

# The Carpet Handbook

Making Sense of Carpet: Materials, Construction, Installation and Maintenance



*Godfrey Hirst*

# MAKING SENSE OF CARPET FIBERS

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A CARPET'S appearance, texture and longevity are determined by its fibers. The pile can be natural, synthetic, or a blend of several fibers.

Understand the properties of common carpet fibers (wool, nylon, polyester and olefin) and consider them carefully when deciding what kind of carpet to buy.

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## WOOL



WOOL is a natural fiber that synthetics strive to emulate.

THE WOOL fiber's structure consists of overlapping scales, arranged much like roof shingles. These scales inhibit dirt from adhering to the fiber. Wool has significantly better soil release than any fiber. Wool cleans better, making stain protection unnecessary.

WOOL is biodegradable. In soil, wool readily biodegrades to produce nitrogen, sulfur, carbon dioxide and water, all of which are plant nutrients.

WOOL is renewable. Sheep can be shorn every nine to twelve months. The wool shorn from sheep is completely natural. It is composed entirely of amino acids, the building blocks of life.

WOOL is sustainable. It is produced from totally renewable resources - water, sun and grass. The production of wool uses only one sixth of the energy required to produce synthetic fibers.

WOOL CARPET is affordable. Godfrey Hirst is one of the largest manufacturers of wool carpet in the world, so it can provide an exceptional selection of value-priced carpets.

# MAKING SENSE OF CARPET FIBERS

## NYLON, POLYESTER , OLEFIN AND WOOL



Synthetic fibers are manufactured from man-made chemicals. Wool's production process is from the Natural Elements. Each fiber has its own set of characteristics that sets it apart from the others. The following graph illustrates each fiber's characteristics, strengths and weaknesses. This chart will also help illuminate the benefits of wool and hopefully help dispel some of the myths surrounding this truly natural and sustainable fiber.

\*\* Of note, be aware of "greenwashing"; the misrepresentation of a product's environmental position. There is a lot of marketing to "green" interests, since it is a very important concern. Wool products are renewable and sustainable. Wool's fiber production process is simply The Natural Elements...Sun Rain, Grass and Sheep. All synthetic fibers; nylon, polyester, and Olefin, are at best, recyclable but they are all petrochemical products that will be with us for a long time since they will take years to decompose and the recycling of these fibers frequently consumes more energy than the original extrusion.

BASED ON A SCALE OF 10 - BEST***	WOOL	NYLON	POLYESTER	OLEFIN
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>				
Sustainability	10	3	3	3
Renewable	10	2	2	2
Recyclable	3	7	7	7
<b>CLEANABILITY</b>				
Cleanability/Soil Release*	8	4	4	3
Stain Resistance*	7	5	5	5
Resilience	9	7	4	4
<b>BREATHE EASY</b>				
VOC Containment	8	2	2	2
Dust & Allergen Control	9	7	7	7
<b>COMFORT</b>				
Humidity Control	9	5	5	5
Comfortable Hand	9	7	5	4
Flammability Control	9	6	5	4
<b>LIFE CYCLE COST**</b>	9	6	4	3

\*Without topical treatments

\*\* Wool carpet can outlive synthetics over a longer period of time

\*\*\* Source: Wools of New Zealand

For further information, please refer to: [www.woolnz.com](http://www.woolnz.com)

# MAKING SENSE OF CARPET CONSTRUCTIONS

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SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT things to consider when choosing a carpet are (1) the room it will be in, (2) the amount of foot traffic to which it will be exposed, and (3) whether children and pets will be adding to the natural wear and tear. Answering these questions can not only help in your color decisions, but also in the type of carpet construction you choose.



## CARPET MANUFACTURING

CARPET MANUFACTURING today is a mix of 21st century innovation and old world craftsmanship.

Carpet is manufactured in one of two ways: tufted or woven.

Most carpets are tufted, consisting of rows of machine-punched yarns held together by adhesive and a backing. The tufting process is similar to using a large sewing machine that is about 13 feet wide with hundreds of needles sewing the yarn into a backing. Tufted carpets make up 90% of all manufactured carpet.

Woven carpets are made on a loom and are known for their longer life span (generally 20-30 years). These types of carpet are extremely popular in areas where longevity and design flexibility are a big part of the decision process. Many homeowners use woven wiltons and axminsters as design statements in the home.

# MAKING SENSE OF CARPET CONSTRUCTIONS

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CARPETS have three basic constructions: cut pile, with hundreds of fibers twisted into individual yarns; twist pile, in which the twists are crimped to give the carpet a softer-looking texture; and loop pile, loops the yarns just as the name suggests, for a dense surface appearance.

