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BEDROOM FLOORING

Right: For a carpet that's soft underfoot with a subtle, luxurious look, the True Velvet Platinum, £60 per sq m from Brittons, is ideal. It's available in a range of contemporary shades and is a mix of 80% wool and 20% nylon so is hard-wearing too.



Above: The eco-friendly choice is always wool and this 100% wool carpet is from a gorgeous range of neutral blends at Alternative Flooring. Soft and hard-wearing, the Barefoot collection feels great underfoot – this is the Ashtanga Asana and it is priced from £83 per sq m.

Right: Velour-style carpets are ideal for pattern as the pile is short so the design is crisp. The Fascination collection from Vorwerk includes a huge choice of detailed designs that are perfect for bringing pattern to a neutral bedroom. This is Modena 2D35, from £29.95 per sq m.



BEST LAID PLANS

By choosing the right style and measuring up properly, your bedroom carpet will be a savvy investment lasting many years to come

Words: Amy Curtis

Unlike a hallway or living room, bedrooms don't get a lot of foot traffic. Most people never even wear their shoes in there, so the carpet isn't going to suffer a huge amount of wear and tear. This doesn't mean you shouldn't invest in good quality when you replace it, though – quite the opposite, in fact. Footfall is only one way that a carpet can age – colours can fade and spills can stain – so it's worth spending time getting it right now to make sure your new carpet retains its good looks for years to come. It's almost never a good idea to scrimp on the spending when buying a carpet, whatever room it's for – you really do get what you pay for.

The type of carpet you choose is based on how a room is used and, as a low-traffic area, a bedroom can offer you more options than you might think, as David Cormack of Cormar Carpets explains. "Bedroom carpets do not receive such regular use so there's an opportunity to play around with different fibres and textures. Carpets with more luxurious qualities are ideal in this environment and there's nothing more warming than a soft carpet for feet to sink into in the morning!" This isn't to say we should all be rushing out for the softest, deepest pile we can find; price, composition, quality and style all play an important part as well.

What's the difference?

The main differences in type are tufted or woven carpets and short or long pile. Woven carpets are made on a loom using wool or a wool blend – the pattern is woven in rather than printed onto the fibres, making them a higher-end product. They are known as Axminster or Wilton, with the main difference being that Axminster is patterned and Wilton is plain. With tufted carpets needles push the pile yarn into a backing cloth, which creates a more springy effect. It's a quicker process and therefore a less expensive option, yet it's still very good quality so very popular.

Pile is more complicated. As a starting point, deep or long pile simply means longer fibres than short, so your feet will sink into it satisfyingly, but it will flatten more easily so is better in a bedroom where it gets less wear. Within these categories, you will also be choosing from twist, loop, saxony, shag or velvet piles. As a brief

rundown, loop is very hard-wearing and sometimes rough to the touch, saxony and shag have deep, luxurious piles, velvet is a softer, richer short pile and twist is a shorter tufted pile that's soft underfoot, but as a bedroom carpet doesn't need to be super-hard-wearing, any pile will be fine; it's simply a matter of what you prefer. Ask for swatches if you're unsure – there's nothing quite as good as seeing and feeling the real thing in your home.


Material matters

What your new carpet is made from is important for its performance in the years ahead. David Cormack says, "How a carpet looks and performs is dependent on the fibre content used. It has a bearing on the durability, resilience, appearance retention, feel, practicality and price."

So what exactly are you looking for? Mike Richardson of Kersaint Cobb recommends a wool or wool mix carpet for a bedroom. "Wool floorcoverings are ideal for bedrooms as they are hard-wearing and soft underfoot," he says. "As a natural fibre, wool is also breathable and it will be warm in the winter but remain cool in the summer."

These aren't the only benefits. Wool is naturally flame-retardant, durable and will insulate against sound. What's more, it's a sustainable, environmentally friendly product too. For these reasons a 100% wool carpet is more expensive, but fortunately an 80% wool mix – where 20% would be manmade fibres – will still give you the benefits at a lower cost. Other fibres you'll come across are polypropylene (which is stain-resistant, colourfast and inexpensive, but not as durable as wool), polyester (hard-wearing and easy to keep clean but easily flattened) and nylon (hard-wearing and stain-resistant but won't retain its appearance as well as wool).

Hot footing

If you're totally revamping your bedroom, you might be considering underfloor heating before you lay a new carpet. Research carried out by The Carpet Foundation with The Underfloor Heating Manufacturers' Association has found that, in general, carpet does not interfere with the efficiency of underfloor heating, but they do recommend that you check with your heating provider to make sure you choose a carpet/underlay combination that will work best with the heating system. 



Left: Some unpatterned designs will still offer a bit of interest – Cormar Carpets's Forest Hills range has a 'speckled' Natural Berber Twist, which gives the appearance of depth and texture. It is made up of 50% pure new wool, 40% Lanelle PP and 10% Tuftbond and costs from £21 per sq m.



Above: Ashley Hicks's Quirky B Daisy collection for Alternative Flooring is inspired by a wall decoration in an old temple in Sri Lanka. Quirky B Daisy Gloriosa is one of three designs, priced £95.85 per sq m.

Left: This 100% wool carpet is called Mojave Desert Sand from Crucial Trading. It comes in a 5m width and is very hard-wearing so it's a great long-term investment. It costs £66 per sq m.