

REAL SIMPLE



rugs

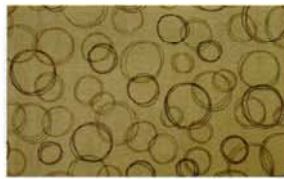
At some point in your life, you'll need a rug that can handle lots of traffic. At other times, you'll want one that can stop it.

TRADITIONAL



STAFFORDSHIRE STRIPE Toss this hand-loomed cotton rug in the machine when it gets dirty, or just turn it over if company drops by unexpectedly (it's reversible).
TO BUY: \$344, dashandalbert.com, 8 by 10 feet.

MODERN



ASHFORD PARK Sunlight can do a number on a rug. But this one won't need replacing anytime soon. It's made of Olefin, a strong synthetic fiber that resists fading.
TO BUY: \$599, shawfloors.com for locations, 7 1/4 by 10 1/4 feet.

ECLECTIC



HENLEY Hand woven in India, this well-priced wool flat-weave rug is reversible and has bold stripes to camouflage stains. So if someone spills coffee on it, no sweat.
TO BUY: \$599, roomandboard.com, 8 by 10 feet.

add an accent

Reinvigorate a large rug by placing a small one on top of or near it (those shown here are four by six feet). Try these reputable retailers.

1. Rugstudio.com has terrific clearances and an amazing selection, including the Monti Cloud 9 terra-cotta wool rug (\$525). 2. Abchome.com features everything from antique rugs to modern ones, including the Sabji wool rug (\$649). 3. Meridameridian.com is the best for made-to-order natural-fiber rugs, like the Boardwalk Braid jute rug (\$550). 4. Dashandalbert.com sells bright and cheery designs, like the Spinnaker striped cotton rug (\$95).

JUST STARTING OUT

GROWING YOUR FAMILY

READY TO INVEST



BAILEY This acrylic rug is one tough customer; it can live in busy areas of the house and still look brand-new. But its durability doesn't take away from the feel. It's surprisingly plush.
TO BUY: \$783, kavlaarace.com, 7 1/2 by 9 1/2 feet.



TOY POODLE These mix-and-match nylon floor tiles are removable, so don't worry if that ground-in Play-Doh won't come out. Just lift the tile and replace it.
TO BUY: \$14 a tile, flor.com, 19 1/2 inches square.



GRIMSBY If you are looking for a nice New Zealand wool rug but don't want to break the bank, this hand-tufted model is a bargain—and it can withstand lots of wear and tear to boot.
TO BUY: \$769, homedecorators.com, 8 by 10 feet.



VINTAGE PAISLEY Made of densely knotted sheared wool, it's hand distressed for an antique appearance. Guests will think it was handed down from generation to generation.
TO BUY: \$3,950, wshome.com, 8 by 10 feet.



SASHA INDIGO Hand knotted in Nepal, this wool rug by designer Thomas O'Brien features a delicate Moroccan-inspired chain motif that resembles fine jewelry.
TO BUY: \$5,469, Safavieh.com, 8 by 10 feet.



JEWELS IN SAND With a chocolate-colored base and a vibrant floral design, this shimmery rug made of hand-knotted Chinese silk and Tibetan wool is an absolute knockout.
TO BUY: \$12,000, emmagardnerdesign.com, 8 by 10 feet.

rug-shopping tips

- **Check the floor.** "People walk in and out of rug retailers and showrooms all day, so a sample rug that has been on the floor, rather than one that has been hanging up, will give a good sense of how well it stands up to foot traffic," says Johnson.
- **Inspect the edges.** "You shouldn't see any loose strings whatsoever," says Johnson. "And curled edges are an indication of poor workmanship—and they will probably get worse over time."
- **Compare materials.** Cotton is generally inexpensive but stains easily, whereas "sea grass is stain-resistant," says Anne Carley,

Karastan's director of rug marketing. If you're willing to spend, long-staple (long-fiber) wool, she says, "is one of the most resilient materials. It has a memory, so it springs back after you move a chair or a sofa off it."

• **Know your wool.** One way to judge the quality of a wool rug, says Carley, is to "ask yourself whether it's lustrous or lifeless and dull. Fine wool has a natural sheen and seems to glow from within." Also, run your hand over it. "It should be very soft," she says. "If it feels rough, there may be bits of straw or fiber mixed in, which means the rug isn't the highest quality."

—Additional reporting by Allegra Muzzillo