



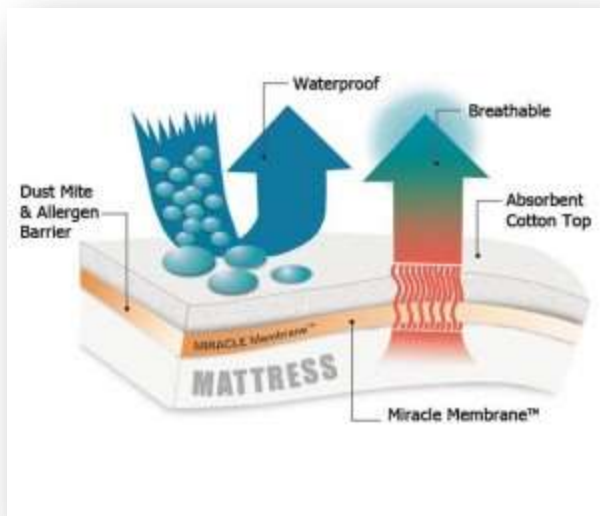
Mattress Buying Guide

NightAirBeds.com

Most people use their beds for a variety of activities; from watching television to reading to simply relaxing, the bed can be the focal point around which daily activities revolve. Despite the fact that a person spends a third of their life asleep, the quality of their mattress is low on the list of concerns. If a full night's sleep leaves a person fatigued, stiff and sore when they wake in the morning, it might be time to start shopping for a mattress.

The life expectancy of most spring-based mattresses is about eight to ten years, but with good quality materials an innerspring mattress can last for eleven to fifteen years. Typically, the more you spend on a quality mattress, the longer it is going to perform. Unfortunately, even the best innerspring mattresses are going to break down over time due to daily wear and tear. The springs within the mattress are designed to cushion the body as it reclines upon the mattress, but constant crushing of the springs will eventually deform the material. Essentially, over extended time of smashing and recoiling, the springs will lose their springiness. As this happens, the materials cradle the body in a less efficient manner, resulting in a misshapen mattress that cannot give the support needed for a comfortable night's sleep.

Memory foam and latex foam mattresses typically last from ten to fifteen years. Like innerspring mattresses, repeated compression can distort the shape of the foam comprising the body of the mattress. This deformation can lead to restless nights of sleep as the body seeks to find the most comfortable position on a pad of foam that no longer will attune to the correct shape for optimal support.

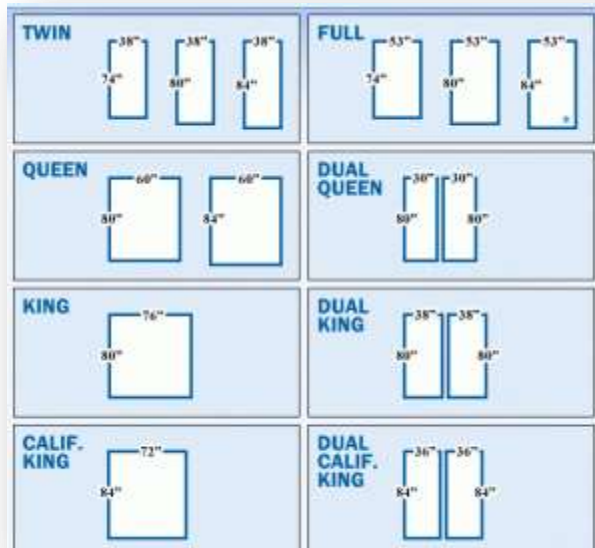


Another reason for seeking a new mattress is a question of hygiene. While a person sleeps, their body is busily rebuilding itself, including the layers of tissue that comprise skin cells. As a person moves in their sleep--shifting, tossing and turning--they are abrading off tiny layers of skin cells that the body constantly is replacing. These millions of dead skin cells collect in the mattress; worse, this collection of dead skin cells off excellent nutritive value for dust mites that enjoy living within the safe confines of your mattress. When the mites eat those dead skin cells, the remains have to go somewhere; it is estimated that approximately

a pound of dead skin and fecal material from dust mites will accumulate per person per year in a

mattress. On top of the dead skin and tiny mites feeding off it, people sweat during the night. Mattresses, especially foam mattresses, can trap this moisture within the matrix of the construction materials. The end result is the interior of a mattress can promote the growth of mold and mildew, which produce spores that can lead to allergic reactions and the onset of asthma.

Most people know when their mattress begins to sag and develop a valley in the middle; it is time to buy a new one. However much a person knows that they need to buy a new mattress, most consumers will delay the purchase for up to three years. That's a long time to put up with sore muscles, aching joints and fatigue from a terrible night's sleep.



