

BEDS & BEDROOM STORAGE BUYING GUIDE

Beds consist of four major components: headboard, footboard, rails, and slats. The headboard and footboard frame the bed at the head and the foot of the bed, rails run along each side of the bed, and slats span the interior space to support the mattress. Rails can be made of either wood or metal. When you go shopping, be sure that you are looking at the price of the entire bed, and not just an individual piece.

A *bed frame* generally refers to a metal bed support system that can be used alone or attached to a headboard, or a headboard and footboard. Bed frames for queen or king size mattresses incorporate center legs for added support.

Beds can be assembled in several different ways. The most common is through metal brackets on each end of the rails that hook into clips on the headboard and footboard. This is a generally strong and reliable construction system. Some better-quality manufacturers bolt the rails to the headboard and footboard with two bolts at each corner. This method produces a very solid assembly that won't wobble when shaken.

Slats span the interior of the bed to support the mattress. Usually, each end of a slat rests on a lip or in a slip on the interior of the rails. Slats are commonly made of a lower grade, unfinished wood. Superior quality bed manufacturers may employ a truss system that holds engineered wood slats in place with brackets. When plywood is used for the slats, the cut edges should face up and down (so you see the layers of wood), instead of to the side, for superior strength.

There are many different styles of beds on the market to suit a variety of tastes. Sleigh beds have a scroll-profile headboard and footboard and resemble a horse drawn sleigh. Panel beds have a flat panel (without corner posts) for the headboard and footboard. Poster beds feature tall or short vertical posts, usually topped with finials, at the four corners. When stretchers are added on to the tall posts of a poster bed, it is considered a canopy bed, whether or not it incorporates a fabric canopy between the posters. Platform beds are distinguished by the fact that they do not require a box spring. Instead of slats, platform beds incorporate a solid surface for the mattress to rest on. Sometimes this surface extends a few inches beyond the dimensions of the mattress.

Before you settle on a bed, think about how your mattress will fit in it. Modern no-flip mattresses with pillow tops or Euro tops are thicker than older mattress styles. This means that less of the headboard shows when your mattress is

placed on the bed frame. If you want a luxurious mattress but want to show off your headboard too, consider a low-profile box spring that allows your mattress to sit lower to the ground. If you plan to keep your current mattress when you buy a new bed, it's a good idea to measure how thick it is with the box spring. This will give you a better idea of how it will look once you get a mattress in place.

If you have a premium mattress (a very thick pillow top) with a conventional box spring you may want to add a bed step to your bedroom. A bed step is simply a freestanding stool with two steps that can give you a boost into a towering bed with a premium mattress.

Plan Ahead for Bedroom Storage

Before you go shopping for an entire bedroom suite, you may want to do some thinking about your space as well as your needs for storage. Try out our online room planner to get an idea of what will fit in your bedroom, as well as what your clothes will fit into. When laying out your bedroom it's a good idea to keep a minimum of 18 inches of walk space around the bed and storage pieces.

The guidelines for well-constructed wood furniture apply to bedroom storage pieces. Corners should be reinforced with screwed-in and glued blocks. The piece should not wobble when shook. Adjustable levelers on the feet should allow you to compensate for an uneven floor. Back panels should be screwed on, as opposed to stapled, to reinforce the structural integrity of the piece. Doors on armoires and other cabinets should align.

Drawer interiors should be smooth so that they do not snag clothing. Drawers should move smoothly along their glides. Very wide drawers should incorporate two glides. Dust panels should be present between the drawers to prevent the contents from becoming dirty as the drawers are moved in and out. Dovetails, either French, English, or both, should be employed in drawer construction for strength and durability.

Where to Put the Alarm Clock... Several styles of furniture can be used for nightstands. While a nightstand used to only mean a bedside table, in recent years the term has become more generalized in reference to function rather than the construction. A traditional nightstand or bedside table might include a drawer and a lower shelf. A bedside chest usually contains two or three drawers. A bachelor's chest, while larger in scale than a bedside chest, can also serve this function.

Nightstands aren't socks and they don't necessarily have to match each other. You can personalize your bedroom to match the personalities of you and your partner by using different nightstands on each side of the bed. However, if you prefer a more formal look for your bedroom then matching nightstands are appropriate.

Where to Put Your Clothes... There are several options available for bedroom clothing storage. Dressers are the most popular option for storage. They are usually accompanied by mirrors and are often sold in dresser / mirror packages. If a regular (single) dresser won't hold enough, then a double or triple dresser may be better for you. The larger options may not be floored in your retailer's showroom, so be sure to ask a sales associate what the options are for a particular collection when you are shopping.

Chests, in general, are available in a variety of configurations. A standard chest of drawers can offer a good amount of storage space. A man's chest, a master chest, or a gentleman's chest offer more storage capacity than a regular chest of drawers. They are usually wider than a chest of drawers and taller than a dresser (not counting the mirror). They can combine drawers and a small cabinet with doors. Occasionally their construction is similar to a chest-on-chest, which consists of a two-part chest of drawers with one section designed to be stacked on top of a wider chest of drawers. A man's chest is generally smaller in scale than a master chest or a gentleman's chest. On the smaller side, a lingerie chest is a narrow chest of drawers that is proportioned to fit undergarments.

Where to Put the TV... Armoires or wardrobes are great, versatile additions to a bedroom suite. New armoires are designed for multiple uses. You have the option to store clothing or hide away a TV. Good quality armoires adapt for either use. If you plan to house a TV, look for an armoire with doors that slip inside or fold back for an unobstructed view. Integrated outlets make it easier to plug in your TV and other electronics.

bachelor's chest - (typically) a three-drawer low chest. May be used as a nightstand or a foyer accent.

bed steps - a two-step stool intended to be used beside a bed.

bedside chest - a small chest of two to three drawers intended to be used beside a bed.

chest - a box with a hinged lid used for storage. May also be used as an abbreviation of a "chest of drawers".

chest of drawers - cabinet with drawers, usually taller than wide, used for storage, frequently used in bedrooms.

chest-on-chest - a two-part chest of drawers with one section designed to be stacked on top of a wider chest of drawers.

cheval mirror- free-standing full-length mirror that may be tilted between its vertical supports.

double dresser - two sets of drawers side-by-side, used for the storage of clothing in a bedroom. A double dresser is usually wider than it is tall and a mirror is frequently placed above.

dresser - a set of drawers that is wider than it is tall, used for the storage of clothing in a bedroom. A mirror is usually placed above a dresser.

landscape mirror - a mirror intended to be used above a case good, such as a dresser or sideboard.

lingerie chest - a tall, narrow chest of drawers intended to store lingerie.

man's chest - a bedroom storage piece that incorporates drawers and may include a cabinet with doors. A man's chest is larger than a chest of drawers, but smaller than a master chest.

master chest - a bedroom storage piece that incorporates drawers and may include a cabinet with doors. A master chest is generally larger than a man's chest or a regular chest of drawers.

night stand - a small table used beside a bed, often incorporating drawers. In recent years the term has become more generalized and used in reference to its function rather than construction.

platform bed - distinguished by the fact that they do not require a box spring. Instead of slats, platform beds incorporate a solid surface for the mattress to rest on. Sometimes this surface extends a few inches beyond the dimensions of the mattress.

triple dresser - three or more sets of drawers side-by-side, used for the storage of clothing in a bedroom. A triple dresser is usually wider than it is tall and a mirror is frequently placed above.