

# HOW TO PUT A CARPET IN IT'S PLACE...

## THE RIGHT WAY TO INSTALL NATURAL FIBER FLOORCOVERING

### A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE 'CHARACTER' OF NATURAL FIBER FLOORCOVERING...

Floorcoverings woven from plant and animal fibers tend to have irregularities that are considered normal because they occur in nature. Weave and shading irregularities are inherent in the fiber and the manufacturing process, so you should expect to find them. What you will not find anywhere is a perfect natural fiber floorcovering. However, these irregularities give the distinctive, interesting character that makes each natural fiber carpet unique.

### WHAT NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS DO THESE CARPETS HAVE?

**PLUGS-** The fibers that have to be tied off in the manufacturing process.

**SPROUTS-** Some fibers, such as seagrass, are short fibers. During handling, they sprout. Clipping sprouts is recommended.

**BOWING AND VARIATION IN LOOP SIZE-** This is quite common. Bowing tolerances vary per product. Contact your supplier for information.

**VISIBLE SEAMS-** These are normal, even when seaming is done well. Some patterns, especially flat woven patterns, are difficult to seam and will be visible.

**COLOR CHANGES-** All natural fibers change. Dyed fibers eventually return to their original shade. Avoid exposing your carpet to direct sunlight.

**EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION-** The hydroscopic nature of natural fibers means that they adjust to environmental conditions. They are constantly moving.

**COLOR VARIANCE-** Your sample may not match your shipment. Roll color differences are more significant with natural fibers than synthetic ones due to growing seasons, soil conditions, moisture and other factors that occur in nature.

**FOR INDOOR USE ONLY-** Natural fibers should not be used in areas where moisture is present or ventilation is inadequate.

**RESIDENTIAL USE-** Natural fiber products are recommended for residential use only unless otherwise specified.

Newly opened rolls of latex backed carpet may have the scent of ammonia. This will dissipate within 24-48 hours.

### A COUPLE OF THINGS YOU'LL WANT TO KNOW...

Let's start with a little history. The word 'carpet' has been in the English language since the 1300's, and it originally meant a thick piece of fabric for covering anything from floors to tables!

Here is something else you may not know (and it's a lot more useful, too)- the proper way to install a natural fiber carpet so that it will give attractive and durable service. The good news is that it won't take you 700 years to learn the right techniques; just study the steps in this brochure before you begin. Call your floorcovering retailer if you find you need more advice.

### Now, Down to Business...

When planning a room, use material from the same roll. Materials from different rolls seldom turn out to be exactly the same color, especially with vegetable fibers (such as jute, grasses, sisal, etc.)

*Take a few minutes to inspect the carpeting for flaws, but remember that some imperfections are to be expected in natural textiles. If you see any major defects, **DO NOT CUT OR INSTALL the material in any way- contact the dealer who sold the product.** No allowances can be made after material is cut or installed.*

Your floorcovering needs time to adjust to the temperature and humidity of your house. Loose-lay the material in the room in which you plan to install it (and the temperature it typically will experience) and give it 24 hours to get used to its new home.

**A WORD ABOUT SHRINKAGE-** All natural fibers are 'hydroscopic' and easily react to changes in the humidity or when moisture is present. We recommend that all surfaces be 'sealed', especially new wood underlayment. A good-quality primer is recommended for sub-floors made of wood or concrete.

## 1. BACKING IS IMPORTANT

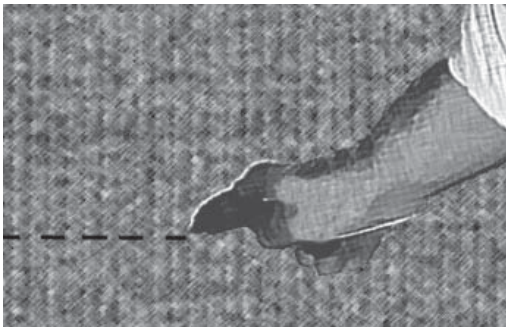
The type of carpet backing will determine the installation technique.

- For carpet with **synthetic** or **jute** backing, follow traditional installation techniques as provided by the Standard for Installation of Residential Carpet, CRI 105 (as published by The Carpet and Rug Institute, [www.carpet-rug.com](http://www.carpet-rug.com)).
- Some carpets are not recommended for broadloom installation. This includes all products with **felt** backing.
- Products with **latex** and **polyurethane** backing have special installation characteristics which include a few restrictions:

**DO NOT STRETCH OR KICK WITH YOUR KNEE KICKER-** you may distort the weave. Lay the carpet in place, and then use your kneekicker to position it properly.

**DO NOT USE THICK PADDING-** the flatter the pad, the better. If you are using a dual-stick pad, stay with the thin kind. A thick pad will be more likely to leave impressions, especially if the carpet is jute.

