

DO RUGS RIGHT

You can give bare floors a quick and stylish makeover with these magic-carpet tips from four 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 four 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



Susie Chusid,
Susie Chusid
Designs, Roseland



Grace Liloia,
Whyte Birch
Interiors, Glen Ridge



Alexa Ralff,
AHR Designs,
Maplewood



Jessica Snyder,
JL Snyder Designs,
Verona



SIZE

A too-small rug visually shrinks the space, so when in doubt, go oversized rather than undersized, says Chusid, and opt for one large area rug rather than several small ones to maximize the room. Liloia's rules of thumb? "For a bedroom, I like three-fourths of an inch of the area rug to be under the bed and in front," she says—your feet should touch the rug when you get out of bed. "For a dining room, the dining table and all chairs surrounding the table should be on the area rug with ample space behind the chairs when they're pulled out." A living-room area rug should fit most if not all of your furniture on it too. But, as a general rule, "leave somewhere between 6 and 12 inches between the end of the rug and the walls," says Snyder.

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 in that room. "Try to pair the rugs to the most prominent items in the space; the furniture and the artwork," Snyder recommends. "The rug should coordinate with surrounding items so that the space feels cohesive and not disjointed." This means the rug should have a colorway and an aesthetic similar to those of the rest of the room, adds Liloia.

Alternatively, a rug you love can serve as the initial inspiration for the rest of that room's overall design. "If you have a rug that makes a statement," says Chusid, "design the rest of the space around it, keeping the furnishings a bit simpler without sacrificing style."



{ FLOOR PLAN }



MATERIAL

Our designers agree that the best material for your rug depends on the room in which it's placed. For first-floor, high-traffic areas such as a mud room or an entryway, "workhorse" rugs such as sisal rugs or those made with a combination of materials like wool and polypropylene work best, says Ralff. This means avoiding rugs made of synthetic fibers, which aren't as high-quality and won't last as long as their more luxurious wool-fibered counterparts. If you're going to put a rug in the kitchen, consider a washable rug that you can throw right into the washing machine, Ralff adds, or an indoor-outdoor runner, which is easy to clean. Kids'-room rugs need not be super-luxurious; instead, they should focus on "durability and softness," says Snyder; she recommends those made from nylon or polypropylene.

{ FLOOR PLAN }

MAINTENANCE

There's no point in purchasing fabulous rugs if they're not properly taken care of. Shake and air them out regularly, spot-clean as needed according to the manufacturer's cleaning instructions—blot into the stain and don't rub, Chusid 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. "Choose a rug pad of both felt and natural rubber to protect the hardware floors and give more cushion," says Liloia. Says Ralff: "Don't cheap out on a rug pad!"

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. Instead, opt for different patterns in the same color palette. "This mixes things up while maintaining an interesting flow from room to room," says designer Susie Chusid of Roseland.
- If you like the layered look...don't be afraid to layer rugs, because it's a seamless way to add texture to your space. "For example, an odd-sized antique rug can work if it's layered over a natural sisal or wool sisal rug," says Alexa

Ralff of Maplewood.

- If you want a runner on your stairs...opt for a wool or nylon runner that will stand up to foot traffic, suggests Glen Ridge's Grace Liloia. "It should be a low-cut pile for stability."
- If you don't know where to start...let your imagination run wild. No, really. "It's incredibly important to give yourself freedom for creativity," says Verona-based Jessica Snyder. "Don't be afraid to blend two or three styles [in your space] to showcase your life and your travels." After all, interior design should be fun!