

Paw patrol

Drool-worthy fabrics and savvy strategies to keep your furniture from going to the dogs

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➔ **SEE SPOT JUMP.** See Spot play. See Spot—and spots—all over your new sofa? Not necessarily. Just because you live with a dog doesn't mean you have to suffer ugly covers or stained fabric. If you're shopping for new furniture—or re-covering what you have—there are lots of practical options. Here, dog lovers' and designers' top tips.

Synthetic stars

"Dogs equal dirt," says Annie Selke, the designer behind home textile company Dash & Albert. "They can do a number on a living room, so I **cover everything with indoor/outdoor textiles.**" Quick to clean and stain resistant, these fabrics are commonly made of solution-dyed acrylic (such as Sunbrella) or polyester and repel

moisture and soil. Today many look and feel like high-end, interiors-only upholstery. Other dog-friendly choices include microfiber, a thin and durable material with a very tight weave, and microsuede, a microfiber designed to mimic suede in look and feel. Both feel soft, but are tough as (dog) nails and wash well.

Natural selections

Hard-working leather is a favorite natural choice, though it can show scratches. Blogger Kristen Levine (kristenlevine.com) put swatches through the pooch test before ordering her leather sofa. "We took samples outside and let my dog run around with them." Selke prefers leather with a distressed finish, "since extra nicks just add to the patina."

Denim and cotton canvas or twill can be fine options too, especially for slipcovers, which New York City designer Heather Higgins recommends. "They're easily cleaned, and usually less expensive than upholstery." Plus, **you can have another slipcover made when you want a new look,** or buy a ready-made sofa that comes with a variety of in-stock options. Her schnauzer-dachshund mix spends a lot of time on her white-cotton-slipcovered sofa, which she keeps looking sharp with bleach.

Technical help

Treated fabric is another way to go. Crypton is a proprietary process that gives fabric dirt-, moisture-, and odor-repelling qualities. It's targeted to pet owners—and parents—and you can find it on upholstered furniture and by the yard at fabric stores, such as Jo-Ann, ranging from \$35 to \$120 per yard. A less pricey, after-market alternative: Scotchgard. Blogger Allison Meece (ahouseandadog.com) swears by it. "It makes wiping up messes very easy," she says, adding that she buys \$6 bottles at the home center and sprays throw pillows as needed after washing them.

Match game

Whatever your fabric, **be smart about style.** Snap a photo and match fabric color to fur. A pattern is also a good idea. When you have a lot to look at, you don't focus on shed hairs. Ikats, geometrics, and florals are all tops at camouflage. ■

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