



A Woman's Guide to Mattress Buying

If you answer yes to any of the following, it's time for a new bed.

- ✔ You wake up tired or achy.
- ✔ Your bed dips like a hammock.
- ✔ You bought your mattress when Monday night meant *Melrose Place*.

If you're still reading, you probably have a bed that's more than seven years old, which is the age The Better Sleep Council says a mattress stops giving you the necessary support it should. After all, your body changes a lot in seven years, and your mattress should keep up with your needs. And although you've probably dreaded looking for a new bed since you bought the last one, just know that with the right information at hand, this shopping experience doesn't have to be unpleasant. Just remember that more comfortable, restful nights await you.



What's your **type of mattress?**

As with finding the perfect cocktail dress, getting feedback from friends is nice. But remember, this is one of the most personal things you'll ever buy. It has to work with your curves. So don't limit your testing. The best way to find the perfect bed is to try models with different levels of firmness. Read on to learn about several basic types of mattresses. All are designed to give you comfort and support. You just have to find the one that feels right.

Innerspring mattresses, the most traditional type of mattress set, typically use systems of open coils or metal springs layered between padding.

Hypoallergenic memory foam mattresses are constructed of high-density polyurethane and conform to the body to reduce pressure points and provide natural body alignment.

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, so you can change your bed's firmness whenever you like – which comes in handy when you overdo it at the gym.

Water mattresses come in several varieties but are all designed to conform to the body to reduce pressure points. And today's designs have reduced the uneasy feeling of sleeping on the high seas.

Find your **comfort zone.**

There are various levels of firmness for mattresses, such as firm, pillow top and plush. Firm mattresses provide more resistance against pressure from the sleep surface, making them as their name indicates, the firmest style of mattress. The plush models utilize various comfort layers to create a softer sleep surface. Lastly, the pillow top models utilize multiple layers of foams in the top upholstery to create especially soft, enveloping sleep surfaces. Just note, the top upholstery may be attached to the mattress in a variety of methods, resulting in pillow top models that feel and appear different.

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Shopping Tips

- ✔ Knowledge is power. Before you visit a store, go online and research mattress brands and styles.
- ✔ The average person moves 40 to 60 times a night. Therefore, if you sleep with a partner, you should consider a queen or king-size set to accommodate the both of you comfortably.
- ✔ Shop with your partner. Yes, getting him to come along might be tough, but it'll be worth it. The two of you should test the mattress together and agree on preferences or at least come to a compromise.
- ✔ Take your time. You'll spend more hours in bed than on your couch. So don't make a rash decision. Regret feels even worse after a sleepless night.
- ✔ As a rule, you get what you pay for. You shouldn't overpay or underpay.
- ✔ Jargon smargon. The coil count reflects the amount of support in the mattress. For example, 300 coils would be less support than 700 coils. Also, for those of you sleeping with herky-jerky partners, more coils means better motion separation.
- ✔ No need to flip. Most mattresses are now sold with only one sleep surface. These mattresses require less maintenance and are able to sustain their comfort and support for a longer period of time.
- ✔ Bad back? There are plenty of mattresses that can help. Look for models specifically designed to help keep your spine in its natural alignment while you sleep.

- ✔ Buy the set. Mattresses and foundations are designed to work together. Getting one without the other may reduce the comfort and support you receive. Plus, it might shorten the bed's lifespan and possibly affect its warranty.
- ✔ New mattresses are thicker now, so your old sheets may no longer fit. Depths have gone from about seven inches to more than 14 inches, meaning you may need sheets with a deep-pocket corner.
- ✔ Test for real. According to Consumer Reports, consumers should test the bed out for at least 15 minutes. A good salesperson should leave you alone while you do this.
- ✔ If you want to try a bed out for a night or two, you can stay in a number of hotels offering luxurious bedding. Just keep in mind, the mattresses in hotel rooms are used and may be softer than a brand new one.
- ✔ Know the policies. Some dealers may let you return a mattress. Be sure to ask for all the details about this. It may affect where you buy.
- ✔ Be curious. Ask the salesperson how the mattress you're interested in is different from the others on the floor. Also, if you're going to buy, find out if delivery of your new bed and removal of your old one are included.
- ✔ Shopping for your ideal bed can be overwhelming. So arm yourself with these tips and an understanding of the different types of mattresses – making the sleep you've dreamed about closer than you think.



Some **Good Advice** for Better Sleep.

- ✔ Make sure your bedroom is dark, cool and uncluttered.
- ✔ Prepare your mind and body for sleep: read for pleasure, take a hot bath or stretch before bed.
- ✔ Limit the use of TV or a computer in your bedroom and turn your clock away from you.
- ✔ Establish a regular sleep schedule and don't sleep in. Instead, take power naps if possible.
- ✔ Try not to drink caffeinated beverages or eat chocolate after 2 p.m. We know this one is tough, but it's for your own good.

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