

How to Install Carpeting

Installing your own carpet isn't the impossible task you might imagine. It does involve specialized tools (that you can rent) and using some muscles you probably didn't know you had. But the hardest part may be selecting the type of carpet that best suits your needs. The type of weave and material you pick depends on your desired price range and your desired strength and durability. You should also consider how often you redecorate since you don't need a high-priced, durable carpet if you change your carpet every few years.

Carpet Materials

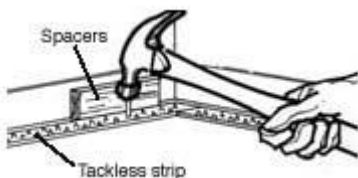
- **Wool carpet** is durable and crush resistant (walking on it does not leave footprints), easy to clean and good for high-traffic areas, but it tends to hold static and is usually very high in price.
- **Nylon** is also very durable and easier to clean than wool and does not hold static. But it is high priced and may fade if exposed to a lot of sunlight.
- **Polyester** is not as crush resistant as wool and fades when exposed to a lot of sunlight. It is extremely durable against abrasions and costs less than wool and nylon carpets.
- **Acrylic carpet** does not fade, is fairly crush resistant and is easy to clean, does not hold static and is low priced. But it is not as strong against abrasion as the other types.
- **Polypropylene Olefin** carpet is the least expensive, easy to clean and fairly strong against abrasion. It may or may not be crush resistant depending on the type of weave, also known as pile.

When installing carpet, floor preparation is usually minimal. If you are replacing carpet, pry up the old carpet from the tackless strip. The padding and tackless strips can be reused if they are still in good shape. Make sure the floor is dry and free of debris. Sweep or vacuum the area to ensure a clean, flat surface for installation. If you are installing carpet directly over concrete, check for moisture problems before installation and get them fixed. Excess moisture can ruin your new carpet.

When you are nailing into concrete, make sure you know where the heat

ducts under the floor are because you may accidentally puncture them. To find the ducts, wet the floor along the wall and turn the heat up. The pipes are located in the area that dries first. Mark this area with chalk and avoid it when nailing the tackless strip to the floor.

- Saw or shears
- Tackless strip (sized for your job)
- Masonry nails
- Hammer
- Carpet padding
- Heavy scissors
- Utility knife
- Staple gun (or cement if covering a concrete floor)
- Carpet of choice (sized for your job)
- Chalk line
- Row cutter
- Seaming tape
- Seaming iron (rented from carpet manufacturer)
- Stepladder
- Rolling pin
- Knee kicker
- Power stretcher
- Trimmer
- Stair tool
- Gripper edge



Step 1: Install Tackless Strips

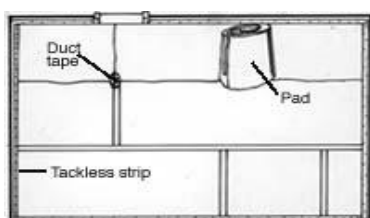
Use a saw or shears to cut a length of tackless strip to fit each wall. Nail the strips around the perimeter of the room, leave a space between the tackless strip and the wall that equals $\frac{2}{3}$ of the thickness of the carpet. Using at least 2 masonry nails for each tackless strip, nail them to the floor. Make sure the tackless strips join together at the corners and the pointed pins in each strip are facing the wall. If you are installing carpet over tile flooring, remove the tiles where you are nailing the tackless strips.



TIP: If you are installing carpet over concrete, install a special gripper edge manufactured for concrete and fasten with masonry nails before installing the carpet.

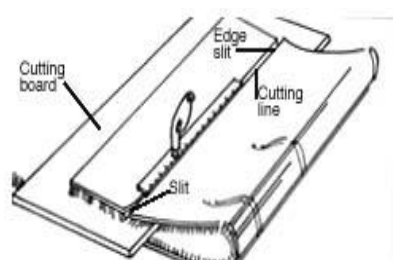


CAUTION: To protect your hands, always wear heavy work gloves when handling tackless strips.



Step 2: Install Carpet Padding

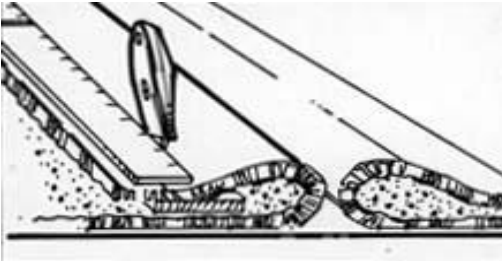
Cut the padding in strips long enough to fit the length of the room. Make sure the padding is long enough to cover the tackless strips on all the walls. Lay out your padding waffle side facing up, and staple it along its edge every 6 inches. If you are installing directly over concrete, cement the padding to the floor. The padding should not overlap; it should be butted up against each other to form a clean seam. Use a utility knife to trim the excess padding that is covering the tackless strips, and cover each seam with duct tape.