**DO NOT CUT DOWN THE 'VALLEYS' IN THE RIB-** cut across them, or the carpet will pull apart unevenly and fray.



**FLAT WOVEN PRODUCTS** can be seamed well, but the seams may be visible. Make sure your customer understands the nature of a flat woven seam. Some products are not recommended for installation if a seam is required. This includes products with excessive pile height and are marked- Seaming in Broadloom Installation Not Recommended.

## 2. THE BASICS ABOUT INSTALLATION OF LATEX BACKED, FLAT WOVEN PRODUCTS...

Unlike many other kinds of floorcovering, latex (and polyurethane) backed carpeting can not be stretched and tacked in. You will get the best results if you lay it in such a way it can be glued to the underlayment, either with adhesive or a dual-stick pad.

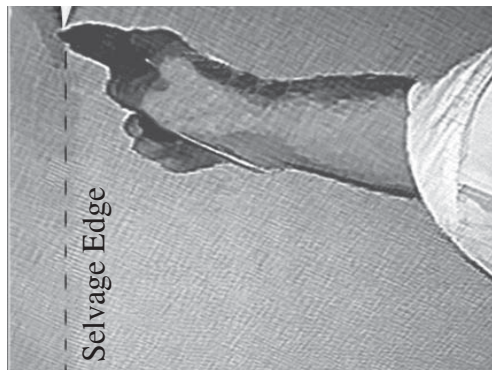
Want to leave it loose-laid? You could, but you will find that the carpet stretches or shrinks a bit because natural fibers take in, then release, moisture. This makes the carpet 'crawl' and causes bubbles to appear from time to time.

## MEASURE CAREFULLY, THEN CUT CLEANLY

First, take an exact measurement of the area you want to cover and then add two or three inches to those dimensions. If you extend the carpet to a doorway, make sure you have allowed enough material to reach its center. For the neatest, most precise cuts, use a razor carpet knife and have enough spare blades on hand to replace dull ones frequently.

### CUT ALONG THE SELVAGE EDGE

If you lift up one side of the carpeting, you will notice that the latex backing stops at least a couple of inches short of the edge. This is because current manufacturing techniques can only apply the backing so far. Take note of the selvage edge of the backing; that is where you should cut if you want a tidy (and virtually hidden) seam. Do not double cut any seams or the edges will fray.



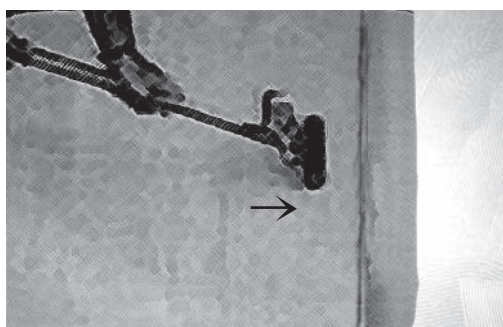
### ALIGN THE MATERIAL GENTLY

Once you have matched the seams- but before you begin to glue them down- be sure the pattern is aligned the way you want, again allowing for natural imperfections. Exact pattern matches probably will not be possible. When you are satisfied, fold back the carpet at the seam area, but do not make a *sharp* fold.

### GLUE NEEDS TIME TO BREATHE AND BOND

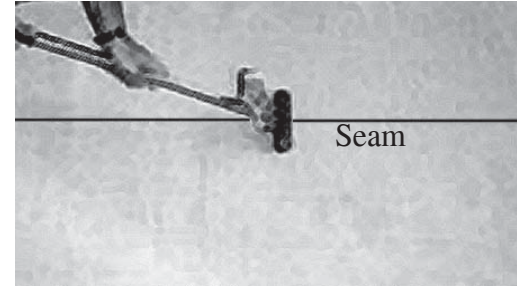
A premium, low-moisture, multipurpose adhesive is best for natural fiber carpets with latex foam backing; ask your adhesive supplier to recommend one. The label on the adhesive will tell you its 'open time' requirements. Scoop up adhesive with a 3/16" x 1/8" x 1/8" v-notched trowel and spread it away from the seam.

If you do it correctly, the trowel will leave scalloped marks at the seam areas. Beginning at the seams and working toward each wall, lay the carpet over the adhesive. For best results, run a carpet roller over the material until the bonding has set permanently.



## SEAMS DON'T HAVE TO BE SEEN

To make sure that your seams are virtually invisible, overlap the floorcovering by a half-inch to an inch. Lift up the edge that lies next to an edge that already has been glued down. Put the new edge next to the previously glued one, leaving a little bulge between them. Then press the bulge down into the adhesive and run your roller along the seam until the two edges bond.



## TIDY TRIMMING AT EACH WALL

For a neat edge at a wall, begin by making a sharp 90-degree fold where the carpet meets it. Cut the fold with a razor knife (again, changing blades often for a sharp cut).



## BE PATIENT

Give your new carpet time to settle and bond before you move furniture or lots of feet across it, because applying too much weight too soon will leave compression marks.