There are several factors to consider when beginning to shop for a mattress beyond the simple question of memory foam or innerspring. One of the major determinant factors of mattress shopping is the size of the mattress required. If more than one person is sleeping in the bed, it is a good idea to start at a full-sized mattress--typically 54 inches wide by 75 inches long--and go up from there. If children or pets that often sleep in the same bed, it might be wise to start looking at queen-sized mattresses--60 inches wide by 80 inches long. If a queen-sized mattress is not enough, then there are two larger sizes available, as well: king-sized, measuring in at 76 inches wide by 80 inches long or the California king at only 72 inches wide but 84 inches long.

While it is important to have a bed that will comfortably fit inside a bedroom without overwhelming it, one factor often overlooked is the age of the house. Being able to transport the bed into an older house can sometimes be an issue, especially with the box spring or foundation of the bed. The foundation is typically the solid piece on which the mattress rests, lending additional support to the mattress itself. For queen-sized mattresses, the foundation is typically one piece and can be difficult to maneuver in older style houses, especially if they have narrow staircases or sloping ceilings. It is possible to get a foundation for a queen mattress split into two pieces, but be prepared to spend a little more.

The bed frame itself is an additional consideration, especially if deciding to change the size of the mattress. Depending on the style of the bed, a new mattress might actually rest higher than the headboard or the footboard. Before shelling out the money for a new mattress, it would be wise to measure the height of the bottom of the headboard from where the rails connect to the headboard. Typically, if the mattress is going to be thicker than fifteen inches, ordering a low-profile foundation to support it is a good idea. This will help to protect the mattress resting higher than the headboard does!

One final consideration when shopping for a mattress is to buy a one-sided, pillow top mattress or to opt for a two-sided mattress. The logic behind the two-sided mattress was that, when flipping and rotating the mattress, pressure would push down on the coils from the opposite direction and would therefore aid

in the springs maintaining their original shape. It was a way of keeping the springs springy. However, flipping and rotating the mattress can be a pain, and so many people simply ignore the need to perform this monthly maintenance.

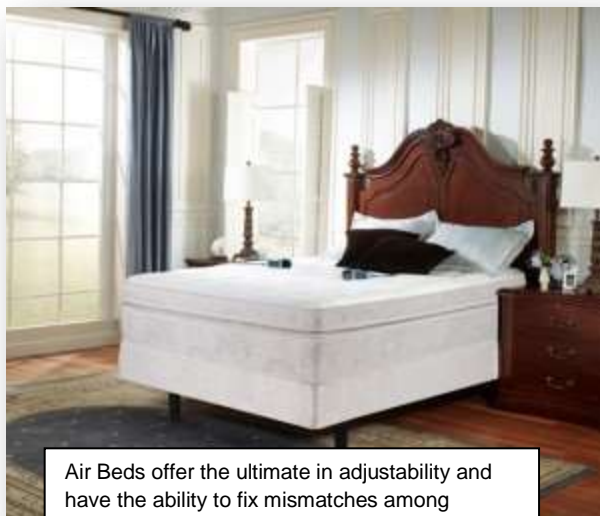
A pillow top, or one-sided mattress should still be rotated (head of the mattress moved down to the foot of the bed) about once a month. This is in part to help extend the life of the mattress by allowing the materials a time of rest in which they are not put under the same stresses on a daily basis. The materials used to manufacture beds are also improved over what they were years ago, and so the lifetime of the mattress is typically extended, lessening the need to flip the mattress as well as rotate it. The foam used in the pillow top mattress can also help prevent the springs from becoming deformed and losing their supportive abilities.

When taken together, there are several factors to consider when shopping for a mattress. The important thing, however, is to not be rushed into a decision and to buy a mattress that fits into each individual's lifestyle, home and budget. Beginning the process armed with the knowledge of what is available to the consumer will help to alleviate the stress and worry over purchasing a new mattress, and that should help anyone sleep better at night

Determining the Best Mattress for the Way You Sleep

One thing that people seldom consider when shopping for a mattress is in what position they sleep at night. This is one of the most important questions a sleeper can ask themselves, but it can be difficult to determine as it can be difficult for a person to observe themselves while they sleep. When it is time to shop for a new mattress, it is important to pay attention to the position of the body as the sleeper is lying while trying to get comfortable for a night's sleep. Important clues can also be noted by being attentive to the body's position when the alarm goes off in the morning.

