

VANCOUVER FLOOR INSTALLERS

Carpet & Carpet Tiles

Broadloom carpet, modular carpet tiles, runners, and padding selection for bedrooms, basements, and living spaces in Vancouver-area homes

11 Expert Answers from Floor IQ

vancouverfloorinstallers.com/construction-brain

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What type of carpet is best for a Vancouver basement bedroom — nylon, polyester, or olefin?

Nylon is the best overall carpet fibre for a Vancouver basement bedroom, offering the strongest combination of durability, resilience, stain resistance, and performance in below-grade moisture conditions. That said, polyester has closed the gap significantly in recent years and offers a compelling value alternative — while olefin (polypropylene) should generally be avoided for bedrooms due to its tendency to crush and mat.

Nylon carpet is the premium synthetic fibre and the professional recommendation for basements in Metro Vancouver's damp climate. Its key advantage is resilience — nylon fibres bounce back after compression from foot traffic and furniture better than any other synthetic. In a basement bedroom that doubles as a guest room or home office, this means the carpet maintains its appearance years longer. Nylon is also the most stain-resistant fibre when treated with a built-in stain protector (look for brands like Mohawk SmartStrand or Shaw Anso nylon with built-in protection). Critically for Vancouver basements, **nylon handles moisture better than polyester** — it absorbs less water and dries faster, reducing the risk of musty odours in a below-grade environment where humidity levels can run higher than main-floor rooms. Expect to pay **\$4-\$9 per square foot installed** (carpet, underpad, and labour) for a quality nylon carpet in a Vancouver basement bedroom.

Polyester carpet has improved dramatically and now represents the best value for basement bedrooms. Modern polyester — especially PET (recycled plastic bottles) polyester — offers excellent stain resistance that is actually inherent to the fibre rather than applied as a topical treatment. This means the stain resistance never wears off. Polyester also comes in softer, more luxurious textures than nylon at a lower price point. The tradeoff is durability: **polyester crushes and mats more readily than nylon** under heavy foot traffic, and once it mats, it doesn't bounce back. For a basement bedroom that sees moderate use — not a main hallway or family room — this is an acceptable compromise, especially at **\$3-\$6 per square foot installed**. If budget is the primary concern, polyester delivers a soft, attractive floor at 25-35% less than comparable nylon.

Olefin (polypropylene) is not recommended for a basement bedroom. While olefin is inherently moisture-resistant and won't grow mould on its own — which sounds perfect for a Vancouver basement — its abysmal crush resistance makes it a poor bedroom choice. Olefin fibres flatten permanently under furniture legs and regular foot traffic, leaving visible wear paths and indentations that cannot be restored. Olefin carpet is best suited for outdoor applications, low-expectation utility rooms, or commercial settings where it will be replaced frequently. At **\$2-\$4 per square foot installed**, it's the cheapest option but a false economy in a bedroom you want to look good for years.

Basement-Specific Considerations for Metro Vancouver

Regardless of fibre type, the **carpet pad is equally important in a Vancouver basement**. Use a synthetic, closed-cell foam pad or a rubber waffle pad — never a jute or felt pad below grade. Jute absorbs moisture, harbours mould, and develops odours in Vancouver's damp climate. A quality synthetic pad rated for below-grade use costs **\$0.75-\$2.00 per square foot** and is non-negotiable.

Moisture testing before carpet installation is essential. Tape a 2x2-foot piece of plastic sheeting to the concrete floor, seal the edges, and leave it for 48-72 hours. If moisture condensation appears under the plastic, you have a vapour transmission issue that must be addressed before any carpet goes down. Options include applying a moisture-mitigating primer to the concrete, installing a dimple mat or Delta-FL membrane, or using a floating subfloor system like DRCore panels. These preparations add **\$2-\$5 per square foot** but protect your carpet investment from moisture damage.

Many Vancouver basements also serve as secondary suites or rental units, and a carpet that performs well in consistently occupied spaces requires the nylon-grade durability. For a typical basement bedroom of 120-150 square feet, budget **\$500-\$1,350 for nylon** or **\$360-\$900 for polyester**, including pad and professional installation.

If you'd like help finding a carpet installer experienced with Vancouver basement projects, Vancouver Floor Installers can connect you with qualified professionals for a free estimate.

Q2

Can I install carpet in a Vancouver basement without mould problems given the moisture levels?

Yes, you can install carpet in a Vancouver basement without mould problems — but only if you address moisture control before the carpet goes down. The carpet itself isn't the problem. The problem is installing carpet over a concrete slab that's transmitting moisture in a climate that delivers over 1,200mm of rainfall annually and keeps outdoor humidity between 60-80% for most of the year. Get the moisture management right, and basement carpet performs beautifully. Skip it, and you're creating an expensive mould farm.

