



Area rugs are unifying elements that tie colors together.

## Choose an Interior Area Rug

Do you want to add a little flair to your floor? Perhaps your intent is simpler—you just want to cover up the distracting pattern of spots and spills on your carpet, compliments of your adorable 3-year old. An area rug may be the answer. In addition to being a great way to accent your decor, area rugs have many practical benefits. They add warmth to a room, not only taking the chill off of cold floors but also creating a feeling of intimacy. They can also reduce the noise level in a room. Whatever your motivation, you can find an area rug to suit your needs.

## Decorating With Rugs

Area rugs are versatile. They can be the focal point of a room, create cozy conversation areas, provide a splash of color or be a unifying element that ties colors together. Plus, they can quickly and easily give rooms character.

## How Do I Choose a Rug That Complements My Décor?

With all the styles and colors available, choosing an area rug that integrates with your decor isn't hard. However, there are a few factors to consider before you buy your rug:

- Decide what you want the focal point of the room to be. If you want the rug to serve as the focal point, think about choosing one with a central medallion. However, if there is another obvious focal point, such as a fireplace, you may want to use a rug with a more repetitive pattern and no medallion.
- Take into account the patterns on the upholstery and walls in the room, so they don't compete with the rug. If you have upholstery or wallpaper with an ornate pattern, choose a subtler pattern for the area rug. If the walls and upholstery are fairly subdued, you can try a busier pattern to add more interest to the room.
- Notice how much traffic the area receives. In high traffic areas, selecting a rug with a detailed pattern may be more practical. The more pattern, the lower the maintenance.
- Choose a rug with colors that coordinate with your decor. While all the colors in the rug don't have to match the colors in the room, at least one color should coordinate. Take swatches of wallpaper, paint or upholstery fabric with you when you shop.
- Remember that lighter-colored rugs make the room seem more spacious and darker colors in the rug bring a cozy atmosphere to the room.
- Keep in mind that texture is also an important element in your decor. Several different fibers within a rug or carved areas can add more pizzazz to an area rug's texture. Rugs made of sisal or jute add an interesting texture to smooth hardwood or tile floors.
- Don't feel limited to rectangles. Octagonal or circular rugs add a unique touch to a room.



Add more interest to a subdued décor with a busy rug pattern.

## Can I Use Different Rugs Within the Same Room?

- You can use rugs of different patterns within the same room as long as the colors coordinate.
- Using two rugs of the same size may tend to divide the room in half. Select rugs of differing sizes to create more interest and contrast.
- To make your decision easier, many rug manufacturers make rugs in different sizes that are designed to coordinate with each other.



Overpowering.



A perfect fit.

## What Size Rug Do I Need?

Under the coffee table:

- Typically 4' x 6' or 6' x 9' area rugs work well under coffee tables. The size you should choose depends on the size of your coffee table and surrounding furnishings.
- The area rug should be large enough to accommodate all four legs of the table.
- The area rug should be approximately the same length and width of the furnishings in the space.
- To accent the furnishings most effectively, leave some flooring between the area rug and the furniture exposed.



Too small.

Under a dining room table:

- Most dining room tables need an 8' wide area rug.
- The chair legs shouldn't fall off the rug when people are seated at the table or pulling the chairs away from the table to seat themselves.
- To determine what size rug you need, measure the length and width of the table and add at least 4' to each measurement.

For an entire room:

- Try to leave an equal amount of flooring exposed as a border on all sides. If that is not possible, try to ensure the borders on parallel sides of the rug are equal.

- For many rooms, an 8' x 11' rug works well.
- It's okay if the front legs of the furniture are on the rug and the back legs are off the rug, as long as the piece is stable and balanced. You may need to place furniture coasters under the back legs to raise them to the height of the rug.

### Why Do I Need a Rug Pad?

Many people realize that rug pads keep the rug properly positioned, preventing it from sliding and wrinkling. But did you know rug pads also:

- Reduce wear and tear on the rug.
- Help to absorb the impact of feet and noise.
- Make vacuuming easier.
- Protect smooth-surface flooring, like hardwood or laminate, from being scratched by the back of the rug.
- For rugs placed over carpet, choose a pad of thin polyester fabric coated with adhesive. This type of pad prevents a dark rug color from bleeding through on a light carpet. A pad made from slightly heavier polyester scrim coated with PVC holds a rug firmly on wood or other smooth-surfaced floors.

### Fibers

Originally, area rugs were made from wool or cotton. Today, you have a choice between several natural or synthetic fibers. So what's the best choice? It all depends on how much traffic the area receives, how easy the rug is to maintain and, of course, how much you're willing to spend.

