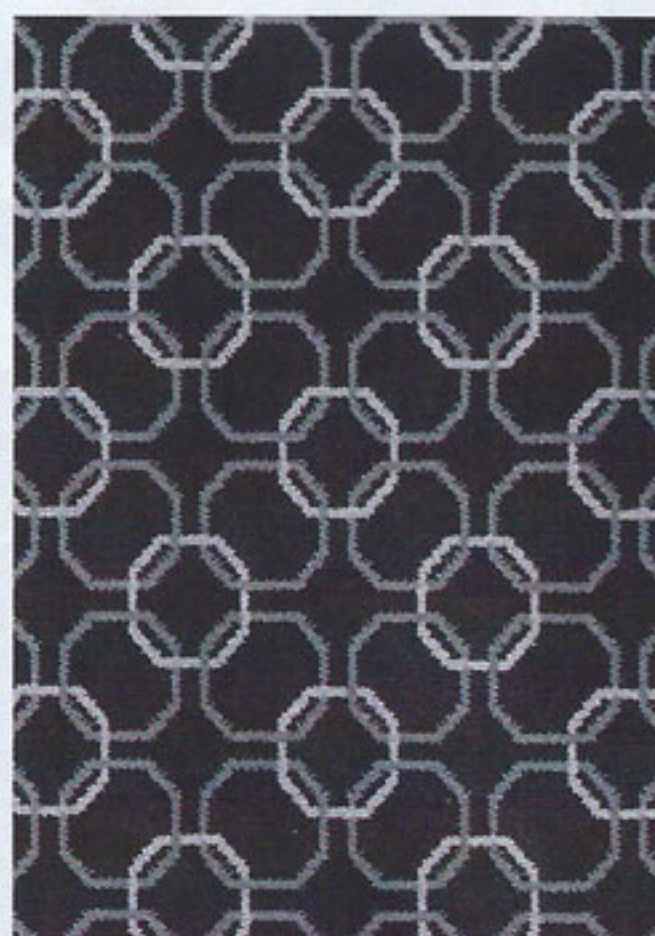


Annalise in Caldey Greylag, wool, available in 22 designs, £70 per m<sup>2</sup>, Axminster



NEUTRAL  
STYLE TO  
SUIT ANY  
SPACE

Pampas Knitted Arran, wool, £33.54 per m<sup>2</sup>, Kersaint Cobb



Glendevon Hexagon in Black Raven, polypropelene, comes in 12 designs, around £16.09 per m<sup>2</sup>, Crown Floors



ON-TREND  
PATTERN

Fusion in Sonic Electric, wool, comes in five colours, around £74 per m<sup>2</sup>, Ulster Carpets



Bell Twist Wool in Aquatint, wool mix, available in 25 colours, £39.99 per m<sup>2</sup>, Brintons



Barbican in Ashes, wool, available in 12 designs, from £24.76 per m<sup>2</sup>, Edel Telenzo



**CLASSIC STRIPES**



Alcazar in Silver Stripe, polypropelene, comes in 12 designs, £24.99 per m<sup>2</sup>, Carpetright



Malabar Two-Fold in Dune, wool, available in 18 colours, £30 per m<sup>2</sup>, Cormar Carpets



Montrose Stripe in Moss, polypropelene, comes in five colours, £30.99 per m<sup>2</sup>, Hillarys

Buy from a reputable dealer, such as a member of The Carpet Foundation, which has a Code of Practice to protect consumers



Habberley in Misty Grove, wool mix, comes in eight colours, around £36.20 per m<sup>2</sup>, Victoria Carpets

