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Consumer Information Service

A Consumer's Guide to Carpet Tiles

The Flooring Guild is dedicated to raising standards in the flooring industry through the delivery of high quality training and education. We believe Consumers should be given unbiased information to help make an informed choice and have produced a series of guides to help in that process.

The contents of each Guide are believed correct at the time of printing. Nevertheless, The Flooring Guild cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions or for changes in the details given in this Guide or for the consequences of any reliance on the information provided in the same.

Although every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, we will always welcome any information to assist in such efforts and to keep the Guides up to date.

We gratefully acknowledge the information given by various contributors including:

Heuga Home Flooring BV

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Contents	Page
CHOOSING A NEW CARPET	1
WHY CHOOSE CARPET TILES?	2
Versatile and Flexible	2
Easy to Fit	2
Simple Maintenance	2
Creativity	2
Durability and Quality	2
Cost Effective	2
HOW CREATIVE ARE YOU?	3
Create a rug effect	3
Create chequerboard	3
Create stripes	4
Create a border	4
Create a random pattern	4
Create a colourful parquet effect	4
THE FACTORS THAT DETERMINE CARPET QUALITY	5
PLANNING AND INSTALLATION OF CARPET TILES	7
Estimating Quantities	7
Tile Orientation	7
Tile Installation Guidelines	7
CARPET MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING	10
Preventive maintenance	10
Daily maintenance	10
Vacuum cleaner	10
Periodical maintenance	11
Major maintenance	11



CHOOSING A NEW CARPET

A new carpet is an investment that is likely to be with you for years and so, if possible, it is a good idea to choose your carpet first and then match other items to match it when decorating or furnishing a room.

Before you select your carpet, you should think about the colour, style and texture that is most suited to your taste and your life style. The type of fibre and the quality of the carpet is equally important because the way it performs on the floor will also be a major consideration.

It is also worth thinking about what you expect from your new carpet and explain that to the sales assistant. After all, some people want to change their decorations and furnishings frequently and others want a carpet to last 20 years. Either way, there will be a product available to suit your requirements and your retailer will be able to help you find it..

Of course, with carpets and rugs, as with most other products, you generally get what you pay for and paying even a little bit more can result in a substantial increase in quality and performance.

A cheap, low quality carpet may last for a reasonable time from a wear point of view but will probably flatten and lose its appearance quickly. It is also unlikely to provide the comfort level you are looking for and can cost you more in the long run.

You will probably want your carpet to look good for many years. In order to achieve this, there are certain factors which should be taken into account.

It is fairly obvious that the more use a carpet receives the quicker it will lose its appearance and the quicker it will wear. Areas such as hall, stairs and landings will normally receive much higher wear than, say, a bedroom or even a lounge but this can vary enormously.

For example, a student studying for several hours each night in the relative quiet of a bedroom could generate excessive wear under a desk or table in what would normally be a light wear area. Conversely, a stairway leading to a self-contained flat would receive far less wear.

However, the principle is fairly clear - identical carpets laid in different wear situations will perform differently.

WHY CHOOSE CARPET TILES?

Carpet tiles add a new dimension to home furnishings.

Versatile and Flexible

Carpet tiles are smart enough to add style to your living room yet take the knocks of being in a kitchen. They are the most versatile and flexible soft flooring option of all. They enable you to create a totally unique appearance in any room.

Easy to Fit

Heuga tiles, in particular, are easy to fit. You simply place the initial tiles on the floors using the low tack adhesive dots on each tile and, once you are happy that all is well, you go on until the job is done. No mess, little wastage and nothing is permanent.

Simple Maintenance

Heuga is domestic flooring so vacuum it in the normal way. Should it become marked, then simply pull up the tile and wash it or swap the tiles around to wear a mark won't be too obvious or replace the tile with a new one.

Creativity

Your home is yours and carpet tiles let you express yourself through their inherent flexibility. With an exciting range of colours, styles, textures and patterns, you are in control.

Durability and Quality

Heuga flooring is backed by a 7-year guarantee. That is because the company are confident that the quality of their fibres, the strength of the backing and the ability of their products to meet their Customers' demands. Heuga products are hardwearing, long lasting and stain resistant.

Cost Effective

Carpet tiles are extremely cost effective because you buy what you need so there is little wastage. They are easy to fit so you don't need expensive tools, adhesives or specialist fitters.

HOW CREATIVE ARE YOU?

You can be as creative as you like with carpet tiles. It's so flexible and it's easy to create your own floor designs.

