

 Glossary of Terms used in the carpet industry

Acrylic • The generic name for fibres produced from the linear polymer polyacrylonitrile. No longer widely used in carpet manufacture other than as a blending fibre.

Action Bac • A polypropylene backing for tufted carpets, manufactured by Amoco.

Advanced Generation Nylon • Yarns which have additional characteristics to the basic fibre, such as soil resistance and anti-static properties.

Affinity • The tendency of two substances chemically to unite a fibre or dyestuff.

Anchor Coat • A latex or adhesive coating applied to the back of a carpet usually tufted to anchor the tufts and prevent them pulling out.

Any Width • The same carpet is offered by the manufacturer in any width to help the estimator/fitter avoid wastage and seams.

Axminster • A machine woven carpet in which rows of pile yarns are inserted during a weaving process to a predetermined colour arrangement

- a) *Spool Axminster* (which can contain any number of colours, the loom being fed from spools that are hand-set)
- b) *Gripper Axminster* (which is limited to eight colours, the loom being operated by a Jacquard)
- c) *Spool-gripper Axminster* (a combination of both)

BCF • Bulk continuous filament yarn. Continuous strands of synthetic fibres extruded in yarn form, without the need for spinning. Only BCF nylon and polypropylene are available in carpets.

Berber • A generic term used to describe cut-pile and loop-pile carpets made from natural coloured yarns.

Bleeding • Loss of colour when wet due to improper dyeing or from the use of poor dyestuffs. Fabrics that bleed will stain fabrics in contact with them when wet.

Blend • A carpet containing a mixture of two or more fibres or yarns or a combination of two or more fibres spun into a yarn.

Body Carpet • Carpets made in narrow widths usually $\frac{3}{4}$ body: 68.5cm (or 27") or fully body: 91cm (or 36"), mainly used for making up into larger areas by seaming.

Broadloom • Carpets made in wide-width, the most common sizes being 4m and 5m.

Brussels • A loop pile carpet woven over unbladed flat wires. Weaving is carried out in a similar manner to Wilton and carpet is often referred to as Brussels Wilton.

Bulking or Texturising • Processing continuous filament yarn to give more bulk and cover for the same weight.

Buried End • A tufted technique to create patterned effects whereby one end of pile yarn is run at a low level so that adjacent high pile yarn covers it.

Bursting • When the end of the tuft is cut the yarn loses some twist and the end of the yarn 'bursts' out.

Colourtec • A tufting machine with individually controlled needles for producing patterned carpet with up to six different colours per design.



Compression • Flattening of the pile due to pressure, eg heavy furniture.

Continuous Dye • A method of dyeing whereby a continuously moving carpet is dyed in a single process.

Cord • A loop pile carpet woven over unbladed round wires.

Count • A means of defining the density of a yarn. A number indicating the mass per unit length or length per unit mass of a yarn. There are various counting systems eg Tex - the weight in grammes of 1000m.

Cover • Descriptive of how the face yarn covers the backing.

Creel • 1) Framework that supports the yarn prior to feeding into a tufting machine.
2) The quantity of yarn packages required to complete a given amount of tufted carpet.

Crimp • 'Waviness' in a fibre or filament to impart bulk and handle.

Cropping • The passage of carpet under a revolving cylinder fitted with cutting blades to obtain a level surface.

Cut/Loop • A carpet having both cut pile and loop pile areas to give a textured effect either plain or overprinted.

Decorwool • A branding programme by Wools of New Zealand that sets quality standards.

Delamination • The separation of the foam or secondary backing from the primary because of poor adhesion.

Denier • Weight in grammes of 9000m of yarn. See 'Count'.

Density • In carpet terms this is the closeness of the pile yarn, ie the amount of pile yarn and the number of tufts in a given area of carpet.

Design Repeat • The length of carpet between pattern repeats.

Differential Dye • Yarns that have been modified so that their dye absorption varies, giving a flecked effect to the finished carpet.

Drysdale • A breed of New Zealand sheep. Specially bred to produce white and resilient wool for use in carpets.