The first step — before you even shop for carpet — is **testing your basement concrete for moisture**. The simplest DIY test is the plastic sheet method: tape a 2x2-foot piece of clear polyethylene sheeting flat against the concrete floor, seal all edges with tape, and leave it for 72 hours. If moisture droplets form under the plastic or the concrete darkens, you have active vapour transmission that must be addressed. For a more precise measurement, a professional calcium chloride test should read below 3 lbs per 1,000 square feet per 24 hours, or a relative humidity probe test should read below 75% RH. In Metro Vancouver, where the water table is high and rain is relentless from October through March, many basements — especially in older homes throughout East Vancouver,

New Westminster, Burnaby, and Surrey — show some degree of moisture transmission even when they appear dry on the surface.

If moisture is present, you have several proven solutions before carpet installation. **A dimple membrane system** (such as Delta-FL or DMX 1-Step) is the most popular and effective approach in Metro Vancouver basements. These interlocking plastic panels create a raised air gap between the concrete and the carpet, allowing any moisture that migrates through the slab to evaporate harmlessly rather than soaking into the carpet pad. Dimple membrane costs approximately **\$1.50-\$3.00 per square foot** and installs quickly. **DRIcore subfloor panels** — engineered OSB tiles with a built-in moisture barrier — provide a similar vapour break plus a warmer, more rigid surface. DRIcore runs **\$3-\$5 per square foot** but adds noticeable warmth and comfort underfoot. Both systems are well-suited to Vancouver's conditions.

The **carpet pad selection is critical** and is where many basement installations go wrong. **Never use a jute-backed or felt carpet pad in a below-grade installation.** Jute is organic — it absorbs moisture, breeds mould, and develops a musty smell that permeates the entire basement. Instead, use a **closed-cell synthetic foam pad or a rubber waffle pad** specifically rated for below-grade use. These pads resist moisture absorption, dry quickly if exposed to minor dampness, and don't support mould growth. Budget **\$0.75-\$2.00 per square foot** for a quality basement-grade pad.

For the carpet itself, choose **100% synthetic fibres — nylon or polyester.** Both are inherently resistant to mould growth because they're non-organic materials that don't provide food for mould spores. Nylon is the more durable and resilient choice at **\$4-\$9 per square foot installed**, while polyester offers a softer feel at a lower cost of **\$3-\$6 per square foot installed.** Avoid wool carpet in basements — wool is an organic fibre that absorbs moisture and supports mould growth in humid conditions. Also avoid olefin for bedrooms and living areas due to its poor crush resistance, though it's acceptable for low-traffic basement utility rooms.

Ongoing moisture management matters as much as installation. Run a dehumidifier in your Vancouver basement during the wet season (October through March) to keep indoor relative humidity below 50%. Ensure your home's perimeter drainage and gutters are functioning properly — clogged gutters and poor grading are the leading causes of basement moisture in Metro Vancouver. If your basement has a sump pump, test it annually before the rainy season. These maintenance habits protect not just your carpet but your entire basement finishing investment.

For a typical Vancouver basement of 400-600 square feet, budget approximately **\$2,500-\$6,000 for carpet installation** including moisture management (dimple membrane or subfloor panels), synthetic pad, quality nylon or polyester carpet, and professional installation. That investment gives you a warm, comfortable, mould-free basement floor that performs well for 10-15 years.

Want to connect with a basement flooring specialist? Vancouver Floor Installers can match you with experienced professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's unique below-grade challenges.

What carpet pile height and density works best for stairs in a busy Vancouver family home?

A low to medium pile height of 1/2 inch to 3/4 inch with high density is the ideal combination for stairs in a busy Vancouver family home. This sweet spot gives you durability that withstands heavy daily traffic, a neat appearance that doesn't show wear paths quickly, and — critically for stairs — a firm surface that maintains traction and doesn't create a tripping hazard.

Pile height is the single most important factor for stair carpet, and shorter is better. **Carpet taller than 3/4 inch creates real safety concerns on stairs** — long fibres fold over at the stair nose (the front edge of each tread), compress unevenly underfoot, and reduce the feeling of secure footing. In a household with kids running up and down, elderly family members, or anyone carrying laundry baskets and groceries, a plush high-pile carpet on stairs is a genuine fall risk. The firm, stable feel of a short, dense carpet is far safer and more comfortable on stairs than a soft, deep pile that shifts under your weight.

Pile density — measured as the weight of fibre per unit of surface area — determines how well the carpet resists crushing, matting, and visible wear. On stairs, every step lands on approximately the same spot on each tread, creating concentrated wear that tests even the best carpet. **A face weight of 35-50 ounces per square yard** with tight twist and high stitch count delivers the density needed for stair durability. You can gauge density by pressing your thumb into the carpet sample — if you can easily feel the backing through the pile, the density is too low for stairs.

For fibre type, **nylon is the clear winner for stair carpet in a busy household.** Nylon's superior resilience means the fibres bounce back after thousands of compressions rather than flattening permanently. Stair carpet takes more abuse per square foot than any other carpet in the home — it's not just foot traffic but also dragged objects, pet claws, and the constant flexing over stair noses. Nylon handles all of this better than polyester, which mats permanently under concentrated use. Budget **\$5-\$10 per square foot installed** for a quality nylon stair carpet with good density — this is not the place to economize.