Add a border effect using two contrasting colours, create stripes as thin or as wide as you please. Be inspired by these floor designs and visit the online catalogue at www.heuga.com and choose your products.



Whenever you feel like a change, it's easy to lift the tiles and create a new design or you can update your floor with a rug effect. That's the beauty of modular flooring!

Create a rug effect

Rug effect created using PuzzlePieces in colour Oriental. Main floor is Thick & Thin in colour Peacock Blue.

Create chequerboard

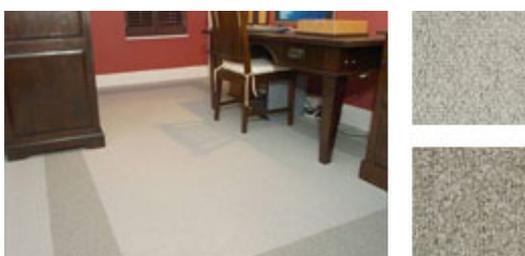
Chequerboard created using ComfyCord in colours Beach and Snow.

Create stripes



Stripes created with SimplySoft in colours Beach and Diving. Cut stripes as thick or as thin as you please. These are half tiles (25cmx50cm).

Create a border



Border effect created using half tiles (25cmx50cm) of CosyCompany in colour Storm. Main floor is CosyCompany in colour Mist.

Create a random pattern



Created using 1/4 tiles (25cmx25cm) of SimplySoft in colour Diving. Main floor is SimplySoft in colour Beach. To recreate this pattern, simply cut random corners from the main colour and place the 1/4 tiles in position.

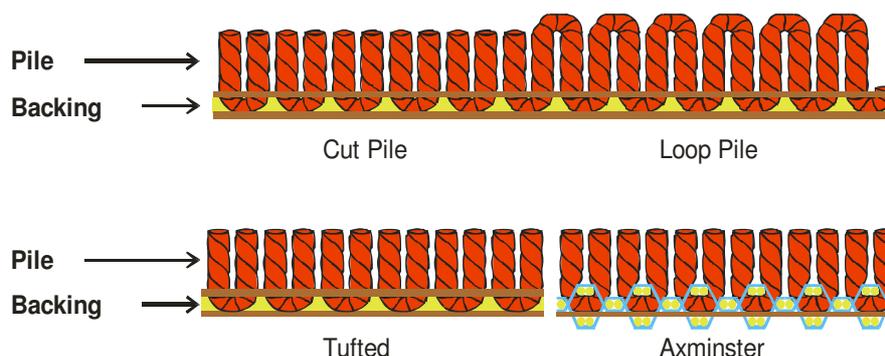
Create a colourful parquet effect



THE FACTORS THAT DETERMINE CARPET QUALITY

Many people recognise the terms Axminster or Wilton and identify them with quality. Whilst most Wiltons and Axminsters are good quality, these are merely names derived from the type of loom or machine on which the carpet is produced.

In practice, virtually all carpets, irrespective of style or type, share the same basic construction.



In other words, there is a pile or surface yarn which is fixed to a backing material as shown above.

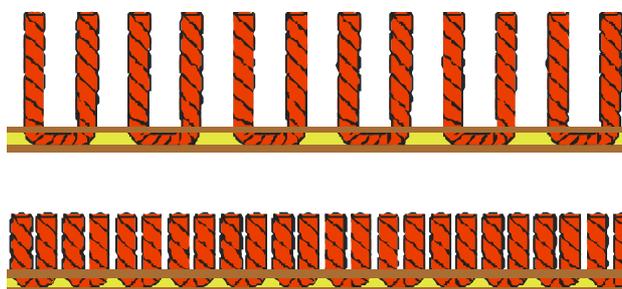
Although a “loop” pile carpet will look, feel and perform slightly differently from a “cut” pile carpet the wear characteristics are very similar.

Likewise, backing materials that are used can vary considerably but once again their wear characteristics are very similar.

Consequently, the main factors which determine quality will be:

- 1 the density of the pile (*surface pile density*) and
- 2 fibre or blend of fibres from which it is made (*pile content*).

The illustration below explains why surface pile density is so important.



The top one has a long pile that will distort and flatten easily. Initially, it may feel soft and luxurious but will lose its appearance very quickly.

The lower one has a denser, shorter pile, which means that it will resist flattening and look better for longer than the one above.

In practice, the closer the pile is packed together, the longer the carpet will last because it will resist abrasion better. There are simply more tufts to wear away but the carpet will also last longer for another reason.

