

It used to be that wall-to-wall carpeting was only installed by the pros.

Now there are lots of folks who would consider this a do-it-yourself project. The writer of our first letter is one.

*I have installed a bathroom carpet that is held in place by double-faced carpet tape. Now I'd like to tackle tacked-down wall-to-wall carpet. How is it tacked down?*

That's really a misnomer. There are tack strips nailed to the floor all around the perimeter of the room. The edges of the carpet are stretched over these strips and are hooked onto tacks that are sticking up at an angle facing toward the wall. The tack strips can be purchased at carpet retailers.

The key to stretching the carpet over the tack strips is a device called a "knee kicker" or carpet stretcher. It has sharp points similar to those on the tack strip to grab the carpet and then you use your knee to push it toward the wall to hook over the tack strips. Most people who sell carpet for do-it-yourself installation will have a knee kicker to rent. It does require some practice.



# Al Carrell

If you want to make a knee kicker, start with a pair of 2-by-4s about a foot long. Nail them together to form a 4-by-4. Pad one end with a thick scrap of upholstery foam and cover it with a fabric. The part that grabs the carpet should be a board about six to eight inches square. You should drive nails through it at an angle, and the distance they stick out will be governed by the thickness of the carpet. Use wood screws to attach this spiked board to the other end of the 2-by-4s with the spikes slanting away from the padded end. With a lot of crawling and some deft knee action, you'll have the carpet laid.