The best carpet styles for stairs are **loop pile (Berber), cut-loop, or tight-twist frieze** in a short pile height. Traditional **loop pile Berber** with a level loop construction is extremely durable and hides footprints and vacuum marks, but it can snag if you have pets with claws that catch individual loops. **Cut-loop patterns** offer visual texture that disguises wear effectively. **Tight-twist frieze** (also called trackless carpet) has kinked fibres that resist showing footprints and vacuum lines — ideal for high-visibility stairs in the main living area. Avoid **plush or saxony** styles on stairs — their smooth, uniform surface shows every footprint and wear mark, and the longer pile crushes at the stair nose within months.

Carpet pad for stairs requires special attention. Use a thin, dense pad — **no thicker than 3/8 inch with a density of at least 8 pounds per cubic foot.** A thick, squishy pad feels luxurious in a bedroom but creates an unstable surface on stairs that shifts under your feet. Many professional installers use a specific stair pad or rebond pad rated for stair use. The pad must be individually cut and fitted to each tread and riser — never wrap a continuous piece of pad around the stair nose, as it bunches and creates lumps.

Professional installation is essential for stair carpet. Stairs are the most labour-intensive carpet installation in any home — each tread and riser is individually measured, cut, and stretched over tackless strips at both the nose and the crotch (where the tread meets the riser). Poor installation shows immediately as wrinkles, bunching at the nose, or loose edges that peel up. In Metro Vancouver, expect to pay **\$15-\$30 per step** for professional stair carpet installation, or roughly **\$200-\$450 for a standard 13-step staircase** (labour only, carpet and pad separate). A full staircase with quality nylon carpet, pad, and professional installation typically runs **\$500-\$1,200** depending on staircase width and carpet selection.

One final consideration for Vancouver homes: stairs are high-traffic transition zones where wet shoes from the rain track moisture and dirt. A darker carpet colour or a flecked/multicolour pattern hides soil far better than solid light colours. Many Vancouver families choose a medium-toned grey, brown, or mixed-tone pattern for stairs specifically because it stays looking clean between vacuuming sessions during the relentlessly muddy rainy season.

If you're ready to carpet your stairs, Vancouver Floor Installers can connect you with experienced installers who specialize in staircase work across Metro Vancouver.

How often should carpet be replaced in a Vancouver home with pets and high humidity?

In a Metro Vancouver home with pets, you should plan to replace carpet every 5 to 8 years — roughly half the lifespan you'd expect in a drier climate without animals. Vancouver's persistent humidity, which typically sits between 40% and 60% indoors, creates conditions where pet accidents, tracked-in rainwater, and general moisture penetrate carpet fibres and padding more deeply than in drier regions, accelerating both odour development and fibre breakdown.

The biggest factor isn't actually the carpet itself — it's the **carpet padding underneath**. Pet urine and moisture from Vancouver's rainy season seep through carpet fibres and saturate the underpad, where they become trapped. Even professional steam cleaning can't fully extract moisture and odour from a compromised pad. If you're noticing persistent pet odours despite regular cleaning, the padding is almost certainly the culprit. In many cases, replacing just the padding and thoroughly cleaning the subfloor can extend carpet life by a couple of years, but once odour has reached the subfloor itself, full replacement is the only real solution.

Material choice matters significantly for longevity with pets. Nylon carpet (such as brands using Type 6,6 nylon) is the most durable and stain-resistant option for pet owners — it resists crushing, bounces back from foot traffic, and responds well to spot cleaning. Solution-dyed nylon offers even better stain resistance because the colour goes all the way through the fibre rather than being applied to the surface. Polyester (PET) carpet is softer and more affordable at **\$3 to \$7 per square foot installed**, but it mats and crushes faster under heavy traffic and doesn't release pet hair as easily. For a pet-friendly nylon carpet with quality padding, expect to pay **\$6 to \$12 per square foot installed** in the Metro Vancouver market.

There are several signs that tell you it's time to replace rather than clean. **Persistent odours that return after cleaning**, visible matting and crushing that doesn't recover with vacuuming, staining that professional cleaning can't remove, and fraying or unravelling at seams and edges all indicate end-of-life. In ground-floor Vancouver homes — especially those built on crawl spaces common in East Vancouver, Mount Pleasant, and New Westminster — watch for a musty smell that suggests moisture is migrating up through the subfloor into the carpet system.

To maximize the years between replacements, vacuum at least twice a week with a HEPA-filter vacuum, address pet accidents immediately by blotting and treating the area with an enzyme-based cleaner, and schedule professional hot-water extraction cleaning every 12 to 18 months. Use **moisture-resistant synthetic padding** rather than traditional jute or fibre pads — synthetic pads resist mildew and don't absorb pet odours as readily, which is especially important in Vancouver's humid climate. A good synthetic pad rated at 6 to 8 pounds density will cost about **\$0.50 to \$1.50 per square foot** more than basic padding but is well worth the investment.

