

At Alexanders we always recommend using expert fitters to lay your carpet or other flooring and we only recommend fitters trained by the Flooring Industry Training Association. However, if you fancy taking on the challenge of installing your new flooring yourself it's important to do it properly. Laying any kind of flooring requires patience and accuracy, but if you feel you're up to the task, make sure you read our Fitting Guides before you begin.

Whether you're fitting carpet, laying vinyl or installing laminate or engineered wood flooring, we have the expert advice to guide you through every step of the process. Packed full of information and tips from our professional flooring fitters, these easy to follow, step-by-step DIY fitting guides will help you get your new flooring right first time. Any mistakes made when you're fitting flooring can be really expensive to put right, if you're laying carpet or vinyl an error could completely ruin your brand new floor, wasting lots of time and money. The best way to avoid these dreaded DIY nightmares is to make sure you do your research first. Feel free to download and print the relevant fitting guide so you can refer back to it as you complete each step.

Good preparation is vitally important when performing any DIY task, and even more so when tackling a job as big as installing new flooring in your home. That's why our floor Fitting Guides list all of the tools and materials you'll need to complete the work, as well as tips on how to prepare the sub-floor for the best results possible. Floor fitting is a skill that can take time to properly master, so we've put our years of experience and knowledge into these handy guides so you have the advice and direction of a professional fitter at your fingertips if you choose to DIY. However, even better than that is to let us make it easier for you by using one of our recommended fitters

What to expect from this expert guide



Whether you decide to use our professional Which? & FITA (Flooring Industry Training Association) approved flooring fitters or want to take on the challenge of fitting your new carpet yourself, you will find everything you need in this fitting guide. We'll cover every step of the installation process including:

1. Using Which? approved Alexanders fitters
2. Accurately measuring a room before fitting
3. Having the right tools to fit new carpet
4. Preparing your sub-floor & removing old flooring
5. Fitting underlay and carpet gripper
6. How to fit your new carpet
7. Getting the perfect finish (door bars & aftercare)

Which? approved Alexanders fitters

At Alexanders we believe in making things easy to you at every step. We're proud to offer a professional fitting service that is approved by industry experts and trusted. We only use fitters who are fully qualified and assessed by the Flooring Industry Training Association (FITA). Our fitters have also all passed the rigorous assessment process set by Which? to become a recognised Which? Trusted Trader. This endorsement scheme acknowledges reputable traders to give you peace of mind.

Which? has been rigorously testing products and services for over 50 years, giving consumers unbiased insight, enabling you to make an informed decision about making a purchase or using a service. Now Which? is doing the same for traders and not just anyone can become endorsed. Only those who meet their high standards are credited with the Which? Trusted Trader status.

By choosing to have your new carpet fitted professionally by us you'll be able to enjoy it without the hassle. Alongside our standard fitting service we offer an uplift and disposal service which for a small fee means our fitters will take up and dispose of your old flooring before they fit your new one. It's just one less thing for you to worry about.

How to measure a room accurately

As with all DIY jobs, preparation is everything when it comes to flooring and it's of the utmost importance that you get the room measurements correct. Draw a simple diagram of your home. The drawing doesn't have to be perfect but the measurements need to be accurate. Just a simple drawing with all the rooms shown is all you need. If you have a two storey home, then do two drawings, one for upper, one for lower. If your room is perfectly square or rectangular, the area can be calculated by multiplying the width by the height. For example, a room that is 5m x 2m will need 10m² of carpet.

If your room includes recesses or chimney breasts, you still need to measure the complete surface area without these as the carpet will be cut around them. Measure each individual area and write the measurement in the relevant space on the diagram. Then break the room down into smaller

rectangles that you can add together to get the total area of the room. Then add an all-important 5% for waste.

Measure your lengths more than once to make doubly sure they're right and remember to measure to the back of any door frames or room trims. When it comes to stairs or steps, the process is similar. Measure the height and depth and of each stair to give you the length before multiplying by the width. This will give you the area of each step. Again, don't forget to allow 10% for waste and to allow for any margin of error as staircases can be tricky.

