

Carpet

Wood and tile floors are certainly handsome, but in some rooms you'll want the softness, quiet and warmth of carpeting. Different rooms call for different carpets. Think about how much traffic the area will get. Some tips for choosing carpet textures:

Berber carpet has tightly woven, low, nubby loops. This long-wearing texture is great for hallways and other high-traffic areas.

Textured carpet is crinkly-surfaced, with smaller loops than Berber. It won't show dirt readily and is also a good choice for busy rooms.

Plush carpeting, which shows footprints, is best in low-traffic areas such as dining rooms and bedrooms.

Sculptured carpets are cut to create a carved surface. They are as elegant as plush carpets but more durable.

Keep in mind that a solid-color carpet in a light shade opens up a small room.

Patterns tend to minimize space, but also help hide dirt.

Carpet is sold by the sq. yd. in widths of 9, 12, 15 and sometimes 18 feet. Wool carpet is more costly than synthetic fibers, but it's also the warmest and most durable. Whatever fiber you choose, make sure the pile is dense. Bend a sample back to see how close the pile really is. And don't skimp on a good pad underneath.