If you're tired of the replacement cycle, consider switching high-traffic and pet-heavy areas to **SPC vinyl plank flooring**, which is 100% waterproof and handles pet accidents without any absorption — a popular swap for Vancouver pet owners. Vancouver Floor Installers can match you with a local contractor to assess your current carpet condition and provide a free estimate on replacement or alternative flooring options.

Q5

Are carpet tiles a practical option for a home office in my Vancouver condo?

Carpet tiles are an excellent and highly practical choice for a home office in a Vancouver condo, offering several advantages that are particularly relevant to strata living. They deliver solid acoustic performance, easy installation, and the ability to replace individual tiles if one gets stained or damaged — something broadloom carpet can't match.

The acoustic benefit alone makes carpet tiles worth serious consideration in a condo environment. Most Metro Vancouver strata corporations require minimum **STC 55 and IIC 55 ratings** for any flooring alteration, and carpet tiles with appropriate backing inherently meet or exceed these thresholds. This means your strata alteration approval process is typically smoother with carpet tiles than with hard flooring options like laminate or vinyl plank, which require additional acoustic underlayment to meet the same ratings. Many strata councils in buildings across Burnaby, Richmond, and downtown Vancouver actually prefer carpet tile installations because they minimize noise complaints from neighbours below.

For a home office specifically, carpet tiles make practical sense for several reasons. They absorb sound from your chair rolling, phone calls, and general movement — important if you're on video calls regularly. They're warm underfoot during Vancouver's cool, damp months from October through March. And the modular design means you can create visual zones within your office space, using different colours or patterns to define your desk area versus a reading nook or meeting space. Standard carpet tiles come in **50cm x 50cm (roughly 20" x 20")** squares, though plank-style tiles are also available for a more contemporary look.

Cost-wise, carpet tiles for a home office run about **\$4 to \$10 per square foot installed** in Metro Vancouver, depending on the quality and brand. For a typical 100 to 150 square foot home office, you're looking at **\$400 to \$1,500 total**. Commercial-grade tiles from manufacturers like Interface, Shaw, or Milliken are more durable and stain-resistant than residential options and are worth the extra investment for a space that sees daily use. Many come with built-in cushion backing that eliminates the need for separate underpad.

Installation in a condo is straightforward and minimally disruptive. Carpet tiles can be installed using **peel-and-stick adhesive tabs or pressure-sensitive adhesive** rather than full-spread glue, which means no strong adhesive

fumes in your enclosed condo space and easy removal when you eventually move or want to change flooring. This is a genuine advantage in Vancouver's condo market, where many owners eventually sell or re-lease. A floating installation with adhesive tabs also means you don't need to worry about damaging the concrete subfloor underneath — important for maintaining your unit's resale flexibility.

One practical tip for Vancouver's climate: choose **nylon-fibre tiles with a moisture-resistant PVC or bitumen backing** rather than felt-backed tiles. In a ground-floor or below-grade condo unit, moisture can migrate through the concrete slab, and moisture-resistant backing prevents mildew development underneath the tiles. If your condo has in-floor radiant heating, carpet tiles work fine — just confirm the specific product is rated for heated subfloor applications, as the adhesive and backing need to tolerate the temperature range.

The only real downside is that carpet tiles show seams more visibly than broadloom carpet, which some homeowners find less appealing. Higher-quality tiles with tighter manufacturing tolerances and textured or patterned designs minimize this significantly. If you'd like help finding a flooring professional to measure your space and recommend the right product, Vancouver Floor Installers can connect you with experienced local installers at no cost.

Q6

What's the best carpet padding to prevent mildew in a ground-floor Vancouver home?

Closed-cell synthetic foam padding is the best choice for preventing mildew in a ground-floor Vancouver home, specifically because it does not absorb moisture the way traditional fibre or rebond pads do. In Metro Vancouver's marine climate — where annual rainfall exceeds 1,200mm and indoor humidity typically sits between 40% and 60% — ground-floor installations face persistent moisture migration through concrete slabs and from damp crawl spaces, making pad selection critically important.

The padding types you want to focus on fall into two categories: **closed-cell foam pads and rubber waffle pads**. Closed-cell foam pads are made from polyethylene or polypropylene with a sealed cell structure that physically cannot absorb water. Even if moisture reaches the pad from below, it won't wick into the material and won't support mould or mildew growth. These pads typically cost **\$0.75 to \$2.00 per square foot** in Metro Vancouver. Rubber waffle pads (sometimes called flat sponge rubber) are another excellent moisture-resistant option, running **\$1.00 to \$2.50 per square foot**, and they also provide superior cushioning and durability — they're the gold standard in commercial applications for good reason.