Step 3: Cut and Lay the Carpet

Measure your room's length and width and cut the carpet 4-6 inches longer than the room's dimensions. Use a utility knife to cut the carpet from the backside. After measuring the carpet, flip the excess over a cutting board

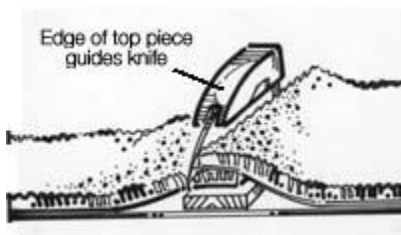
and use a straight edge to guide cutting. Overlap each piece of carpet at the edges to allow for trimming. Make sure when cutting and laying the carpet that its pile is facing the same direction.



Step 4: Cut the Carpet Seam

Overlap the edges of the carpet leaving about 2 inches of excess carpet at the wall. Snap a chalk line on the back of the overlapped carpet edges and trim a straight edge to ensure a straight seam.

Overlap the straight edges and use a row cutter to cut the bottom piece. The edge of the top piece should be your guide in cutting the seam to fit.



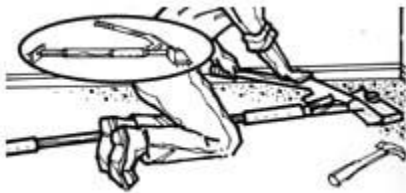
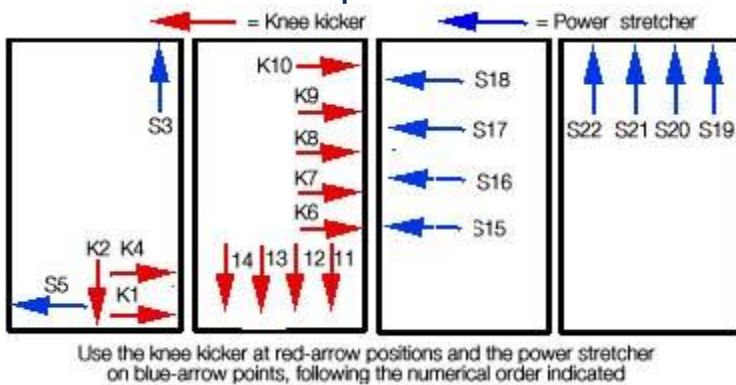
Step 5: Adhere the Seam with Seaming Tape

Cut a length of seaming tape and center it under the seam. Make sure the adhesive side of the tape is facing up and the carpet seams butt up against each other. Use a seaming iron to melt the adhesive by slowly pulling the

iron down the tape. Once the adhesive is melted, immediately press the carpet edges together over the tape. Roll over the seam with a rolling pin.

Step 6: Use the Knee Kicker to Attach the Carpet

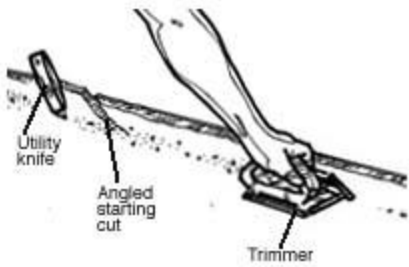
Hook the carpet to the tackless strip starting in one of the corners. Dig the teeth of the knee kicker into the carpet about 1 inch from the wall. Swiftly kick the cushioned end of the knee kicker with your knee to hook the carpet to the tackless strip. Follow the kicker-stretcher illustration below for the correct order and position.



Step 7. Use the Power Stretcher to Attach the Carpet

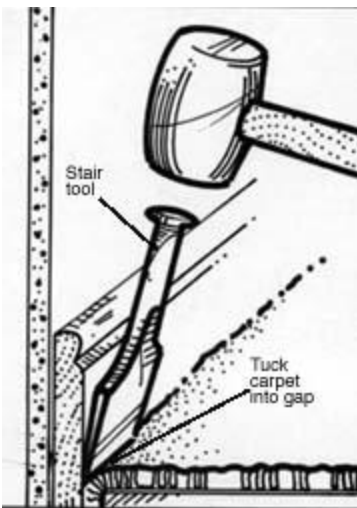
Once one corner is hooked, use the power stretcher to stretch the carpet to the opposite wall. Put the base of the power stretcher at the wall that was just hooked with the knee kicker, and use a piece of scrap carpet or a padded 2 x 4 to pad the wall. Dig the teeth of the power stretcher into the carpet about 6 inches from the opposite wall. Press down the lever and lock it into place, stretching the carpet and attaching it to the tackless strips. Next, use the power stretcher to hook the other corner opposite of the first corner hooked, following the same procedure. Follow the numbered sequence in figure 8, kicking and stretching the carpet until the edge of the carpet is attached to the tackless strip around the entire perimeter of the

room. The small arrows represent the knee kicker and the large arrows represent the power stretcher in the diagram.



Step 8. Trim the Excess Carpet

To protect your hands, always wear heavy work gloves when handling tackless strips.



Step 9. Smoothing Out the Rough Edges

Use a stair tool to push the edges of the carpet between the wall and the tackless strips.

Step 10. Install a Gripper Edge

Finally, trim the carpet at the doorway, centering the end of the carpet under the shut door. Install a gripper edge or nail in a metal strip to hold the carpet in place.