

## DESIGNER FYI: more on floors



### By Kris Linder

When I last talked about floors, we barely scratched the surface. In the previous article (September 2003) we covered wood flooring and how one can incorporate interesting design elements to create a unique look. Today, wood is only one of many flooring options you have. For people who like a softer feel, let's explore the world of carpeting and its myriad choices.

Slip resistant, warm and comfortable, carpet muffles sounds, is easy on the feet and even feels good to lay or sit on. Carpet is typically made from one of four fibers: nylon, olefin, polyester, or wool. Wool is typically the most expensive and most durable, followed by nylon, polypropylene and polyester, respectively. Nylon and other synthetics are washable; wool is not. Loop piles will perform better than cut piles over the years because the loops help evenly distribute the impact of foot traffic.

There are many ways to use carpet in a room as a design element. One of the most common is to add a border off the walls 12- to 24-inches thick in a complimentary color. This is effective in a large room where one may want to create a "center" for furniture to be arranged. Many designers create custom designs in the carpet using several colors to establish an art-like aspect for the floor. With this technique, the old standby "plush pile" carpet is elevated to a new design plateau. To achieve this in other less artful ways, there are types of pile and loot which show more dimension and texture and can further add to a rooms ambiance.

How do you make the decision between carpet and other flooring choices? If you suffer from allergies or are concerned about your home's indoor air quality, you may want to choose hard flooring, like tile, stone or wood, as they do not harbor dust mites and allergens. But if you do decide on carpet, pick one that has been treated with an antimicrobial chemical designed to reduce the growth of bacteria, viruses and other microbes.

Carpet prices range from approximately \$20 per square yard for polyester to upwards of \$90 per yard for wool. These prices do not always include padding and installation.

Even with all the flooring choices today, carpet remains the tried-and-true element of luxurious elegance for most interiors.

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Kris Linder is the owner of Interior Design Source in Los Gatos, which provides full-service interior design, consulting and architectural planning services. Contact her at 408.395.4028 or visit [www.interior-design-source.com](http://www.interior-design-source.com).