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DO RUGS RIGHT

You can give bare floors a quick and stylish makeover with these magic-carpet tips from five local pros. *By Haley Longman*

Finding a fabulous area rug to ground your space shouldn't be a game of Goldilocks: "Too big?" "Too soft?" "Too bright?" Or "just right?" A rug will smartly complement the rest of your décor, as well as add texture and warmth to your space—if it's chosen and used wisely. So we asked five local designers to share revelations on how to find the perfect size, material and style of rug for every room in the home, plus tips on maintaining and cleaning them.

OUR EXPERTS



Christie Adams,
Christie Adams
Design, Wyckoff



Laurie DiGiacomo,
Laurie DiGiacomo
Interiors, Ridgewood



Lisa Laliberte-Alle,
Laliberte Interiors,
Glen Rock



Michele Taylor,
Michele Taylor
Interiors, Ramsey



Marina V. Umali,
Marina V Design
Studio, Ridgewood



SIZE

Our experts agree that a too-small rug visually shrinks the space. So, when in doubt, go oversized rather than undersized, and opt for one large area rug rather than several small ones to maximize a room. To help visualize the space, "I always recommend placing painter's tape on the floor to see the dimensions of the rug you're considering," says Umali. Adams' rules of thumb? "For a living room, it's important that the front legs of a sofa are on the rug," she says. "For a dining room, you want the rug to completely go under the table and chairs even when the chairs are being sat in and pulled out." In a bedroom, you want to step out of bed with a comfy rug underfoot. But, as a general guideline, "leave a 12- to 15-inch border of bare space around the room," adds DiGiacomo.

STYLE

The pattern or overall look of your rug will depend on your taste, of course, and the one you choose should complement the furnishings and the rest of the décor. "If a room has already been designed," says Taylor, "just play off of what's already in the space."

Alternatively, a rug you love can serve as the initial inspiration for the rest of that room's overall design. "I usually design from the floor up," DiGiacomo confides, "so that if I want to make the rug a statement by using lots of color or pattern, I'll keep most other elements quiet." Laliberte-Alle has a similar approach; she says that "a rug is an excellent opportunity to incorporate bright colors or contrasting patterns into your room design." And Taylor agrees that there will be times when you'll "select your rug first and then pull the room together around it."



{ FLOOR PLAN }



MATERIAL

The best material for your rug depends on the room in which it's placed—our designers agree on that. "For living areas, I always recommend wool rugs or a wool blend over synthetics," says Taylor. "Wool is far superior in beauty, longevity and sustainability. It's 100 percent a worthwhile splurge." For first-floor, high-traffic areas such as a mud room or an entryway, "a low-pile rug is always best as it's not going to collect as much dirt and is easier to clean," says Umali. If you're going to put a rug in the kitchen, consider a washable rug, an indoor/outdoor option or a runner made of polypropylene—they're good for busy families with dogs or kids, says Laliberte-Alle. One note from Adams: "Jute and sisal rugs are not kid- and pet-friendly. I personally learned that the hard way."

{ FLOOR PLAN }

MAINTENANCE

There's no point in purchasing fabulous rugs if they're not properly taken care of. Vacuum regularly to keep dirt from settling, spot-clean as soon as a spill happens—blot into the stain and don't rub, Taylor warns—and consider hiring a professional rug service to deep-clean each rug yearly. A good rug pad is imperative too, to protect both the rug and the floor on which it's placed. "I personally appreciate felt rug pads with acrylic backing," says Laliberte-Alle. "They add softness to the step, and the rubber backing holds the rug in place." One important pro tip: consider their combined height if placing the rug near a door to avoid blocking the door swing.

FOR RUG-GED INDIVIDUALISTS

Our rug mavens offer these further tips depending on who you are, what you like and what you've got already:

- If you have an open floor plan...your rugs should coordinate but not be matchy-matchy. "Use different colors or patterns but stick within the same design aesthetic," says Lisa Laliberte-Alle of Glen Rock. "Vintage rugs are great when mixed with more neutral ones."
- If you like the layered look...be warned that while it sure looks pretty in pictures, this trend tends to be harder to achieve than it looks. "It can be frustrating to get the top rug to stay in place if you don't have heavy furniture holding it down in all

four corners," says Christie Adams of Wyckoff.

- If you want a stairs runner...choose a pattern and/or material that will hide wear and tear. "For this reason, consider a runner that's highly patterned and has gray or brown undertones," advises Ridgewood-based Laurie DiGiacomo.

▪ If you're wondering when to purchase your rug...the answer is now, basically, because you don't want the rug to be a last-minute addition when furnishing your space. "Rugs take up a large amount of space in your home, and they can make or break a room," says Michele Taylor of Ramsey. "Don't let them be an afterthought!"