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## TYPES OF CARPET CONSTRUCTION

### CUT PILE:

Yarn stitched through backing ; sheared across the top



{ **SAXONY** Sometimes called plush or velvet, a saxony has short strands of yarn that are cut evenly and twisted together for a soft, smooth, formal look.



{ **TEXTURED** Not as dense as a saxony, textured carpet usually has two-toned yarn, which gives it a less formal appearance. Tightly twisted yarn is ideal for casual areas.



{ **FRIEZE** Short, durable, extra twisted yarn in the frieze style often has flecks of color, giving it a casual look that's highly versatile. Longer, more irregular friezes are called shags.

### LOOP PILE

Yarn stitched through backing ; loops left intact



{ **LEVEL LOOP** Often called Berber, carpet with loops of equal height. It hides footprints and vacuum marks. It is very durable and great for informal, high-traffic areas.



{ **MULTI-LOOP** Yarns of varying heights, often create patterns that help conceal dirt. Multi-loop is not as lush as cut pile, but longer loops make it softer than level loop.



{ **CUT AND LOOP PILE** Intact loops and cut loops of varying heights, a carpet in the cut and loop style often looks as if a design has been sculpted into it.

## MAKING SENSE OF A CARPET PAD

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ALL CARPETS need a pad (or cushion) underneath, and although you can't see it, the pad is almost as important as the carpet itself. The right pad makes the carpet feel softer every time you walk on it and it helps insulate the floor so your room will feel warmer and quieter.

A cushion serves other purposes as well. It allows air to circulate between the carpet and the floor, so your carpet is able to breath better and your vacuum will suction up more dirt. A quality cushion may even increase the life of a carpet because it keeps pile from matting in high traffic areas.

Before buying a pad, we recommend your checking our requirements, which take into account the carpet's thickness and density.

The composition of pads can range from polyurethane foam and recycled bonded foam to natural materials such as felt, animal hair and jute.

## MAKING SENSE OF CARPET INSTALLATION

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AT THE TIME of your purchase, your carpet dealer will either have installers on staff or will recommend an independent installer.\*\*\*

Your dealer will first send an estimator to your home to measure your floors. From there an installation will be scheduled.

Before installation: Have a clear understanding of the services provided and what you must handle, ie., who moves the furniture?

When carpet is delivered: Have your installer check its texture, color and style, and make sure there are no visible defects before installation.

During Installation: New, thicker carpet may prevent doors from swinging free and clear. If the doors do not clear, arrange to have them trimmed.

After Installation: Vacuum your carpet to remove loose fibers.

\*\*\* Failure to have your carpet installed by suitably qualified installers on suitable pad may void your guarantees.

In the months following installation, you may notice these characteristics:

**Shedding:** the shedding of loose fibers is normal and should subside with regular vacuuming.

**Sprouting:** If a single tuft extends beyond the carpet's surface, simply clip it off. Do not pull it out.

**Questions:** Your first contact is your dealer.

# MAKING SENSE OF CARPET MAINTENANCE

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An upright vacuum with a beater bar/brush is best for cut pile carpet. A suction only vacuum is best for loop pile carpet to prevent excessive fuzzing.

Please refer to the Godfrey Hirst Wool Cleaning Guide for further instructions on how to best care for wool carpet.

**TO PROTECT** the investment made in your purchase of carpet, it is important to follow prescribed maintenance periodically to keep it looking and performing at its best. Cleaning at regular intervals - rather than waiting until the carpet is heavily soiled - actually extends its life. And when carpet life is increased, so is the return on your investment.

Properly maintained carpets enhance the appearance and atmosphere of interiors. Maintaining the beauty of wool carpet is exceptionally easy - in fact, a lot easier than most people think. The wool's unique and complex fiber structure releases soil up to 25% more readily than synthetic fiber carpet. Not only that, the scaly outer structure holds soil high on the pile, right where the vacuum can lift it out. Synthetic fibers are slick with no scales to protect it from soil. With wool, it is quickly and easily cleaned.

Cleaning methods for carpet vary by fiber, however regular and thorough vacuuming once a week is an effective way to remove soil and dirt particles before they become embedded into the pile of the carpet.

Occasionally, more comprehensive cleaning is needed to restore color and appearance. Impregnated absorbent compound inert powders made up of a mixture of cleansing agents and solvents can be brushed into the carpet pile to absorb dirt from the carpet fiber.

Thorough cleaning is required periodically to remove the deepest soil. There are many deep cleaning methods you can use to ensure the beauty and life of your carpet. When having your carpet professionally cleaned, use a reputable company and check references.

We hope our handbook has answered some of the questions that a buyer faces when purchasing carpet. If you have any further questions regarding Godfrey Hirst wool carpet, please contact us.

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