The pads you absolutely want to avoid in a ground-floor Vancouver installation are rebond (bonded urethane) and fibre pads. Rebond is the most common carpet padding on the market — it's the multicoloured foam you see in most homes — and while it's comfortable and affordable, it acts like a sponge when exposed to moisture. In a ground-floor home sitting on a concrete slab or over a crawl space, rebond absorbs moisture from below and creates the perfect environment for mildew growth, often without the homeowner realizing it until the musty smell becomes persistent. Fibre pads, including jute-backed options, are even worse for moisture-prone installations.

Beyond the Pad: A Complete Moisture Strategy

Choosing the right pad is essential, but it's only one layer of protection. For a ground-floor Vancouver home, you should also install a **6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier** directly on the concrete slab or plywood subfloor before laying the carpet pad. Overlap the seams by at least 6 inches and tape them with vapour barrier tape. This prevents moisture from the slab or crawl space from reaching the carpet system at all. If your home has a crawl space — common in older homes throughout East Vancouver, Kitsilano, New Westminister, and Burnaby — make sure the crawl space itself has a proper vapour barrier on the ground and adequate ventilation. Crawl space moisture is the number one hidden cause of carpet mildew in ground-floor Vancouver homes.

Moisture testing the subfloor before installation is a step many homeowners skip but shouldn't. A calcium chloride test should read below **3 pounds per 1,000 square feet over 24 hours**, and a relative humidity probe test should read below **75% RH**. If your readings are higher, you need to address the moisture source before installing any carpet — no pad, no matter how moisture-resistant, can compensate for an actively wet subfloor.

For the pad density, aim for **6 to 8 pound density and no more than 7/16-inch thickness** for residential use. Thicker, softer pads feel luxurious but they allow the carpet to flex more underfoot, which accelerates fibre wear and can cause seam separation. A firm, dense, moisture-resistant pad will outlast a thick, soft, moisture-absorbing pad every time — especially in Vancouver's climate.

Finally, consider pairing your moisture-resistant pad with a **synthetic-backed carpet** (polypropylene or synthetic latex backing) rather than a jute-backed carpet. Jute absorbs moisture and supports mould growth, effectively undermining your moisture-resistant padding investment. If you need guidance on the right pad and carpet combination for your ground-floor home, Vancouver Floor Installers can connect you with a local flooring professional who understands Metro Vancouver's moisture challenges for a free consultation.

How do I choose between loop pile and cut pile carpet for a Vancouver living room?

The choice between loop pile and cut pile carpet for your Vancouver living room comes down to how you use the space, who lives in your home, and what aesthetic you're after — both perform well in Metro Vancouver's climate, so this is more about lifestyle fit than moisture concerns.

Loop pile carpet (including Berber) is constructed with yarn loops that remain uncut, creating a tight, dense surface. It's exceptionally durable and resists crushing and matting in high-traffic areas, making it a strong choice for a living room that sees heavy daily use. The tight loop construction also hides footprints and vacuum marks, which keeps the room looking tidy between cleanings. Loop pile runs **\$4 to \$9 per square foot installed** in Metro Vancouver for a quality product with good padding. The main drawback is that pets with claws can snag loop pile — individual loops can pull and unravel if caught. If you have cats or dogs that scratch at the floor, this is a genuine concern worth factoring in.

Cut pile carpet has fibres that are sheared at the top, creating a softer, more plush surface. Within cut pile, you have several textures to choose from. **Plush (velvet)** has a smooth, even surface that feels luxurious but shows every footprint, vacuum line, and shade variation — beautiful in a formal room but high-maintenance in a busy household. **Frieze (also called twist)** has tightly twisted fibres that curl in different directions, hiding footprints and wear patterns far better than plush — this is the most popular cut pile choice for Vancouver living rooms because it balances comfort with practicality. **Textured cut pile** falls between plush and frieze, with a subtly varied surface that masks traffic patterns while still feeling soft underfoot. Cut pile typically costs **\$5 to \$12 per square foot installed**, with frieze and textured options at the lower-to-mid range and plush at the higher end.

For a Vancouver living room specifically, consider the entrance traffic pattern. If your living room connects directly to the front door or a mudroom — where wet shoes and jackets come in from the rain for six months of the year — a **level loop or textured loop pile** handles the moisture and dirt tracking better because the tight construction doesn't trap debris as deeply. If your living room is deeper in the home, away from exterior entrances, a **frieze or textured cut pile** gives you the softness and comfort you want in a relaxation space without the wear concerns.

Fibre type matters as much as pile type. Regardless of whether you choose loop or cut, nylon fibre is the strongest performer for a living room — it resists crushing, bounces back from heavy furniture, and cleans well. Solution-dyed nylon adds permanent stain resistance that won't wash out over time. Polyester (PET) is softer and more affordable but mats and crushes faster, making it better suited for low-traffic bedrooms than a living room that sees daily family use.

If your Vancouver home is a **strata condo**, acoustic performance is another factor. Both loop and cut pile carpet meet STC/IIC acoustic requirements more easily than hard flooring, but check your strata bylaws — some buildings have specific carpet density or padding requirements for units above the ground floor. A quality **6-pound density synthetic pad, 7/16-inch thick**, paired with either pile type will deliver excellent acoustic insulation and comfort.