### Synthetic Fibers

- **Acrylic** — Highly resistant to sunlight, stains and mildew. You'll mostly find acrylic fibers in bath mats and rugs.
- **Polypropylene/olefin** — The most stain-resistant synthetic fiber on the market today. Polypropylene repels water and is impervious to most stains. Usually less expensive than other fibers.
- **Nylon** — Versatile, durable, easy to maintain and clean. Withstands heavy foot traffic.



Rugs made of jute add an interesting texture to smooth hardwood or tile floors.

### Natural Fibers

- **Wool** — Dyeability, durability, softness and cleanability make wool the superior fiber. Wool is the standard by which all other carpet fibers are measured.
- **Cotton** — Softer than wool but less durable. Available in a variety of colors.
- **Jute** — The softest of all natural fibers. When exposed to direct sunlight, jute may fade or darken in color. With prolonged exposure to moisture, the fiber disintegrates.
- **Sisal** — Stronger and more durable than any natural rug fiber. And since sisal is static-free and colorfast, it makes it perfect for just about any area.
- **Blends** — Two or more of these fibers that have been combined in one rug.

## Weaving Methods

The following definitions of common weaving terms give you a better grasp of how rugs get from the weaver's hand or loom to your feet.

**Hand hooked** — The weaver pushes a hooking tool through the foundation cloth to the front of the rug, then pulls the yarn to the back, leaving a loop on the surface.

**Hand knotted** — Each knot is individually tied by hand. These knots are single strands of yarn that have been looped around two adjacent warp threads.

**Hand tufted** — An inked-on foundation cloth is stretched over a loom. Then a manually operated hand-tufting gun pushes the yarn through the back of the cloth. When the rug is taken off the loom, a scrim and layer of latex is placed on the back. A back-cloth is then sewed on to the latex and scrim to protect your floors.

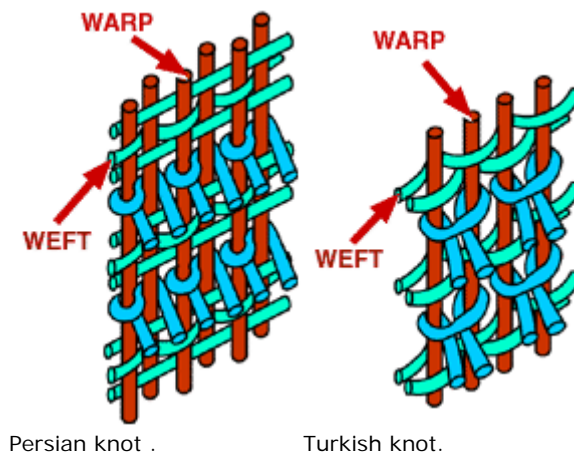
**Jacquard** — A mechanized loom that has an endless belt of punched cards. The holes in the card are arranged to produce the weave of the rug.

**Wilton loom** — These rugs bear a close resemblance to hand-knotted rugs, but are machine made. The pile is woven between two backings and then split down the middle — so you get two separate rugs.

## Rug Lingo

Here are some words every rug shopper should know. Not only will you feel confident about your rug decision; you'll really impress the salesperson.

- **Hand carved** — Using hand shears, the weaver cuts a design in to the rug. The carving and sculpturing give the rug a distinctive and unique look.
- **Heat set** — A process polypropylene goes through to put a twist in the yarn. When the yarn is set with heat, it has a wool-like appearance.
- **Line count** — One indicator of rug quality is the number of knots or stitches per square inch. When comparing the line count number of different rugs, it's important to remember that this number may be calculated differently, depending on how and where the rug was made.
- **Pile** — The surface yarn that makes up the face of the rug.
- **Stitches/needle count** — The number of loops of yarn. The higher the stitch or needle count, the denser the rug. Higher density rugs last longer and wear better than more loosely woven constructions.
- **Warp and wefts** — The warp yarn is the stationary thread on the loom. These fibers are the strongest part of the rug. They are intersected with wefts — the filling yarn that is woven through the warps.
- **Border** — The border is composed of decorative designs repeated in one direction around the outside of the rug.
- **Field** — The field is the background of the rug inside the border. It may be a solid color or patterned.
- **Medallion** — The medallion is a round or oval design in the center of the rug.



Was this information helpful? Please [let us know](#) your do-it-yourself experiences. We'd love to hear from you!

These How-To's are provided as a service from Lowe's, the Original Home Improvement Warehouse of How-To information for the World Wide Web. The information in Lowe's "How-To" clinics is intended to simplify jobs around the house. Tools, products, materials, techniques, building codes and local regulations change; therefore, Lowe's assumes no liability for omissions, errors or the

outcome of any project. The reader must always exercise reasonable caution, follow current codes and regulations that may apply, and is urged to consult with a licensed professional if in doubt about any procedures. [Please read our terms of use.](#)