If you look closely at a carpet that has had a lot of use, you will see that the tufts are thinner as well as shorter.

When a carpet is walked on, the tufts tend to bend and move underfoot and in doing so rub against each other.

This movement causes friction and the friction causes wear. So the concept is very simple:

The greater the movement - the greater the friction - the quicker the wear.

Through the action of foot traffic the pile will be abraded and, once this has flattened or worn away, the carpet's useful life is virtually ended.

This means that if the tufts are closely packed together they will move less.

Less movement means less friction which means less wear so the carpet lasts much longer.

PLANNING AND INSTALLATION OF CARPET TILES

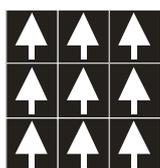
Simplicity is at the heart of all Heuga flooring. Every box of tiles contains all the instructions you'll need and because you won't need any specialist tools or adhesives, the costs are kept to a minimum.

Estimating Quantities

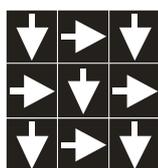
A very useful and easy to use on-line calculator can be found on www.heuga.com.

Tile Orientation

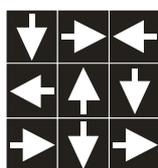
All Heuga tiles have arrows on the back to guide installation. There are five different installation methods which create different effects for your floor.



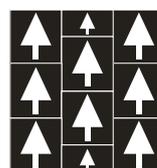
Monolithic



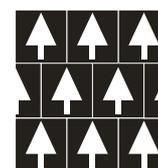
Quarter-Turn



Non-Directional



Ashlar



Brick

Tile Installation Guidelines

Step 1 - Sub-floor

Heuga carpet tiles can be laid over stone, ceramic or vinyl floors. Do not lay on a soft sub-floor such as existing carpet, underlay, cushion, vinyl or cork tiles.

Before laying, ensure that the floor is clean, hard, smooth, level and dry (see figure 1).



Step 2 - Tools and preparation

You will need:

- A Stanley knife fitted with a new heavy duty blades
- A straight edge, cutting board and tape measure
- Pencil or chalk marker

It is recommended that all carpet tiles be removed from the box and allowed to acclimatise for 24 hours to room temperature.

In each box of tiles, you will find a number of peel-off adhesive dots, which can be used to fix individual tiles into position. You won't need to fix every tile like this, just the key ones. The adhesive is low-tack, so you can reposition tiles easily. If you run out of

dots, you can use small pieces of a proprietary, low-tack carpet tape from your local DIY store.

The arrows on the back of each carpet tile indicate the direction of the pile. For ranges designed to be laid in a conventional broadloom style, the tiles should be arranged with the arrows pointing in the same direction. However, other ranges can be installed in a variety of ways to achieve pattern effects (e.g. quarter-turn, brick, ashlar or non-directional). In these cases, you should always follow the instructions printed on the packaging.

Step 3 - Measurement

Plan your installation by drawing a straight line approximately 75cm from the main wall and then draw a line at right angles to this. The lines must be straight and at right angles to each other.



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An easy way of creating a right angle is to construct a triangle with sides of 90cm, 120cm and a diagonal of 150cm (see figure 2).



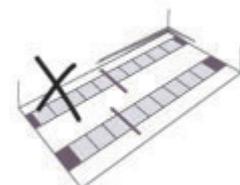
3

If you have an L-shaped room, you will need to subdivide the room into oblongs (see figure 3) and, for planning purposes, treat each oblong as a separate unit.

Step 4 - Trial run

We recommend that you carry out a trial run along both lines (see figure 4) to ensure that the planning is correct.

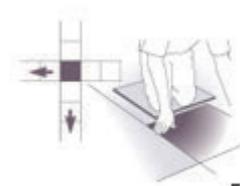
Lay the first tile into the right angle formed by the crossing lines and continue to lay tiles along the main line up to the wall. If you find that this leaves you with a very narrow strip against the wall, you may have to replan the guidelines.



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Step 5 - Laying the first tiles

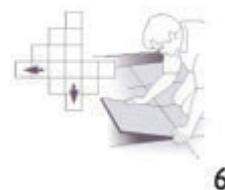
Once you have ensured that your initial laying point is suitable, fit the tiles along the first two lines, creating two crossed lines of tiles (see figure 5). To do this, attach adhesive dots in each corner of the tiles, remove the protective film from the dots and stick each tile to the floor. Perimeter tiles must be anchored firmly. When laying cut pile carpet tiles, be careful not to trap the pile between the edges of the tiles.



