

# TR2 Carpet Replacement

by Joel Justin

You all know what project creep is, right? You start off doing one thing on your car, then you find something else that needs attention, so you say, "While I'm at it...". It can be a slippery slope, but I'm sure you've all been there. This time, it all started with a slipping clutch.

For those of not familiar with Triumph TR's, to pull the gearbox, you need to remove the seats and gearbox cover and pull the gearbox out from inside the car. Once the seats and floor mats are out, the entire carpet is exposed. That's when I noticed how badly faded the gray Wilton wool carpet was. I didn't take a photo of the carpet in the car, but I laid it out on the floor once it was pulled and you can see the gearbox piece where the shift lever come out and the prop (drive) shaft piece behind it are quite faded.



Figure 1: Old faded carpet

Well I got the clutch replaced and the gearbox reinstalled, but I decided "while I'm at it", I'll replace the carpet. And if I was going to replace the carpet, I should probably replace the underfelt too. But before I put new carpet, I should fix (rebuild) my master cylinder which had a small leak as I don't want silicone brake fluid on my nice new carpet. And so it goes...

This isn't so much a story about my particular carpet replacement, but is meant to describe the process in case anyone wants to tackle a carpet replacement themselves. It does take a little time, but with some basic tools, it's not hard to do. So what do you need? Other than wrenches, ratchets and sockets, and screwdrivers to remove your seats and whatever trim pieces need to be removed to get your carpet out, you need:

- A good pair of scissors for trimming the underfelt and carpet. Something like this:
  - <https://www.amazon.com/CANARY-Wrestler-Carpet-Scissors-NAW-205B/dp/B0091GW6XI/> or
  - <https://www.amazon.com/Fiskars-Inch-Razor-edge-Shears-94467097J/dp/B000189RV4/> or
  - <https://www.amazon.com/Clauss-18524-Carbonitride-Titanium-ExtremEdge/dp/B00E2T54EY/>
- A sharpie or two to mark where to trim and punch holes
- Some hole punches, assuming you have screws and/or bolts that go thru your carpet (i.e. seat track and seat belts). Something like this:
  - <https://www.harborfreight.com/6-piece-hollow-punch-set-67030.html>
- Interior trim tools, something like this:
  - <https://www.harborfreight.com/trim-and-molding-tool-set-5-pc-64126.html>

You'll also need some consumable items:

- Trim adhesive. I'd highly recommend 3M General Purpose Trim Adhesive. You'll need at least 3-4 cans:
  - <https://www.walmart.com/ip/3M-General-Trim-Adhesive-39187-19-oz-Net-Wt-1-Can/492234819>
- Some adhesive cleaner/remover, especially if you are going to install sound deadening material. One quart is plenty (you'll need plenty of old rags too):
  - <https://www.amazon.com/3M-General-Purpose-Adhesive-Cleaner/dp/B00ZIM9XPI>
- Some disposable (nitrile) gloves to keep the adhesive off your fingers:
  - <https://www.harborfreight.com/safety/gloves/5-mil-nitrile-powder-free-gloves-10-pc-large-64419.html>
- A pair of chemical resistant gloves for use with the adhesive cleaner (the nitrile gloves will work, but they wear out quickly):
  - <https://www.harborfreight.com/pvc-with-dipped-sand-gloves-large-99692.html>
- Finally, some plastic or cardboard to spray the trim adhesive on the carpet and underfelt on

Now you need to decide if you're replacing carpet only, or underfelt too, and if you're going to add any sound and heat barriers. Let's start with thermal & sound deadeners. There are many brands out there. Dynamat is the most well-known. I've used FatMat on my TR4. It's less expensive and comes with a knife and roller for installation. Amazon Basics even sells it now and it's cheaper yet. I bought some to put in Pam's GT6. The primary material used in these products is butyl. It's a pliable rubbery material that has an adhesive on one side. You can get it with and without an aluminized foil on one side.

To apply it, your floors need to be clean, with all old adhesive removed. That's where the adhesive remover comes in. After a thorough vacuum, use an old rag to dampen areas where there is adhesive. Let it soak for a bit, then scrub with the rag. It may take several passes to get it all off.

Now for the FatMat. It's best to work with smaller pieces. You can use your new carpet kit pieces as a template for cutting the FatMat, then for some of the larger pieces, maybe cut them in half. Test fit the pieces and trim as necessary to ensure they fit properly.

The adhesive is VERY sticky, so it's best to peel back one corner or edge of the FatMat, then carefully position the piece (an assistant can come in handy here). Once you have it over the area you want, lay the edge down. Then while holding the other end up, peel the backing off while you press the FatMat down. Once it's all in place, use the roller to ensure good adhesion and get any air bubbles out. You can poke a hole at the edge of a bubble to bleed air while you roll it flat.





Figure 2: Fatmat applied

Next is the underfelt. Some comes precut while others come in bulk (rolled or folded). If you have the latter, use your carpet kit pieces as templates to cut the underfelt. And like the FatMat, test fit and trim so there is no overlap. One note with underfelt. With Triumphs at least, over time, they changed where they put it. You can decide if you want to put it only where it was removed, or on every floor and firewall surface. I don't see a downside (other than possibly originality) and the upside is a softer feel and additional sound deadening.



Figure 3: Jute underfelt installed



If you need to make holes for things like seatbelt bolts or trim screws, it's best to do that before you glue the underfelt down. Use your Sharpie to make where the holes are and use a hole punch a size or two larger to make the hole. This will make installing your bolts and screws much easier later. If you missed making a hole, use a nail to poke thru the underfelt from the back side, mark it with your Sharpie and use an Exacto knife to make the hole.

Make a plan for the sequence of both underfelt and carpet installation. Carpet is more important as some edges are rough (no binding) and are meant to go under a finished edge. And it's usually best to start at the firewall and work your way back. Lay the carpet all out on the floor to make sure you have the sequence right. The underfelt sequence isn't as important, but you might as well use the same sequence.

Use the 3M General Purpose Adhesive on both the floor area and the back of the underfelt. When spraying the underfelt, be sure to do it on a piece of cardboard or plastic. While the spray pattern is pretty easy to control, you don't want overspray getting on your floor or table. Use adhesive cleaner to cleanup overspray.

You need to let the adhesive flash off. Generally, that takes a couple of minutes. Once it's dry but tacky, you can install it. Just like the FatMat, you only get one shot at placing it. Fortunately, the underfelt has some give and take, so you can adjust a bit as you lay it down. Repeat this for each piece in sequence until all your underfelt is installed. As each piece is installed, test fit it first and trim as necessary. You don't want any overlap as it will be too thick and may show as contours after the carpet is laid.

Finally, the carpet. Use the exact same process as with the underfelt. Fit, trim, cut any holes, spray adhesive and place. The carpet does not flex much, so it's important to get the placement as close as possible. And remember your sequence. If your cardboard or plastic gets too sticky from overspray, use a new piece so you don't have your nice new carpet getting adhesive on it. If you do get some overspray on the carpet or other interior trim, use a little adhesive cleaner to remove it. I've found it doesn't harm carpet or vinyl trim, but I use it sparingly just to be safe.



Figure 4: Tunnel & rear carpet installed





Figure 5: Final carpet before seat installation

Once your carpet is all in, give it a good vacuum as it's probably pretty dirty from all the fuzz and other bits of stuff it's picked up during installation. Screw in any trim pieces and bolt in your seats and seatbelts, and you're all done!