Ensure you have the right tools for the job



Like with measuring, getting the right kit to fit your carpet is another important consideration. Many of the tools you may already have in your toolbox and most DIY outlets will sell everything else. Tools you might need include:

- Knee pads
- Tape measure

- Pencil
- Masking tape
- Hammer or nail gun
- 19mm & 10mm nails
- 3mm hardboard sheets
- Pipe and cable detector
- Gloves
- Hack saw
- Carpet tape
- Craft or Stanley knife
- Carpet stretcher
- Carpet tucker
- Drill
- Vacuum cleaner

Preparing your sub-floor & removing your old flooring



Before you start fitting your new carpet you must prepare your sub-floor. If the sub-floor is not properly prepared it will affect the way that your carpet lies and potentially ruin the overall finish. Below we discuss the key things that you should consider when preparing your sub-floor for carpet.

Sub-floor preparation for carpet

- To protect your knees and for your comfort always wear knee pads when working on flooring.
- If a lot of your floorboards are damaged, it's less costly and much easier to pull them all up and start again. Use fit tongue-and-groove chipboard flooring panels which will give you a great base for your final flooring.
- 3mm hardboard sheets are best to use to level your boarded floor plus they will help to reduce any draughts coming from below. Always make sure the boards have been conditioned beforehand by spraying them with water over the textured side and then stacking in the room in which they are going to be used back to back. Leave them for at least 48 hours and as they dry they'll retract back. This reduces the risk of the boards expanding after they've been fitted.

- Prepare your boards by ensuring no nails are sticking out above the surface and nailing down any boards that are loose. You can sand down any boards that are at a higher level than the rest to level it up.



- Make sure you use nails that are not too long as there is a risk of piercing through the floorboard into pipes or cables. 19mm nails should be about right.
- Space the nails about 150mm apart around the edges but in the centre 225mm apart. It's a good idea to start in the centre of one edge and work across the board to the other side.
- Lay the hardboard sheets texture-side up as you'll need something for any adhesive to stick to. Start in a corner of the room and set the nails about 13mm in from the edges of the sheet in a pyramid pattern. It's a good idea to use something as a spacer like a piece of wood.
- Push the sheets together and nail the edges where the sheets meet first. When you finish the first row of boards the last one will need to be cut to size.
- Use this off-cut from the last sheet in the first row to start the second row and carry on in the same way. This reduces waste and also helps by ensuring the joints are staggered.

Removing your old floor

Before fitting your new carpet its likely that you will need to remove your old flooring alongside preparing the sub-floor underneath. At Alexanders we make fitting a new floor easy at every step. Alongside our professional Which? approved fitting service, we also offer uplift and disposal. We can uplift your old flooring and dispose of it for you to ensure that you experience a hassle-free fit.

How to fit carpet grippers & underlay



Carpet grippers

Available in lengths of 1.52m, carpet gripper comes pre-nailed to provide a firm grip on your floors and prevent new carpets losing tension once laid. These gripper rods are thick and rigid to provide an ultra-strong grip and keep the carpet taught so you won't get any lumps and bumps. Simple to use,

carpet gripper can be cut to size if needed which can sometimes speed up installation, and can be used on concrete or wooden floors.