5

Step 6 - Laying the main area

Now cut the tiles in to the main wall and continue the tiling by building up a pyramid shape (see figure 6). Continue to expand the pyramid outwards until you are less than one tile width from each wall.



Where necessary, use adhesive dots to keep the tiles in position. Ensure that each tile is butted tightly against its neighbour.

Step 7 - Cutting the edge tiles

You will have to cut the edge tiles to fit the space between the last row of full tiles and the wall.

Turn the tile to be cut over (see figure 7) with the backing facing upwards and the arrows going in the opposite direction. Place the upside-down tile against the wall and underneath the last full tile of the installation.



Using the edge of the full tile as a guide, draw a line across the tile to be cut (see figure 8). Remove the tile and score along the line with a Stanley knife and a straight edge. Then crack the tile from behind and cut through the top cloth.

When cutting, always use a sharp blade and take precautions to cut safely.

Step 8 - Positioning the edge tiles

Position the cut tile with the cut edge against the wall (see figure 9).

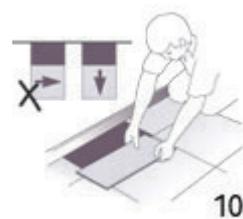
Make sure that the arrow on the back is pointing in the same direction as the arrows on the other tiles.



Step 9 - Pile direction

The arrows on the backs of the tiles (see figure 10) indicate the pile direction.

They must all point in the same direction to ensure a consistent finish. Please note that special care must be taken with other laying directions.



CARPET MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING**Preventive maintenance**

A carpet provides a warm and comfortable atmosphere. It is a strong product that will give you long-lasting pleasure.

But we advise you to exercise some care in choosing your carpet.

In frequent traffic areas, such as corridors, a carpet in a suitable colour will give the best results.

Also look critically at the design. You see more on a plain-coloured carpet than on carpet in mixed colours.

In addition to the colour of your carpet, there are also more functional aspects to be considered. The greatest enemy of soft floorcovering is sand.

A grating outside or a walk-off mat at the entrances will trap most dirt and moisture before it can soil your carpet. Good results at low costs.

Daily maintenance

Your carpet keeps looking at its best through regular care and maintenance. Any dirt and stains must be removed directly. Allow mud to dry for easier removal. Dust is hard to see on your carpet but is certainly there.

Consequently, vacuum cleaning twice a week is the absolute minimum for removing both dust and coarser dirt particles. The pile fibres in frequent traffic areas will also rise up again as a result of vacuum cleaning.

Your carpet will look splendid again in a jiffy.

Vacuum cleaner

Always bear in mind that a good vacuum cleaner is your carpet's best friend. Old, poorly maintained vacuum cleaners or vacuum cleaners with (almost) full dust bags will not do their work properly.

The vacuum cleaner should have an underpressure of at least 160 millibar. This figure is more important than a high electric power -- indicated on your vacuum cleaner in Watts. Data on the important underpressure can be found in the technical specifications of the appliance.

For hygienic reasons it is important to replace the dust bag once a month. Even if it is not full. It is highly advisable to use a vacuum cleaner with a hepafilter or a double-walled dust bag to make sure that dust emission in the vacuum, cleaner is minimized.

Very useful for people who are allergic to household dust.

Periodical maintenance

Despite regular vacuum cleaning, the appearance of your carpet will change gradually.

Heavy traffic areas will soil more easily than areas that are less intensely walked on. In general, accumulated dirt can be removed properly.

There are various do-it-yourself methods. Such periodical maintenance should be carried out once every twelve or eighteen months.

Dry powder is probably the most commonly known product. It is suitable for synthetic low-pile carpets. The powder binds dirt and dust. It is poured on the carpet, rubbed in lightly and removed again shortly afterwards with the vacuum cleaner. The powder is available from your drugstore or carpet dealer.

Caution! Dry powder is not suitable for high-pile and needle felt carpets. Of the other cleaning agents, products based on dry foam or shampoo are not advisable. There is a great risk that sticky soap residues will be left behind, which will soon attract dirt again.

Major maintenance

To extend the life of your carpet we recommend you to have the carpet cleaned thoroughly once every two or three years.

If there is little periodical maintenance, major cleaning should be carried out even more frequently. Major maintenance is a professional cleaner's job. With different cleaning methods tailored to specific situations they can achieve optimal results.

Well-known methods are spray extraction, pad cleaning and carbon dioxide-based cleaning.