Dye Fastness • The property of the dye to retain its colour when the finished carpet is exposed to various agencies, eg light, water, shampoo, etc.

Dye Injection • Specially formulated dye solutions are injected under pressure to the surface of the carpet through fine jets to create a predetermined pattern, eg the Millitron.

Embossed Design • A carpet having an engraved appearance, usually achieved by hand tufting.

Extrusion • A method of producing synthetic fibres in which the fibre forming substances are forced through small holes in a spinneret to create single filament yarns.

Face-to-Face • A process in which the pile yarn is sandwiched between two backing fabrics and then cut while on the machine to form two separate pile carpets.

Fading • Loss of colour caused by various agencies, but in particular light.

Felt Paper • A paper underlay used primarily under foam backed carpets to prevent adhesion to the floor. Also applied to wooden floors to prevent dust penetrating the boards and causing dirt lines on the carpet.



Filament • A continuous single strand of textile fibre.

Fine Gauge • A tufted carpet in which the rows of pile yarn are very close together, most frequently 8 or two rows of tufts per inch.

Fixed Width • Where the carpet is only available in the manufacturer's standard widths, the most common being 4m and 5m.

Flat Bed • A printing process in which dye is applied to a carpet through a series of flat screens, one for each colour.

Flocked Carpet • Short, cropped lengths of fibre (flock) are applied, usually by electrostatic process, to an adhesive coated backing fabric.

Fluffing • Loose fibres on the surface of the carpet left during manufacture. A characteristic that, in time, disappears with use and suction cleaning, and is not detrimental to the carpet.

Foam Back • A carpet having a secondary backing of foam.

Frame • A rack at the back of a Wilton loom that holds the spools of coloured pile yarn. A 5-frame Wilton has 5 colours in the design.

Frieze or Frise • A tightly twisted yarn that gives a rough knobby appearance to the surface of the carpet.

Gauge • The number of ends of pile yarn per unit length across the width of the carpet, eg $\frac{1}{8}$ th gauge has 8 pile ends per inch.

Grades/Grading • An assessment that is given to a carpet following testing, to indicate its suitability for a particular location, eg Grade - Heavy Domestic/General Contract use.

Graphics Machine • A tufting machine that incorporates a computer controlled double sliding needle bar to achieve geometric patterning.

Grinning • When the backing is visible through the rows of pile yarn, particularly in carpets having low pile density.

Gripper • 1) Part of a gripper-Axminster loom
2) The narrow flat strips of nailed plywood or metal used in carpet fitting.

Gum Tak • A process in which a special gum is applied to the carpet before printing to produce a random pattern or shadow effect. The tuft areas with the gum resist the uptake of dye.

Hair Cord • A cord carpet with the pile yarn made entirely of animal fibres, eg hair.

Handle • The tactile qualities of a carpet, eg softness, firmness.

Hank Dyed • A process in which the yarn is dyed in hank or skein form before being made into a carpet.

Hard Twist • A yarn with a higher than normal twist (see 'Freize' or 'Frise')..

Heat Setting • Processes in which heat is used to set a permanent twist into the yarn. The most commonly used are Superba, Suessen and autoclave.

Hessian • A woven fabric produced from jute and used as secondary backing for tufted carpets.

High Low • A multi-level pile, sometimes combining cut and looped surface yarns.

High Tufts • 1) The highest level in a multi-level construction
2) Loose ends that may stand proud or be buried in the carpet surface.



Homogenous • Consisting of ingredients all of the same kind. The term normally applies to smooth floor coverings.

Hydrashift • The Hydrashift attachment is an hydraulically operated, electronically controlled mechanism for lateral shifting of the needle bar of a tufting machine to achieve patterning.

Jacquard • A mechanical patterning device, invented by Marie Jacquard, which controls the patterning elements of a loom by means of a series of punched cards.

Latex • A milky coloured rubber solution found in various plants, eg rubber trees, and used for sealing the backs of carpets. Synthetic lattices are also available.

Loop Pile • Pile surface in which the loops are left uncut.

Man-made Fibre • Produced by the action of chemicals on fibrous raw materials, such as wood and cotton, which are present in nature, ie viscose rayon.

