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With evolving carpet fiber technology, carpet choices abound.

Finding durable carpet that is right for your home can be an overwhelming experience.

Before going to the showroom, the experts at Solutia, makers of Wear-Dated® carpet fiber, have a few tips savvy shoppers should know to make a wise carpet investment.

The four primary carpet fiber materials on the market today include wool, olefin, polyester and nylon.

Wool is the about the only natural material still used in carpet manufacturing.

Although wool performs well, it is pricey and can have staining issues if not pretreated.

Olefin fiber (popular in berber carpet), and polyester fiber are both stain-resistant, but often lack durability in high traffic areas.

Nylon fiber is the most predominant fiber material on the market today.

Nylon is engineered for durability in traffic, as well as resistance to stains. Nylon fiber comes in hundreds of colors, so you can get the durability you need with the look you want even in the high traf-

fic rooms.

In addition to fiber choice, consider the weight, pile height, density and twist when choosing carpet.

- Weight indicates how much fiber is in the carpet.

- Pile height is the length of the carpet yarn from the backing to the top of the tufts.

Pile height is a matter of personal preference. Some people like the feel of high pile between their toes, while others prefer a shorter pile, which is easier to keep clean.

Toys and furniture roll more easily on shorter pile.

- Density refers to the thickness of the yarn and how closely the tufts are spaced together.

- Twist refers to how tightly the strands of yarn in each tuft are twisted.

Density and twist have the greatest impact on performance. Select the densest carpet with the highest twist level that you can afford.

Pile height and density determine how much fiber is used in the carpet or the "face weight" of the carpet. The heavier the carpet, the greater the cost.

In addition to the carpet itself, look at the carpet's warranty since

all are not the same.

Prorated warranties pay a portion of the value of the carpet if there is a problem, and the amount decreases each year following the purchase.

Look for non-prorated warranties which cover the cost of the carpet during the entire warranty period.

Finally, choose a quality carpet pad.

A carpet pad acts as a "shock absorber" for the carpet, extending its life.

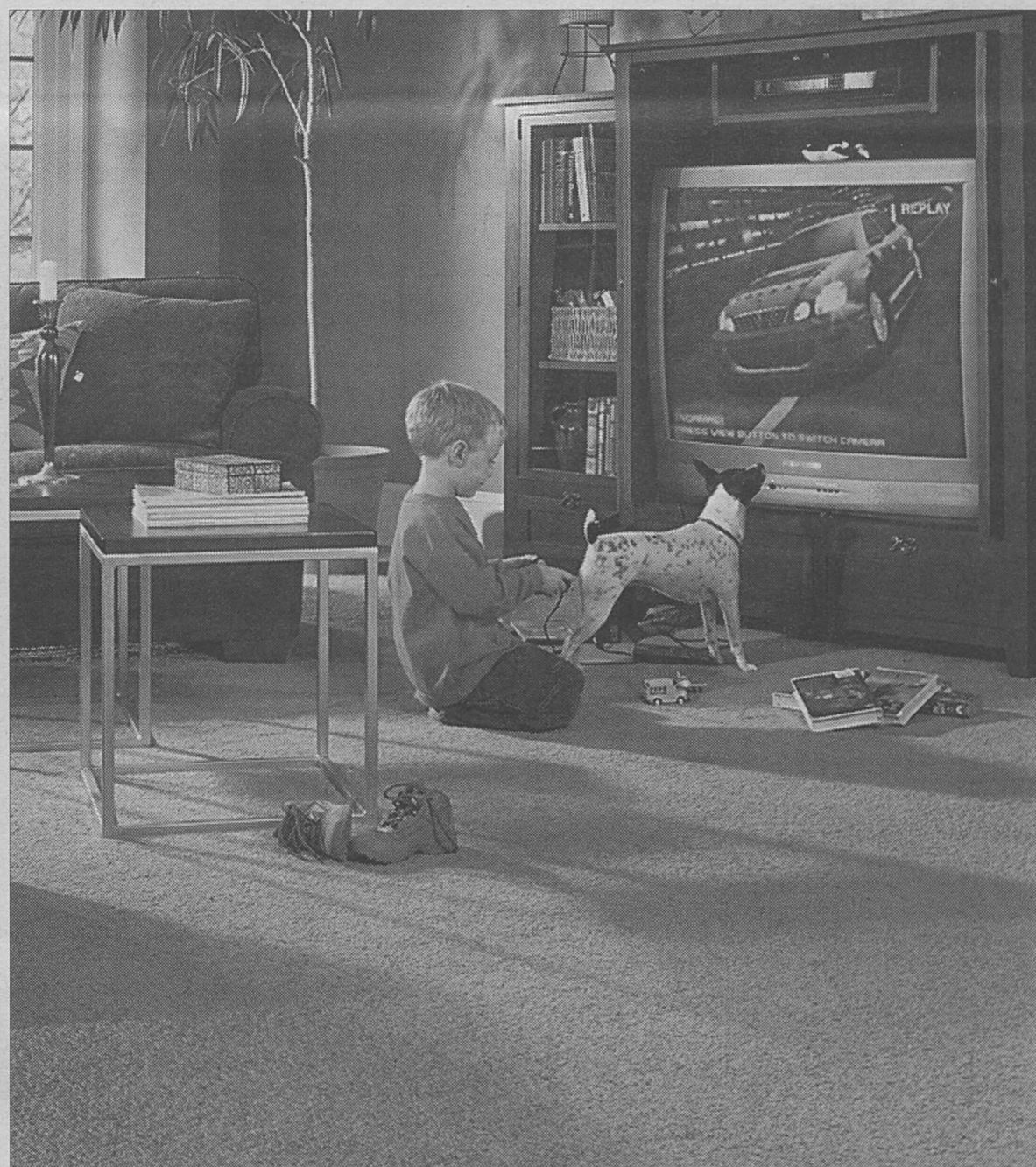
Follow the manufacturer's recommendation for the best pad for your carpet.

A pad that is too thick and soft may reduce the life of your carpet by pulling on the carpet backing.

In general, a thinner (no more than 7/16 inches), denser pad will prevent undue wear on the carpet.

Be sure to verify that the pad is water-resistant to prevent its color from bleeding through the carpet if it gets wet.

For more advice on finding the kind of carpet that is right for your home, or to learn more about Wear-Dated carpet fiber products, visit their Web site at www.weardated.com.



Educate yourself on carpet fibers and weight, pile, height, density and twist when choosing durable carpet to withstand the traffic in