

## REST ASSURED: KNOWING THE BASICS

Your mattress is one of the most important pieces of furniture in your home. In fact, you'll spend a third of your life on it. That's more than the time you spend watching television or sitting at a computer. No other piece of furniture contributes so profoundly to your health and well-being. Buying a mattress is a decision that you should carefully consider. Since most people replace their mattress every seven to ten years, you'll have to live with your decision for a long time.

For most buyers, comfort is the single most important factor. Support and durability rank close behind. When it comes to comfort, there is no right or wrong. When people consider buying a mattress, all too often they let price be their first, and only, guide. It becomes clear that mattress buying deserves the same amount of careful research as your choice of what to drive or where to go on vacation.

For many of us, a good night's sleep is just a pipe dream. But it doesn't have to be! Studies show that a good mattress improves sleep quality, reduces neck and back pain, and increases energy levels during waking hours as well.

Here is a short checklist to help you plan, research and pay for your new mattress:

### **Budget**

People often over extend themselves with purchases that they may not be able to afford. A high price tag for a mattress does not guarantee the absolute best set. However, do not go cheap either. Set a budget and let that be your guide.

### **Size**

The size of your mattress will be somewhat limited to the actual size of the room it is going in. Consider whether you're sleeping alone or with a partner. In that case a queen size or king size might be a better option. There are also extra long beds for all of you tall people.

### **Composition of Materials**

Different mattresses provide combinations of material that give the desired firmness level. Some give the sensation of firm or stiff support, while others feel like a marshmallow and let you sink directly into them. Typical construction of a mattress is a box spring foundation with an innerspring mattress on top. Currently there are also popular models of memory foam mattresses, individual air

mattresses, and even futon type bed tops. To test out these different types of materials, visit store locations, spend the night at a fancy hotel, and ask your friends about what they own or recommend sampling.

### **Thickness**

Thickness is also known as the "depth" of a mattress. Manufacturers add foam to increase the comfort and softness of the mattress. These surfaces are called a pillow-top, which can be stuffed with foam or even feathers to give an additional layer of comfort. This is important as the dimensions for your sheets might be affected because of the extra inches added to the mattress's overall depth. In other words a deeper bed may require a larger bedspread than the claimed size. Make sure you measure the mattress from top to bottom and get the correct thickness.

### **Foundation**

You cannot build a solid house without a good foundation. The same applies to a mattress. Your bed frame should provide a firm, strong support for the mattress and counterparts. A solid steel frame is usually recommended. This frame should have support on the four major corners and middle frame so it will not sag. Some frames are specifically built to fit a specific box spring size; others are adjustable and fit different bed sizes.

### **Level of Firmness**

Mattress firmness is personal preference. Some people like the hard support of sleeping on the floor, while others may find comfort in a soft pillow surrounding. Any type is suitable as long as it supports your back and body evenly while you rest. They currently have adjustable beds which allow you to inflate the air coils to a certain level of firmness depending on how you sleep. You could also purchase two smaller mattresses and place them side by side, one being firm and the other being soft.

### **Brands**

I find it difficult to select a brand, so listen to what your friends and family say as well as the mattress sales person at your home furnishings store. Most of the well-known brands offer the latest in comfort, style, and technological advancements. Don't be afraid to take a look at and research some newer models with the higher end technology. Just remember to keep it within the budget.