Meltbond • A generic term for a process designed to improve the performance of twist pile carpets and reduce shedding. Ten per cent bonding fibre is added to the fibre blend. This melts during subsequent heat treatment, forming a reinforcing lattice within the yarn structure.

Multi-Tuft • A single pass tufting machine that is capable of producing random patterning.

Multi-Width • The same carpet is offered by the manufacturer in a series of widths to help the estimator/fitter avoid wastage.

Naturals • Floorcoverings produced from materials such as jute, coir, sisal and seagrass. The surface effects are now being replicated by carpet manufacturers using natural and synthetic fibres.

Needle Bar • The support for the vertical or horizontal row of needles arranged across a tufting machine. By giving this bar a lateral movement over a controlled number of needle spaces a wavy line pattern effect can be achieved on a tufted carpet.

Needlepunch/Needlefelt • Layers or batts of loose fibres are needled, with needles having downward facing barbs, to form a densely compressed felted or flat textured material. Needled fabrics can be embossed, printed and laminated to a cushioned backing material.

Non-Woven • A fabric made up of a web of fibres held together by a chemical or fibrous bonding agent.

Nylon • The generic name for fibres produced from the linear polymer polyamide. It was the first synthetic fibre and was invented by DuPont in the US. Officially called polyamide in the EU.

Over-Tufting • A process whereby a plain tufted carpet is fed through a tufting machine for the application of a design.

Pass Machine • A narrow width tufting machine for small batch production. The primary backing is 'passed' through the machine the number of times necessary to produce the required carpet width. Hence the name 'Pass'.

Pattern Match (Self Matching) • Assuming a design repeat of 1m, then two 1m lengths, each containing a complete design, will match across both widths when laid side by side.

Piece Dyeing • A process in which a roll of carpet is dyed in a beck/winch after tufting but before secondary backing.

Pile Reversal • A so-called phenomenon whereby 'pools' and heavy 'watermarking' appear on the surface of the carpet. It is claimed not to be a manufacturing fault but due to subsequent handling or usage.



Pile Thickness • The height of the pile above the backing of the carpet.

Pile Weight • The total weight of pile yarn in the carpet, measured in ounce per square yard, or grammes per square metre.

Pilling • Small balls of short fibre attached to the surface of the carpet. Certain yarns, blends and constructions are more prone to pilling than others. This is regarded as a manufacturing fault.

Pitch • See 'Gauge'.

Planting • A method of introducing a greater number of colours into a woven pattern than that dictated by the number of frames in the loom. Bobbins of additional colours are substituted.

Plush/Splush • A carpet with a single level cut-pile surface that is less dense and longer than a velvet.

Ply • The number of strands of yarn twisted together to form a single yarn, eg 2 ply or 3 ply.

Polyamide • The polymer from which nylon is made. The term is frequently used to denote nylon fibre.

Polyester • A fibre in which the fibre-forming substance is a linear synthetic polymer.

Polymer • The basic chemical unit from which synthetic fibres are made.

Polypropylene • Fibres spun from polymers or copolymers of polypropylene.

Primary Backing • In a tufted carpet it is the backing into which the tufts are inserted. The most popular material is woven polypropylene.

Printed Carpet • A carpet which has had the design applied by printing onto a white base cloth eg screen printing or dye injection printing.

Pseudo Axminster • A tufted carpet printed with a typical Axminster pattern.

Rotary Screen Printing • A term used to describe a printing process in which the screen is in the form of a roller.

Saxony • A construction having a level cut pile less dense and longer than a velvet in which each tuft is clearly defined.

Scotchguard • A fluorochemical compound manufactured by 3M, which is applied to the pile of a carpet to give anti-soil properties, usually during manufacture.

Sculptured Pile • A multi-level textured pile carpet.

Seam • The point at which two carpet pieces are joined.

Secondary Back • In a tufted carpet it is the backing, usually woven of jute or polypropylene, which is bonded with latex to the primary backing to give greater stability.