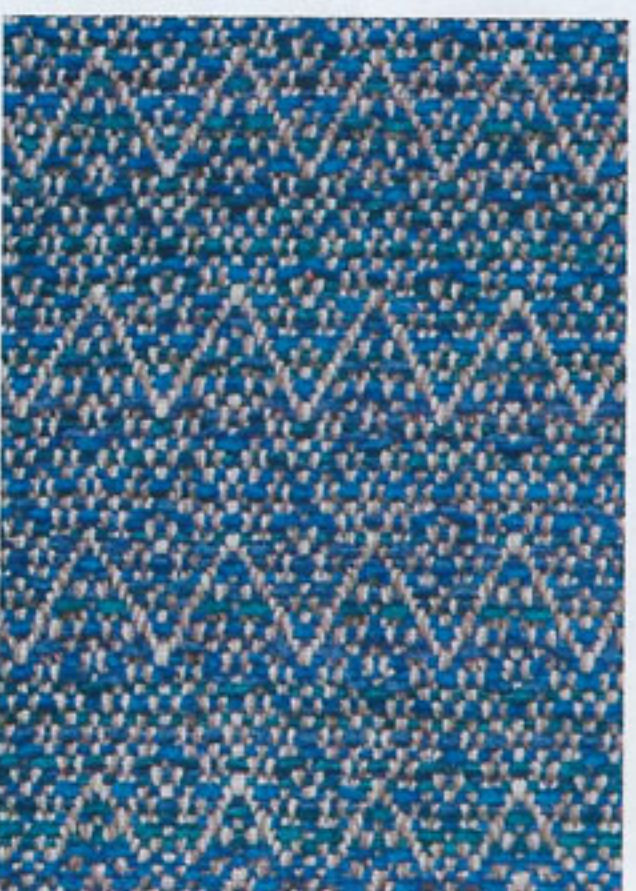


Big Herringbone Bagel, jute, £38.25 per m<sup>2</sup>, Alternative Flooring



Broadway, wool twist, £46 per m<sup>2</sup>, Sisal & Seagrass

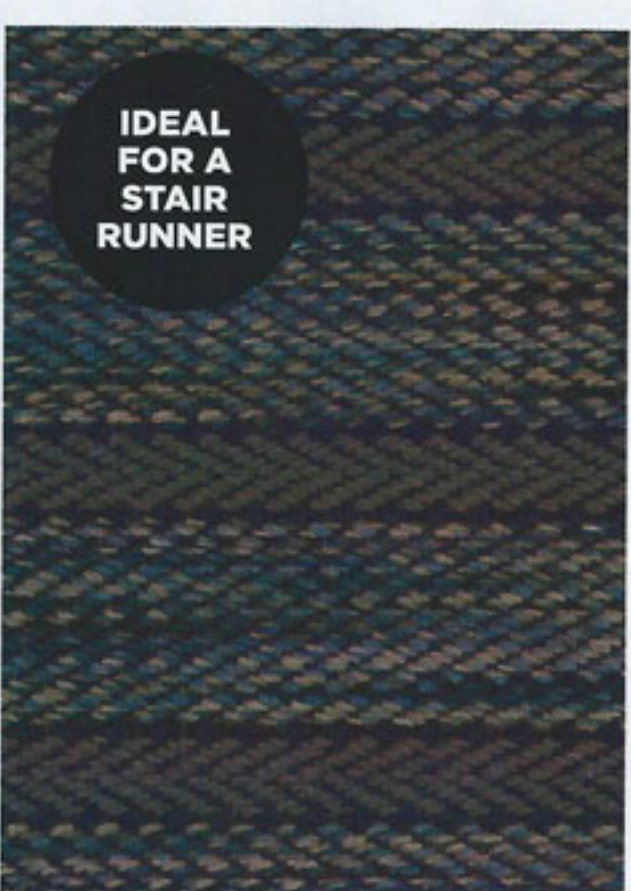
**NEXT MONTH:**  
Your guide to alternative flooring



Giorgi, wool/cotton mix, comes in four colours, £89 per m<sup>2</sup>, Louis de Poortere



Salamanca in Graphite, wool, £112 per m<sup>2</sup>, Jacaranda



Kasuri in Indigo, wool, £129 per m, Roger Oates

**IDEAL FOR A STAIR RUNNER**

Use samples to see how the carpet you favour looks in situ under both natural and artificial light