One often-overlooked option is **cut-and-loop carpet**, which combines both constructions in a single carpet to create patterns and texture. These multi-texture carpets are becoming more popular in Metro Vancouver for living rooms because they offer visual interest, hide wear well, and perform solidly in high-traffic areas. They typically fall in the **\$6 to \$10 per square foot installed** range.

If you'd like to see and feel the difference between loop and cut pile options in person, Vancouver Floor Installers can connect you with a local carpet professional who can bring samples to your home for a free consultation.

Q8

What stain-resistant carpet treatments actually work well in a Vancouver home with kids and dogs?

Solution-dyed nylon fibre is the most effective and durable stain-resistance technology available for a Vancouver home with kids and dogs, and it outperforms every topical treatment on the market. Understanding the difference between built-in fibre protection and spray-on treatments will save you money and frustration in the long run.

The stain-resistance landscape breaks down into two fundamentally different approaches. **Solution-dyeing** embeds colour throughout the entire nylon fibre during manufacturing — think of it like a carrot, where the colour goes all the way through, versus a radish, where colour is only on the surface. Because the colour is integral to the fibre itself, staining agents like red wine, coffee, juice, and pet urine literally cannot bond to and displace the colour. This technology is permanent and does not wear off, wash out, or degrade over time. Brands like **Shaw Anso nylon, Mohawk ColorStrand, and Stainmaster PetProtect** use solution-dyeing as their core stain-resistance mechanism. A quality solution-dyed nylon carpet runs **\$7 to \$14 per square foot installed** in Metro Vancouver — more than basic polyester but significantly more durable and stain-resistant.

Topical stain-resistant treatments — including Scotchgard, factory-applied fluorochemical treatments, and aftermarket spray-on protectors — work by coating the carpet fibres with a chemical barrier that repels liquids temporarily. These treatments do provide real short-term protection, typically lasting **12 to 24 months** before they wear off from foot traffic, vacuuming, and cleaning. They can be reapplied by professional carpet cleaners for about **\$0.15 to \$0.30 per square foot**, but they are fundamentally a maintenance item, not a permanent solution. In a

home with kids and dogs, topical treatments wear off fastest in the highest-traffic areas — exactly where you need protection the most.

For a Vancouver home specifically, there's an important moisture dimension to consider. **Vancouver's marine climate means carpets in entryways, living rooms near exterior doors, and ground-floor rooms absorb more tracked-in moisture than homes in drier cities.** Wet shoes, damp dog paws after rainy walks, and general humidity all contribute to a carpet environment where stains have more opportunity to set. Solution-dyed nylon handles this beautifully because the moisture doesn't affect the fibre's colour integrity. Polyester carpet — even with topical treatments — tends to absorb oily stains and pet oils more readily, and these become permanent faster in a humid environment.

For pet-specific performance, look for carpet lines specifically engineered for pet households. Products in the **Stainmaster PetProtect** and **Mohawk SmartStrand** lines are designed with pet owners in mind. SmartStrand uses a proprietary Triexta fibre (not nylon, not polyester) that has inherent, permanent stain resistance without any topical treatment — stains wipe up with just water even after sitting for 24 hours. SmartStrand is softer than nylon, extremely durable, and runs **\$8 to \$13 per square foot installed**. It's become one of the most popular choices for Vancouver families with both kids and pets.

Practical tips that make a real difference alongside any stain-resistant carpet: keep a **spray bottle of enzyme-based pet cleaner** (available at any pet store) near the door and treat pet accidents within minutes — even the best stain-resistant carpet benefits from quick response. Place washable **indoor/outdoor mats at every exterior entrance** to catch the worst of Vancouver's rain and mud before it reaches the carpet. Vacuum at least twice weekly with a HEPA-filter vacuum to remove pet hair and dander before they grind into fibres. And schedule professional hot-water extraction cleaning every **12 to 18 months** — this removes the deep soil and oils that dull the carpet's appearance over time.

For the padding underneath, choose a **moisture-resistant closed-cell synthetic pad** rather than standard rebond, especially on ground floors — this prevents pet accidents from soaking through to the subfloor where odours become permanently trapped. This costs about **\$0.50 to \$1.50 per square foot more** but is one of the smartest investments you can make in a pet household.

If you're ready to explore stain-resistant options for your home, Vancouver Floor Installers can match you with a local carpet specialist who carries pet-friendly product lines for a free in-home estimate.

Q9

Should I install carpet over concrete in my Vancouver basement or put down a subfloor first?

You should always install a subfloor system before carpeting a Vancouver basement — laying carpet and padding directly on bare concrete is one of the most common and costly flooring mistakes in Metro Vancouver's wet climate. The region's high water table, heavy annual rainfall exceeding 1,200mm, and persistently elevated ground moisture mean that concrete basement slabs routinely transmit moisture upward, even in homes that appear completely dry.

