



THE
Couple's Guide
TO MATTRESS BUYING

Love's a little easier in a comfortable bed.

Few things are more essential to our overall health and welfare than proper sleep. If one or both of you is having trouble sleeping, it can even put a strain on your relationship. After all, it's harder to be patient, kind and courteous when you're always tired, or living with back or neck pain caused by a worn-out bed. Given the importance of sleep, a comfortable and supportive new mattress can change life for the better. We hope this little guide will give you the advice you need to find that perfect bed, and get back to being a well-rested and happier couple.

Things to consider before you buy:

Put some space in the relationship. This may be obvious to some of you, but couples should sleep on at least a queen-sized bed. It doesn't matter how in love you are, a full sized mattress is just too cramped for two people and all the involuntary movement that happens in the wee hours. The only exception to this queen-sized rule: Manhattan apartment dwellers.

Have a good, long mattress talk. In terms of daily impact on your life, this is the most important piece of furniture you'll buy. So be sure to talk about what you want in terms of comfort. Firm? Plush? Pillow Top? If it's not what you want, don't agree just to get it over with. Mutual happiness should be your goal.

Can't agree? Then compromise. If you're at a stalemate, where one of you wants a firm bed and the other needs something softer, you do have options. There are models that allow each side to be adjusted for softness. Or, for a more economical solution, a thick mattress pad on one side of the bed could help.

Talk about price before you shop. If money is an object, then determine your price range and stick to it. If you can't find what you want with the money you have, don't buy an uncomfortable mattress to save a few bucks. Take a few months and save up more. Short-term discomfort always beats long-term misery.

Research can pay off. If you're not in a huge hurry to buy, there are ways to try out different mattresses. For a true test of comfort, and a romantic getaway, you can always book a night at a hotel that uses a brand of mattress you're interested in. To help you, some chains advertise which bed they feature. And if you travel, peel off the sheets and take note of beds that you like or dislike.



Here's what's **new**.

There have been a lot of innovations since you last shopped for a mattress. Here are few you should know about.

The pampered sleeper. Beds these days are more indulgent than ever, thanks to the incorporation of cushy pillow tops and breathable natural fibers like cotton and wool. Taking luxury to another level, the Beautyrest Black™ mattress from Simmons is created with high-end materials like cashmere and silk.

Dual comfort. These mattresses are perfect for couples with different needs. Some models allow you to adjust either side, while others come with customizable comfort layers for both sides of the bed.

Thick is in. When you shop, you'll notice that beds are getting are getting taller. This is because of all the added comfort layers. And since beds that are even 16 inches thick are commonplace, you'll have no trouble finding sheets that fit.

Hold the flip. First created by Simmons, the No Flip mattress has eliminated one of life's sillier chores. And for those who want a king sized mattress, this should be especially happy news.

The wide world of mattresses.

There are many types out there, so here's a little primer to keep you from feeling overwhelmed in the store.

Innerspring mattresses, the most traditional type of mattress set, typically use systems of open coils or metal springs layered between padding. When shopping you'll hear the term "Coil Count." Typically, the higher the count, the more support you'll get.

Pocketed Coil mattresses, created by Simmons®, feature an advanced innerspring system. The springs are individually wrapped in a fabric cover, enabling each coil to adjust independently to your body. Because these springs move individually, if your bedmate rolls over, the motion won't disturb you. This feature alone has been known to save relationships.

Hypoallergenic memory foam mattresses are constructed of high-density polyurethane and conform to the body to reduce pressure points and provide natural body alignment. Memory foam is temperature sensitive and conforms as your body warms it. Latex foam is not sensitive to temperature and is available in many different densities. While you research your purchase, keep an eye out for the next generation of foam, as new types are always being developed.

Hybrid mattresses combine layers of foam and coils. This gives you the comfort and support you're looking for from each type of bed. And, if you're undecided about foam vs. coil, it gives you a nice option.

Air mattresses use air chambers as their primary support. A quality air mattress will mold to body contours. Some models come with adjustable air chambers, which allow you to change your bed's firmness whenever you like.

Water mattresses come in several varieties but are all designed to conform to the body and reduce pressure points. Built for stability, today's waterbeds have done away with the wavy feeling you might remember.

Shopping advice.

Patience pays. Take the time to comparison shop. And start looking at the mattress ads in your newspaper. If you know the bed you want, chances are, it'll go on sale before too long.

Pricing games. Stores near each other rarely carry the same exact model. Which makes it difficult to compare prices directly. To get a better deal, find a model you like, then go to another store and see if you can find a bed that feels just as good for less.

Never settle. Yes, we've said this a lot. But you'll spend more hours in bed than on your couch. Hard to believe, but true. So keep searching until you find a bed you both feel good about.

In the store, test for real. However you normally sleep, lie that way for a few minutes. And be sure to try out every bed together. This way, you can feel for motion in the bed when one of you moves around.

Bad back? There are mattresses out there that are specially designed to relieve back pain, but the truth is, any good mattress should give your back the proper support it needs. So if you're miserable at night, spend a little extra and get some restful, pain-free sleep. It's worth it.

Know the policies. When it comes to returns, testing period, delivery charge and hauling away your old bed, every store is different. Be sure to ask about all these details. It may affect where you buy.

Yes, buy the box spring. Like any good couple, a mattresses and foundation complement each other. Buying just the mattress may reduce its comfort and support. Plus, it might shorten the bed's lifespan and possibly void the warranty.

A message to the men: assert yourself. If you're shopping with a partner, be sure you get a mattress that you are comfortable with. According to research*, 38% of men say they are unhappy with the mattress chosen by their significant other.

*Source: Classic Bed Company <http://www.classicbedsteads.co.uk/newsitem.php?item=798>
Research carried out by 1-800-Mattress.com

Tips for better sleep.

- Set the mood. Make sure your bedroom is dark, cool and uncluttered.
- Sleep takes preparation. Don't pay bills or work late at night. Instead, start slowing down and relaxing well before bedtime. Spend some quiet time together listening to music, reading or just talking.
- No late night sit-ups. Daily exercise can help you sleep better, but if you work out too late in the evening, it can keep you keyed up and make it harder to fall asleep.
- The 11 o'clock news is not relaxing. Don't watch TV in your bedroom late at night. It goes back to sleep preparation.
- The menacing clock. If you can't sleep, knowing what time it is only makes it worse. So turn those red lights away from you to help you relax.
- Make it a habit. Establish a regular sleep schedule and don't sleep in. Instead, take power naps on weekends.
- Bring in the white noise. If you live in an apartment or on a busy street, use a fan or one of those rainforest sound machines to drown out the neighbors and the traffic.
- Try not to drink caffeinated beverages after 2 p.m. If you crave coffee late in the day, try decaf. On a related note, don't eat anything heavy before bed. If you're hungry, try fruit or cereal.

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