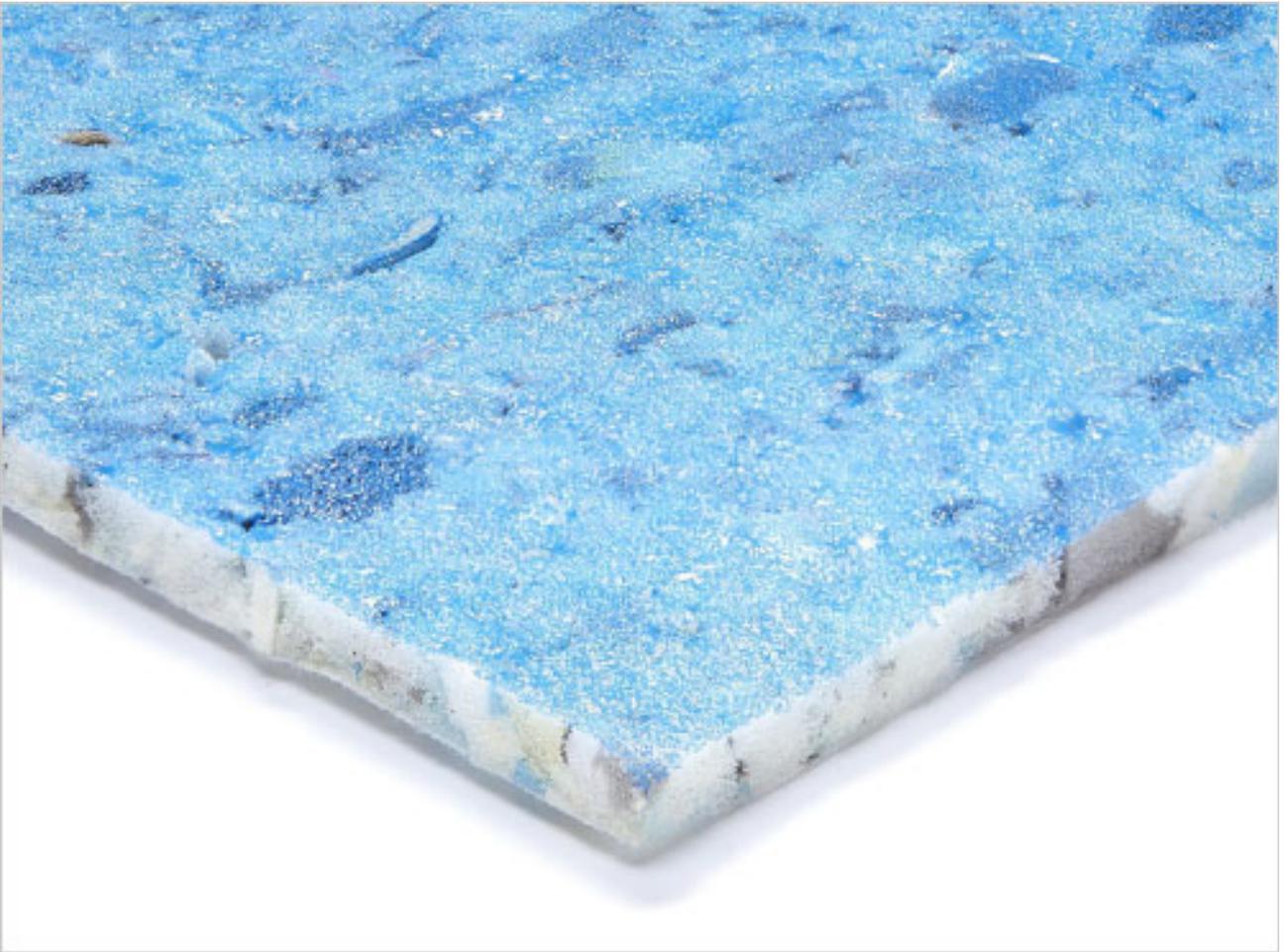
Before you start it is important to locate any hidden wires or pipes using a pipe and wire detector. If you find a pipe or wire mark the spot in these areas and use gripper adhesive instead of nails. Make sure you wear gloves when handling gripper as the pins are very sharp. Gripper should be fitted all around the edge of your room except across door thresholds. Measure between the door frame and then cut the trim with a hack saw.

Wooden floors

- For wooden floors use 10mm nails or screws.
- Place the gripper rods 2/3 of the carpet thickness away from the skirting boards with the pins pointing towards the skirting boards.
- Use a hacksaw to cut the gripper to size. Carpet gripper comes with nails or screws already in situ so hammer in the nails or screw in the screws.

Concrete floors

- If the floor is concreted, use Gripfill and leave to dry.
- Follow the above instructions but use a bead of Gripfill under the gripper rods. This will help to maintain the integrity of the grippers if the nails work loose over time.



Handy hint for fitting gripper in awkward areas

For areas that are harder to reach (like under radiators) it's best to move the nails. Re-position the nails closer to the edge of the gripper and hold them in place with a long bar. As you can hit this with your hammer further back, you won't risk damaging your radiator.