Concrete is porous. Even when a basement slab looks and feels dry to the touch, it is constantly wicking moisture from the surrounding soil through a process called **capillary action**. In Metro Vancouver, this moisture migration is essentially year-round — unlike drier climates where it may be seasonal. When carpet padding sits directly on this concrete, it absorbs that moisture slowly and continuously, creating the ideal conditions for mould, mildew, and musty odours. You may not notice the problem for months or even a year, but eventually the smell becomes unmistakable and the padding — and often the carpet itself — needs to be torn out and replaced.

The Right Subfloor Approach for a Vancouver Basement

The subfloor system you choose depends on your budget, your ceiling height (basements often have limited headroom), and the moisture conditions of your specific slab. **Before any subfloor installation, test the concrete moisture level** using a calcium chloride test (should read below 3 pounds per 1,000 square feet over 24 hours) or a relative humidity probe test (should read below 75% RH). If readings are elevated, you need to address the moisture source — usually with exterior drainage improvements, interior waterproofing, or a sump pump system — before proceeding.

Option 1: Dimpled membrane subfloor panels (\$2 to \$4 per square foot). Products like DRCore or Delta-FL use a raised dimpled plastic membrane topped with either OSB or engineered wood panels. The dimples create an air gap between the concrete and the subfloor, allowing any moisture that comes through the slab to evaporate rather than being trapped. This is the most popular and cost-effective basement subfloor solution in Metro Vancouver. The panels are tongue-and-groove, install without fasteners, and add only about **3/4 inch to 1 inch of height**. For a 500 square foot basement, materials run **\$1,000 to \$2,000** plus installation labour of **\$2 to \$4 per square foot**.

Option 2: Sleeper system with vapour barrier (\$3 to \$6 per square foot). This involves laying a 6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier on the concrete, then installing pressure-treated 2x4 sleepers (either flat or on edge) with rigid foam insulation between them, topped with plywood. This system provides more insulation and a warmer floor, but it adds **1.5 to 3.5 inches of height**, which can be a problem in basements with low ceilings. It's the better choice if you want to incorporate radiant heat or if your basement has known moisture issues that require a robust

vapour barrier.

Option 3: Rigid foam underlayment with plywood (\$3 to \$5 per square foot). A layer of **2-inch extruded polystyrene (XPS) foam board** directly on the concrete, with a 6-mil poly vapour barrier, topped with 3/8-inch or 1/2-inch plywood screwed through the foam into the concrete with Tapcon screws. This provides good insulation and a solid substrate while adding about **2.5 inches of total height**.

Regardless of which subfloor system you choose, the carpet padding over it should be **closed-cell synthetic foam** or **rubber waffle padding** — never standard rebond foam, which absorbs moisture even with a subfloor in place. For basement carpet, synthetic fibre (nylon or polyester) with **synthetic backing** is essential — avoid jute-backed carpet entirely, as jute absorbs moisture and supports mildew.

The total cost for a properly prepared basement carpet installation in Metro Vancouver — including subfloor, vapour barrier, moisture-resistant pad, and carpet — typically runs **\$8 to \$16 per square foot**, or roughly **\$4,000 to \$8,000 for a 500 square foot basement**. That's more than carpet directly on concrete, but it's an investment that protects your flooring, your air quality, and your home's value. Replacing a mouldy carpet and dealing with mildew remediation costs significantly more.

Need help getting your basement carpet done right? Vancouver Floor Installers can connect you with experienced local contractors who specialize in below-grade installations across Metro Vancouver — get matched for a free estimate.

Do I need strata approval to change the flooring in my Vancouver condo?

Yes, you almost certainly need strata council approval before changing the flooring in your Vancouver condo. Under BC's Strata Property Act, alterations to a strata lot that affect common property, common assets, or the use and enjoyment of other strata lots require council approval — and flooring changes fall squarely into this category because of noise transmission to neighbouring units.

The vast majority of Metro Vancouver strata corporations include flooring replacement provisions in their bylaws. The most common requirement is that any change from carpet to hard flooring (hardwood, engineered hardwood, laminate, vinyl plank, or tile) must be accompanied by an **acoustic underlayment that meets the building's STC and IIC sound rating requirements** — typically STC 55+ and IIC 55+ or higher. Even replacing hard flooring with a different type of hard flooring often requires approval, because the acoustic performance varies between products.

The **approval process** typically works as follows. First, obtain a copy of your strata's current bylaws and any renovation or alteration guidelines — your property manager can provide these. Then submit a formal **alteration request** or renovation application to the strata council. Your submission should include the specific flooring product you intend to install (manufacturer, model, thickness), the acoustic underlayment you will use with its lab-tested STC/IIC ratings, a description of the installation method, the name and contact information of your installer, and your proposed timeline including start and finish dates. Many stratas also require proof that your installer carries **WorkSafeBC coverage** and general liability insurance.

Some strata buildings require an **acoustical engineering report** confirming that your proposed flooring and underlayment combination will meet the building's acoustic requirements when installed over the specific subfloor in your unit. This is more common in older wood-frame buildings and concrete towers with thinner slabs. An acoustical consultant's report typically costs **\$500-\$1,500** in Metro Vancouver.

