

Find and maintain the right carpet for you

Carpets provide both practical and aesthetic appeal inside a home. In winter, carpets help keep homes warm, and the right color carpet can add to design schemes. While rugs may have originated in the Far East, North America also has some rich carpet history. According to The Carpet and Rug Institute, the United States carpet industry began in 1791 when the first woven carpet mill opened in Philadelphia. Others soon followed suit. Tufted carpets and machine-powered manufacturing helped churn out yards upon yards of carpeting, making it a popular, affordable and common addition to homes, especially after the post-World War II housing boom. Carpeting remains a go-to flooring material in modern homes. In fact, many homes offer a blend of both carpeting in some rooms and dif-

ferent flooring choices in others. Upon choosing carpet, it is important that homeowners follow some guidelines to prolong a carpet's longevity and maintain its style. The following are some common carpeting dos and don'ts. **DO** consider the room's purpose and foot traffic before shopping for carpeting. Make a list of the attributes desired (e.g., sound-proofing, easy care, high pile) and present these to the salesperson so he or she can help you make the best choice. **DON'T** rush into flooring choices. Unlike paint colors, flooring materials are more permanent choices that are only updated every several years or more. Weigh all of your options before diving in. **DO** consider conservative colors and styles. Neutral hues and patterns will blend better with fur-

niture options. This means you can change furniture out and still keep the existing carpeting, which complements any new pieces. Also, if there's a chance you might sell your home in the near future, buyers tend to look for a neutral color scheme they can make their own. **DON'T** skimp on padding to save a few dollars on the carpet installation. The carpeting needs a solid foundation to last and look its best. Inadequate padding can lead to extra and noticeable wear and tear. Invest in a good foundation for the carpeting, like firm, dense padding in high-traffic areas. **DO** become knowledgeable about different carpet styles, such as frieze, Berber, Saxony, textured, and more. This will help ensure you make the most educated decision. **DON'T** purchase at the first store



you visit. Shop around to investigate different pricing and specials. Also, consider the professionalism and expertise of the staff responsible for carpet installation. High-cost carpet may not look very good if it isn't installed correctly. **DO** stain-protect rugs and carpeting, which can help repel stains that would otherwise become permanent and can prolong the longevity of the flooring. **DON'T** forget to vacuum carpets frequently to prevent ground-in dirt and debris. **DO** pick textured carpets to conceal footprints and vacuum track marks.

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