

Finding the perfect rug for any room starts with an understanding of the materials and constructions that are used to make area rugs today.



The type of yarn that is used in making an area rug contributes to both the ambience it creates as well the practical sensibilities inherent in one rug vs. another for a particular room. For example, a fine, hand-knotted wool rug, embellished in vibrantly colored designs and silky-soft textures is a striking focal point in room decor – but you won't want to use this rug where it will be in constant contact with dirty shoes!

In this case, a power-loomed rug, made using soft, supple synthetic yarns, is a stylish and durable alternative. These rugs add brilliant color and textures that hold up beautifully even in busier areas of the home, e.g. the family room, game rooms and kids' playrooms and bedrooms.

To get the most satisfaction and enjoyment from an area rug, familiarize yourself with the attributes associated with the different materials and constructions that are used in making them. You'll find that this knowledge will help immeasurably in choosing a rug that is ideally suited for the look you want to create, the type of room you are decorating, and your budget.

[Find Safavieh area rugs sorted by material:](#)

WOOL RUGS

Wool is used to make the finest hand-knotted antique rugs as well as more practical hand-tufted and hand-hooked area rugs. Pure wool yarns are soft and naturally stain-resistance due to the lanolin that is found in sheep wool. The finest wool yarns will have more lanolin than other grades and will tend to shed much less, if at all. Some examples of Safavieh wool rugs are:



Suzani

SZN102A

Hand Hooked



Tibetan

TB055C

Hand Knotted



[Blossom](#)

[BLM420B](#)

[Hand Tufted](#)

COTTON RUGS

Cotton yarn is often used in making flat weave rugs as well as in blends with other materials such as wool. Cotton is soft underfoot and takes well to dyes, which results in vibrantly colored designs. However, the naturally absorbent qualities of cotton can also cause stains to set more quickly, so consider this when choosing where you'll place a cotton area rug in your home. Some examples of Safavieh cotton rugs are:



[Nantucket](#)

[NAN214A](#)



[Rag Rug](#)

[RAR126A](#)



[Montauk](#)

[MTK121C](#)

SYNTHETIC RUGS

Synthetic yarns are commonly used in the construction of area rugs. Advancements in the quality and texture of synthetic yarns, such as polypropylene and polyester, have followed step-for-step with the remarkable progression of power loom technology.

Today, rug manufacturers are able to replicate the complexity of design, brilliant colors, and textural feel of handmade rugs, but in machine-made, synthetic yarn versions, all available at a moderate price point. These rugs are durable, beautifully designed, and available in a wide range of styles, including indoor/outdoor rugs, shags, traditional, contemporary and the trendiest new looks in transitional area rugs. Here a just a few examples of Safavieh synthetic yarn area rugs.



[Evoke](#)

[EVK224B](#)



[Glacier](#)

[GLA124B](#)



[California Shag](#)

[SG151-3737](#)

VISCOSE RUGS

Viscose, with its lustrous sheen and silky soft texture is a truly luxurious rug material. Also known as 'artificial silk', bamboo silk or rayon, 100 percent viscose fiber rugs make utterly elegant floor coverings that accentuate sophisticated décor in any style room from traditional to contemporary. These rugs are best placed in low traffic areas of the home to preserve the softness and shimmer of viscose yarns. These are examples of Safavieh viscose rugs:



[Mirage](#)

[MIR344W](#)



[Vintage](#)

[VTG113-2111](#)



[Persian Garden](#)

[PEG608D](#)

NATURAL FIBERS

Natural Fiber yarns are a sustainable rug making material sourced from biodegradable, organic plants; primarily jute, seagrass and sisal. Natural fiber area rugs are a “fashion-must” when it comes to enhancing the earthy, coastal or bohemian look of room decor. These rugs are also an ideal choice when the look calls for layering different textured rugs.

Layering Area Rugs



The distinctive, organic look of natural fiber rugs can often lead people to use them outdoors, however this is not recommended because excessive moisture can cause the fibers to breakdown over time.

SPECIALTY MATERIALS

Safavieh offers thousands of rugs, many made from unique, fashion-forward materials. Some examples are genuine cow hides, leather strip shags, natural sheep skin, synthetic grass, and recycled products such as plastic soda bottles.



