

Cozy Toes in the Kitchen and Bath

By E. T. Robbins

There's nothing worse than waking up on a chilly morning and smacking your bare feet against a cold, hard floor in the kitchen or bathroom. With kids tracking in dirt and pet fur flying about (not to mention the crumbs), are rugs appropriate for these high traffic areas? Local experts offer their opinions.

Dogs, Cats, and Kids - Oh My!

Do you have to sacrifice style because you have kids or pets? Nope. You just need to know what works. For the kids' bathroom, Joanne Lucas, a decorator with Lynne Greene Interiors (www.lynnegreeneinteriors.com) in Burlington, says bright colors and busy patterns in rugs work well because they invite the little ones in while disguising things like toothpaste stains.

Work with an interior decorator to purchase a rug (some will even go shopping with you) or check out the offerings from places like Linens 'n Things (www.LnT.com) or Bed, Bath, & Beyond (www.bedbathbeyond.com). From Linen 'N Things' simple 17" x 24" Pegasus Bath Rugs (\$9.99) to Bed, Bath, and Beyond's 20" x 30" cat or dog rugs (\$24.99), you'll find plenty of sturdy, machine washable options. Robin Fincke of Robin Fincke Residential Interiors (www.robinfincke.com) in Natick says that "machine washable" is the operative term.

"Kids' bathrooms tend to get messy fast. Practical is as important as anything else...I have no objection to buying a standard bathmat."

For the master bath, consider the traffic and the number (and cleanliness) of the occupants.

While you may opt for a more "grown-up" look, you should still consider sturdy, machine washable rugs. You can be a little more creative in guest bathrooms since they're not used as much.

Lucas offers this one caveat: don't sacrifice safety for style in any bathroom. Make sure the rugs have rubber backings.

Ideas for the kitchen

What's the look you're striving for? Lucas says, "Right now the real popular trend is oriental carpeting...the reason why is that a lot of people are going towards natural materials for under the oriental rugs."

Wood, stone, and granite are popular floor options and oriental rugs are the perfect complement. Lucas says prices for oriental carpeting range from \$25.99 to \$2500, and that it's important to match your budget to the quality and look of the kitchen.

Make sure you purchase your oriental rug from a reputable dealer. Arthur T. Gregorian, Inc. in Newton Lower Falls, Landry & Arcari of Salem and Boston, and Koko Boodakian & Sons in Winchester are all good options.

Fincke recommends indoor/outdoor carpeting for food prep areas. "It's great cushioning under your feet, there are some very nice textures, and really saturated colors. So you can have something that's actually very nice looking, very supportive, and very easy to clean."

For the rest of the kitchen, Fincke says it's important to consider the whole house. "Whatever décor you've got going on elsewhere, you should carry into the kitchen and make it part of your home."

An option that's "timeless," but new to many homeowners is the hand painted floorcloth. Nancy Walk and Frances Barrineau are owners of Walk On Art Floorcloths (www.walkonart.tk) in Boxford.

Barrineau says, "Floorcloths have been around since the 1700's.

They were used in Colonial America...in homes where people did not have the money to buy the woven rugs, or they were used under woven rugs for extra insulation during the winter...They were painted on heavy canvas that you'd use on a sail called 'oil'd' cloths."

Floorcloths are practical too. Walk says, "The biggest feature is that you can spill anything on them and because they're urethaned pieces of canvas, they just wipe right up. Once you make the investment, you get a rug that doesn't need any dry cleaning and literally lasts for decades."

Walk and Barrineau charge \$22 per square foot for smaller, off-the-shelf rugs and \$24 per square foot for the larger custom rugs. •

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Photos courtesy of Walk On Art Floorcloths