

## **Carpet Fibers Make All the Difference**

### **By Dan Cochrane**

Perhaps your policy for purchasing carpet for your apartments can best be described by the following quote, “The chance of the bread falling with the buttered side down is directly proportional to the cost of the carpet.”

Indeed, many property managers and owners are convinced that their tenants are going to ruin whatever carpet he or she chooses. So they continue to select very inexpensive nylon carpet, and replace the carpet after every tenant. Does the choice of carpet fiber make a difference?

### **Fiber, Fiber, Fiber**

There are four factors generally used to distinguish one carpet’s quality from another. Its fiber, its face-weight or the total amount of yarn used, its density or how tightly packed the tufts of yarn are sown together and finally its twist-rate, the number of turns of each individual tuft of yarn. All of these factors must be taken into consideration as they all play a vital role in determining how durable a carpet will be. However, it’s the carpet’s fiber that plays the largest role in determining how stain resistant rental grade carpet will be.

How do the various fibers compare in offering you the best combination of durability *and* stain resistance?

**Nylon:** Nylon has a well-deserved reputation as one of the most durable carpet fibers. Unfortunately, it soaks up stains. Many of the stain treatments applied to Nylon carpet do a great job in protecting the yarn from permanent stains. But these stain treatments are designed for carpet that will receive reasonable care, including immediate attention to spills. Apartment grade nylon carpets generally receive neither the best of stain treatments nor the care needed to avoid permanent stains. Permanent stains such as bleach, wine, Kool-Aid, and coffee are often the end result. So the cycle of replacement due to permanent stains continues, because Nylon leaves the carpet vulnerable to tenant damage.

**Polyester:** Polyester enjoys the position as one of the most popular choices for rental grade carpet. Its stain resistance is permanent. Quite often stains that would permanently discolor a Nylon carpet can be clean right out of Polyester, including wine and coffee. Additionally, carpets manufactured from Polyester carpets are less expensive than Nylon carpets.

However, Polyester carpet is inherently less durable than Nylon. Many apartment owners choose Polyester carpet of greater weight, density and twist to offset this weakness, and still spend less than they would have on Nylon carpet. The end result is a better-looking carpet with permanent stain protection that is almost as durable as Nylon at no additional cost.

**Corterra:** Corterra fiber may be one that you are unfamiliar with, but it is quickly changing the Apartment Carpet market. Corterra is Shell Chemical’s trade name for their

polyethylene terephthalate (PTT) polymers from which the Corterra fiber is derived. Du Pont's trade name for the same polymer is called Sonora. The fiber is the most durable and stain resistant combination available today.

With stain protection similar to that of Polyester and durability that of Nylon, Corterra offers apartment owners the best that the carpet industry has to offer with no compromise in stain resistance or durability. Like Polyester, wine and coffee stains can be cleaned from carpets made from Corterra even if the stains have been allowed to dry. The durability, resiliency and cost are similar to that of Nylon. Because of Corterra's stain resistance and durability it has won over large Property Management Companies as their carpet of choice.

It seems that in the apartment market, the bread has a way of always falling with the "battered side down." Yet, today's choices in carpet make it easier than ever to protect oneself from the worst of tenant damage.

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