

Ask Martha



How do I choose an area rug for my family room?

—Debrah Ayoub, via Instagram

The right choice adds depth and softens a space, inviting people to gather. Because it's a long-term investment, you should also factor in your furniture setup, says *Living* home editor Lorna Aragon. "If it's a large room that will be split into a couple of seating arrangements, a few small rugs can help define each one. If you want to unify the room, one large rug will do the trick." Consider these other details, and roll out a winner.

SIZE

To scale your rug to its setting, use your furniture as a guide. Lorna prefers that sofas and chairs at the edges have either all their legs on the rug, or just the front two. The first option is pricier (since you'll need a bigger piece), but it can also help anchor a wide-open space.

MATERIAL

If you have young kids or pets, or entertain often, avoid tough-to-clean shag options in favor of an acrylic-blend performance rug. Fine wool and silk designs better suit low-traffic areas.

COLOR

Neutral beige and gray are timeless, Lorna says. Or select a more saturated shade from something already in the room—say, a forest-green pillow. The same goes for patterns: Pick one featuring an existing color in your décor.