Carpet underlay

It's worth investing in a good underlay as it's really an integral element that shapes how flooring feels, wears and looks and will ensure your carpet has a long life. Underlay adds a level of cushioning underneath your carpet, making it more comfortable underfoot. It can also help to significantly reduce your energy bills as it insulates the room by trapping heat under your floor.

- Lay the underlay loosely in the space, ensuring the rubber side is facing down.
- Using a craft or Stanley knife cut it so that the underlay is at the same level as the grippers.

- Butt the edges together and join them with tape, ensuring that the edges do not overlap and that the underlay is flat and level.

How to fit carpet



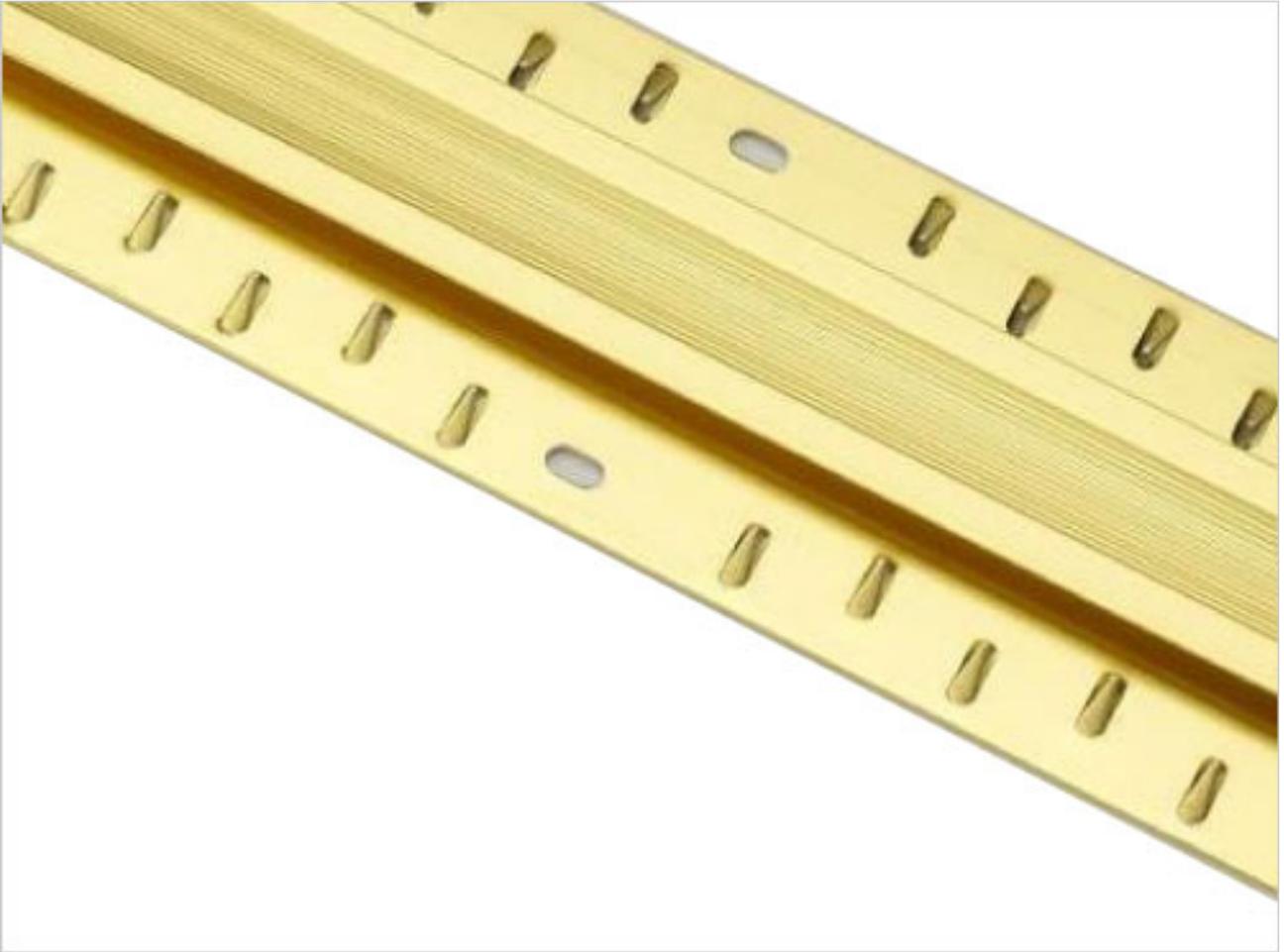
How you store your carpet prior to fitting is really important. It will need to remain in a roll as this makes it easier when it comes to laying it flat and stretching it. Also, bear in mind that carpet is very heavy so, unless you are carpeting a small area, it's a good idea to have someone assisting you with carrying and positioning it.