Semi-Worsted • A shortened spinning system for staple fibres. Ideal for synthetic fibres, but semi-worsted yarns are lean when compared to woollen spun yarns.

Shading • An optical effect in which light is reflected differently from pile that lies at different angles thus giving the effect of light and dark patches. It is a characteristic of cut-pile fabrics particularly high quality constructions.

Shag • A carpet with a deep pile with a pile length greater than $\frac{3}{4}$ " and of a fairly open construction. Now rarely seen on the UK market.



Shedding • The process of losing loose fibre from the pile yarn of a carpet. It is not detrimental to the carpet (see fluffing).

Short-Lines • A manufacturing fault where the line of tufts running across the width of the carpet is incomplete.

Shot • The number of weft yarns in relation to each row of pile tufts crosswise in the look. A 2-shot fabric is one having two weft yarns for each row of pile tufts; a 5-shot fabric has five weft yarns for each row of tufts.

Singles • A yarn containing a single strand of fibre.

Solution/Pigment/Producer-Dyed • Yarn is spun from a polymer to which a pigment has been added.

Space Dyeing • A process in which different colours are applied to a yarn along its length, eg by printing. Subsequent tufting creates a mottled effect.

Special/Custom Dye • Where the pile yarn is dyed to meet the customer's exact colour requirements.

Spool • The basic former on which the pile yarns are wound in spool-Axminster weaving.

Sprouting • A term used when ends of backing material such as jute appear on the pile surface as a result of some minor fault in the weaving.

Spun Yarn • Yarn formed from staple fibre by spinning or twisting into a single strand of yarn.

Staple • Short lengths of fibre in an unprocessed state that must be spun or twisted into yarns unlike BCF.

Static • The build up of an electric charge when a person walks over a carpet that is subsequently discharged. It can occur on both synthetic and natural fibres dictated by humidity levels.

Stipple • An all over design made up of small dots.

Stitch Rate • The number of stitches per unit length in a tufted carpet, eg 8spi.

Stock Dyeing • The process of dyeing loose staple fibre prior to yarn spinning.

Streakings/Stripes/Linearity • Lines or streaks in a carpet caused by poor tufting, yarn variations or poor dyeing.

Texturising • A process of modifying continuous filament yarns, eg crimping, to improve the bulk and cover of the yarn.

Tip Shearing • 1) A textured pattern producing by shearing tips of some of the loops in a multi-height loop-pile carpet.

2) Shearing the surface of a carpet to give an even surface.

Tonal/Tone-on-Tone • A carpet having a pattern in two or more shades of the same hue.

Tuft Anchorage • The firmness with which the tufts are held onto a carpet.

Tuft Definition • When each individual tuft is clearly defined in the surface of the carpet.

Tufted/Tufting • A carpet manufacturing process in which pile yarns are inserted, by means of needles, into a pre-made backing fabric.

Twist • The spiral disposition of the components of a yarn. It is usually expressed in turns per inch (tpi) or turns per metre (tpm).



Unitary Backing • A single application of heavy latex or similar material to the primary backing, which permits direct adhesion to the floor.

Uptwisting • A process for inserting twist into a yarn.

Velour • Similar to a velvet, but usually tufted.

Velvet • A carpet with a dense short pile made from fine highly twisted yarns.

Viscose Rayon • Fibres formed by the regeneration of cellulose.

Warp • The lengthwise threads in a woven fabric.

White Carpet • Carpet in an unfinished state before it is dyed or printed.

Wilton • A woven carpet in which the pile is formed over bladed wires (except face-to-face Wilton). When the pile yarn is not required in the pattern it is woven into the backing.

Wool • The outer hair of the sheep. It is ideally suited and is the predominant natural fibre used in carpet production.

Woollen • A spinning system producing yarn in which the fibres lie in a random orientation. Woollen yarns are bulky and give good apparent value to the carpet.

Wooltweed • Where two or more different coloured fibres are blended together in pile yarn manufacture to give a 'heather' or 'multi-colour' effect to the carpet surface.

Worsted • A yarn spinning system producing a yarn in which the fibres lie almost parallel to each other. Worsted yarns are uniform but lean.