Processing times vary widely — some strata councils review renovation requests monthly at regular council meetings, while others handle them on a rolling basis. Allow **2-6 weeks** for approval from the time you submit your application. Some stratas charge an **alteration deposit** (refundable upon satisfactory completion and inspection) ranging from **\$500-\$2,000**, plus a non-refundable application fee of **\$50-\$200**.

Once approved, most stratas impose **renovation rules** governing permitted work hours (typically 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM weekdays, sometimes Saturdays), elevator booking for material delivery, floor protection in common hallways, and dust and noise mitigation. Your installer must follow these rules — violations can result in fines to you as the unit owner.

After installation, some stratas require a **post-installation inspection** to verify that the approved materials were used and the acoustic underlayment was properly installed. Keep all receipts, product documentation, and installation photos as proof of compliance.

What happens if you skip strata approval? If a neighbour below you complains about noise after you install hard flooring without approval, the strata council can investigate and, if your flooring does not meet the building's acoustic requirements, can order you to **remove the flooring and restore the original floor covering at your own expense**. This is not a theoretical risk — it happens regularly in Metro Vancouver, and the cost of removing new flooring and reinstalling carpet after the fact can easily exceed **\$5,000-\$10,000** for a typical condo.

The bottom line: get approval first, buy materials second. If you need help navigating the strata flooring process, Vancouver Floor Installers can match you with contractors who regularly handle strata installations across Metro Vancouver and know the documentation requirements inside and out.

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Is carpet or cork better for sound insulation in a Vancouver condo bedroom?

Carpet is the better choice for sound insulation in a Vancouver condo bedroom, delivering superior impact noise reduction that your downstairs neighbours will appreciate — but cork is a compelling alternative if you prefer a hard-surface floor with natural acoustic properties. Both materials outperform hardwood, laminate, and vinyl for noise control, which makes either one a smart choice for strata living.

Carpet with quality underpad is the gold standard for acoustic performance in multi-family buildings. A good broadloom carpet over 8mm or thicker foam or rubber underpad can achieve IIC (Impact Insulation Class) ratings of 65–75 and STC (Sound Transmission Class) ratings of 55–65, comfortably exceeding the minimums that most Metro Vancouver strata corporations require (typically STC 55+ and IIC 55+). Impact noise — footsteps, dropped objects, moving furniture — is the primary concern in condos, and carpet absorbs these sounds more effectively than any other flooring material. For a condo bedroom, carpet also adds warmth, comfort, and a soft landing surface that many people prefer in sleeping spaces. At \$3–\$12 per square foot installed including underpad, carpet is also the most affordable flooring option. A 150 square foot bedroom runs \$450–\$1,800 fully installed.

Cork flooring offers natural sound absorption that is genuinely impressive for a hard-surface material. Cork's cellular structure is filled with microscopic air pockets that dampen both impact and airborne sound. A quality cork plank floor over cork underlayment can achieve IIC ratings of 55–65 and

STC ratings of 50–58 — not quite as high as carpet, but often sufficient to meet strata requirements, especially with a premium acoustic underlay beneath the cork planks. Cork is warm underfoot, naturally antimicrobial (a plus for bedrooms), and has a gentle cushioning effect that reduces fatigue. At \$6–\$14 per square foot installed, a 150 square foot bedroom costs \$900–\$2,100. The main trade-off is durability — cork dents more easily than hardwood, and heavy furniture legs need protective pads to prevent permanent marks.</p>

<p>The strata approval process is a critical step regardless of which material you choose. Before purchasing anything, check your strata bylaws and submit an alteration agreement specifying the exact product, underlayment, and acoustic test data. If you are replacing existing carpet with cork (moving from soft surface to hard surface), most strata corporations will require documented proof that the new assembly meets STC/IIC minimums. Some older stratas restrict hard flooring on upper floors entirely, which would make carpet your only option. Budget \$500–\$2,000 for strata application fees and any required acoustic testing or engineering review.</p>

<p>For a ground-floor or lowest-level condo, acoustic requirements are typically less stringent because there is no neighbour below, which gives you more flexibility. In that scenario, cork becomes a more attractive choice since the primary acoustic concern — impact noise transmission downward — is less relevant. For upper-floor units, carpet is the safer bet to keep your neighbours happy and your strata board satisfied.</p>

<p>One practical compromise worth considering: carpet in the bedroom and cork in the adjoining hallway or den. This gives you the best acoustic performance where impact noise matters most (the bedroom, where you walk first thing in the morning) and the aesthetic appeal of a hard surface in adjacent areas. Vancouver Floor Installers can connect you with flooring contractors experienced in strata installations who understand the acoustic requirements specific to your building.</p>

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Vancouver Floor Installers. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any flooring project. Information is current as of March 15, 2026 and may change. Visit vancouverfloorinstallers.com for the latest answers.