Use a carpet stretcher (sometimes called a knee kicker) to stretch carpet onto the gripper. This tool has a flat plate with teeth at one end and a padded cushion at the other. The teeth grip the carpet while whoever fits the carpet pushes the padded end with their knee.

- Lay your carpet loosely in position then stand in one corner with a foot underneath the carpet. Use the other foot to smooth the carpet into place and, leaving around 50-75mm excess on every edge, cut the carpet to size (if necessary).

- Cut this excess vertically above the corners and trim the overlapping triangles.
- Starting from the longest wall and working your way backwards, begin fitting the carpet. Use a carpet tucker to make a firm crease in the carpet along the skirting board. This will give you a fold line.
- Cut along the edge, around 5mm higher than the carpet surface, with a sharp knife. Hold the carpet flat to the floor whilst you cut.
- Take the carpet stretcher and place it around 25mm from the skirting, teeth facing down. Push the padded end firmly with your knee so the carpet hooks onto the gripper on either side of the corner. Using the carpet tucker, push the excess carpet down between the skirting and the gripper. Repeat this process until the first wall is complete, then work along the two adjacent walls and finally the opposite one.
- To fit carpet around tricky shapes such as door frames, cut down the edge vertically in several places, then trim it so it's flush. For a pipe, cut straight from the carpet edge to the centre of the pipe then press the carpet around it. Trim it by running the knife round the base at a 45 degrees angle until the carpet lies flat.
- For fitting carpet across a doorway, cut it so it is in line with the next room's flooring. You will then need to then fit a door bar (see below) making sure the carpet edge is firmly in place underneath it.

Fitting a door bar & aftercare



Fitting a door bar

Door bars serve to join different flooring types across door thresholds neatly. Firstly make sure you have the right door bar as there are various choices, depending on your flooring types and heights.

- The correct position for a door bar is centrally across the threshold so it cannot be seen on either side when the door is closed. Once you have positioned your door bar centrally like this, cut the bar to the right length with a hack saw.
- Ensure there are no pipes or cables under the floor by using a pipe and wire detector.
- For a concrete floor drill the holes with a power drill using a masonry bit and insert wall plugs. You can then fit your door bar.
- For a wooden floor make pilot holes first to ensure you have the right positioning then screw the door bar to the floor.



In the days after fitting...

You may find that your carpets sheds some fibres which is perfectly normal. Regular vacuuming, daily if possible during the first few weeks, will solve this issue. A vacuum cleaner fitted with a beater bar and/or brushes is recommended for cut pile carpets and one without a beater bar or brushes is best for loop pile carpets.

Once the carpet is fitted, there may be a slight odour which may be caused by the carpet or the underlay. Ideally, the room should be ventilated by opening windows and doors and the odour will normally disappear within a few days.

Which? Trusted Traders - Alexanders Approved Fitters



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Their tough endorsement checks include:

1. A financial health check
2. References Interview and assessment
3. Interview and assessment
4. Code of Conduct agreement

So, just like the Which? Best Buy awards, as Which? Trusted Traders, we can proudly use the icon to highlight that our fitters have been endorsed. For more information on the Which? Trusted

Trader scheme, visit their Website



What to expect on the day of fitting

We guarantee that you receive the perfect flooring finish without any hassle, so you can relax while we take care of everything. By choosing to have your new flooring fitted professionally by us you'll be able to enjoy it without the hassle.

You can upgrade your fitting service for a small fee and our fitters will also:

- Uplift & Dispose of your old flooring
- Move additional items of furniture
- Take away any new waste and trimmings. We can turn them into

runners, doormats or even rugs if you'd prefer.

- Remove, trim and refit any doors if necessary