[Sheep Skin](#)

[SHS121D](#)



[Leather Shag](#)

[LSG511N](#)



[Studio Leather](#)

[STL216A](#)

These exotic materials are excellent for adding a designer's touch and organic energy to swank room decor. Keep in mind that animal hides and real fur rugs need to be gently handled and require routine care to maintain their fine appearance.



The main constructions used in making area rugs are hand knotted, hand tufted, hand loomed, hand woven, power loomed, and natural hide.

HAND WOVEN

Flat weave rugs are one example of hand woven rugs. Natural fiber rugs are another. This construction is rooted in ancient rug weaving traditions, but today, has been adapted for more modern décor preferences. Hand woven area rugs are made by intertwining warp and weft yarns resulting in a flat rug with no pile. These are a few examples of Hand Woven Rugs by Safavieh.



[Kilim](#)

[KLM108D](#)



[Studio Leather](#)

[STL168A](#)



[Montauk](#)

[MTK123C](#)

HAND KNOTTED

Hand knotted rugs are revered for their painstaking detail and time-honored knotting techniques. Hand knotted rugs are made on a loom where warp threads build a foundation, onto which craftsmen tie each thread that is used to create the design, and texture of the rug.

Hand knotted rugs will vary in the density of knots per square inch, a key determinant in the value of a hand knotted rug, but all display the fine texture, clarity of design, and vivid colors associated with this timeless rug construction.



[Sultanbad](#)

[SUL1078A](#)



[Oushak](#)

[OSH561B](#)



[Leather Shag](#)

[LSG421C](#)

HAND TUFTED AND HAND HOOKED RUGS

These rugs are made by punching individual yarns through a fabric sheet using a device called a “tufting gun”. A second fabric, generally cotton or felt, is then attached to the underside of the rug to hold the yarns in place. Hand tufted rugs are generally thicker, with a dense pile that is soft and comforting underfoot. Here are some examples of hand tufted area rugs:



[Soho](#)

[SOH971A](#)



[Himalaya](#)

[HIM311E](#)



[Persian Legend](#)

[PL523A](#)

HAND LOOMED

This type of weaving uses a wooden vertical-shaft loom and is powered by hand or foot. Warp threads are manually passed through the weft threads and secured by a [heddle](#). Hand loomed rugs are made with detailed attention down to the painstaking process of shedding the rug. These are several hand loomed rugs by Safavieh.



[Tibet](#)

[TIB553A](#)



[Cedar Brook](#)

[CDR262A](#)



[Mirage](#)

[MIR755C](#)

POWER LOOMED

Power loomed rugs are produced by electronically driven machines. The detail of their patterns is controlled by computer. Power loomed construction is used today to create intricate graphic images, marvelous blends of color and textures. This technology-driven method of rug making is also used in creating new renditions of traditionally styled rugs at a much more moderate price point. These are just a few examples of power loomed rugs made by Safavieh.



[Courtyard](#)

[CY8522-36822](#)



[Artisan](#)

[ATN316A](#)



[Monaco](#)

[MNC222F](#)

NATURAL HIDE AND FURS

Safavieh makes these rugs with natural cow hides sourced from Pampas, Argentina and natural sheepskins from various snow-capped mountain regions around the world. The hides are processed without the use of dyes to give the backing a lasting, flexible quality.



[Sheep Skin](#)

[SHS121A](#)



[Cowhide](#)

[COW211B](#)



HOW TO TELL A HAND KNOTTED RUG FROM OTHER RUGS

Look on the back. A hand knotted rug displays the same pattern on the back as appears on the front. The underside of a hand tufted rug will almost always show the plain backing material that is used to hold the yarns in place.

Hand knotted rugs are heavier, more densely knotted, and soft underneath. They also boast an unmistakable clarity of design in the close cut wool and silk pile. Power loomed rugs also show the rug pattern on the underside of the rug, but it will not feel as soft nor will it be as densely woven as a hand knotted rug.

If you are unsure, hand knotted rugs can be folded in either direction (like a handkerchief) all others must be rolled.

HOW CAN I TELL THE QUALITY OF A HAND KNOTTED RUG?

The most important, but not the only, determinant of quality is the knot count. The higher the number of knots per square inch, the more precisely detailed the design, and the heavier the rug will feel.

Wool quality, design, luster and dye methods are also important factors when assessing the quality of a hand knotted rug.

Now that you have a basic idea of the rug construction and materials, check out [rug care and cleaning tips](#) to keep your rug looking as beautiful as the day you bought it.