The reason for examining the position of the body is to consider the type of mattress needed in order to achieve the best night's sleep. There are three basic positions for sleeping: on the stomach, on the side and on the back. Stomach sleepers typically need a firmer mattress. Most stomach sleepers have spent their lives on firm mattresses, which has caused the need to sleep on the stomach. When considering the alignment of the spine, this is the worst position a sleeper can adopt; in order to make up for the misalignment of the spinal column the muscles of the back and shoulders need to pull the vertebrae into place in order to keep the back straight. This will lead to a sore and stiff feeling in the morning, and can lead to restless nights of sleep. The softer the mattress, the more the stomach sleeper will sink into the fabric, and the more the muscles will have to work in order to achieve a straight spine.



Air Beds offer the ultimate in adjustability and have the ability to fix mismatches among couples comfort and support needs!

Sleepers who rest on their back will want to look toward a medium-firm mattress. A mattress that is not as firm will allow the body to sink into it some, and this sinking in will not only support the shoulder girdle and the hips, but also the lumbar region of the lower back. People who sleep on their sides also will probably prefer a medium-firm mattress for similar reasons; the mattress that is slightly softer will allow the pressure points of the shoulders and hips to be better cradled by

the fabric of the mattress, lending additional support and helping maintain a straight spinal column.

Matching the firmness of the mattress to the sleep type is an important first step when shopping for a mattress. The next step is to assess the different types of materials used for mattress construction and how they match not only the position in which a person sleeps but also how a person sleeps.

There are three basic types of mattress materials, but among these three there can be several different variances. By far, the most common type of mattress is the metal spring. A spring is a coil of wire that can be compressed to support the weight of a body resting atop it; once the pressure is removed, the spring should return to its original state. The more a spring is compressed over time, the less likely it is to return to its former shape. There are three things to look for when shopping an innerspring mattress is the gauge of the steel in the spring, whether the steel is tempered or not, and the coil count.

The lower the number of the gauge of the wire used to manufacture the springs in an intended mattress will mean a thicker wire was used to create the spring. The thicker the wire, the more resilient it will be to deforming with time and use. Tempered steel will also tend to be stronger and less likely to lose its shape, thus lengthening the lifespan of the mattress. Coil count is more a rough estimate of comfort and motion transfer experienced while sleeping on an innerspring mattress. The higher the coil count, the better the mattress will support a sleeper and the less likely they will feel their partner or pets moving around on or in the bed.

The Bonell coil is the oldest and typically the cheapest spring type offered. The coils are tied together in helicals which are then fastened to a heavier wire frame; the coils and helicals are usually hooked horizontally across the mattress, which

means that a lot of motion is transferred from one side of the bed to the other. Light sleepers will find this annoying as they will be jostled whenever a partner moves during the night. Not only that, but they also tend to make a lot of noise, which can add more frustration to a light sleeper's night.

A variant of the Bonell style is the "continuous wire," in which a single piece of wire is used to construct the entire mattress. The springs and coils of these mattresses are typically run vertically, reducing the amount of movement transferred across the bed; they are also typically not made of tempered steel, and so can wear out faster than other types of mattresses.

The open-ended coil is the type of bed spring most people think of when imagining a bed. The coil is typically shaped like an hour-glass--narrower in the middle, wider on the top and bottom--and is excellent for supporting the body. Each spring is made separately, which helps to cut down on the transfer of motion. The springs are typically made of tempered steel, which helps to increase support and comfort while also extending the life of the mattress.



Latex Mattresses are popular for their springy support properties! They are also popular choices for allergy sufferers.

The pocketed coil type of mattress is similar to the open-ended coil, but each individual spring is encased in a sleeve of fabric and then the springs are glued together. The support and comfort of these types are usually higher, and the transfer of motion is minimal. All types of innerspring mattresses will have varying layers of fabric on top of the mattress to maximize stability, comfort and support and to minimize the feeling of springs poking into the body.

Foam mattresses are another type of mattress available on the market, and they too come in three main varieties. The first is polyurethane, which is a continuously-poured foam mattress. These are typically only temporary or short-term solutions and are rather inexpensive. Some hotel chains use polyurethane foam mattresses because they are cheap and easy to replace, something hotels are required to do often for hygienic reasons.

Latex foam is an all-natural foam derived from the sap or "milk" of the latex tree. These can be nice if a person is sensitive to vapors released from the petroleum-based chemicals used for polyurethane or the third type of mattress, the "memory foam" mattress. The one risk run by a latex foam mattress is the potential for sensitivity to some of the proteins found in natural rubber. If a person has a latex allergy, it is advisable for obvious reasons to not look at latex foam mattresses. Most latex foam mattresses, however, are sealed in several layers of padding and fabric. If sensitivity issues arise, it is advisable to see a doctor and to look at different types of mattresses immediately.



Memory Foam Mattresses provide abundant support for proper spinal alignment.

The most popular of the foam mattresses is the memory foam mattress. It is a petroleum-based polymer and, like all foam mattresses, small pockets of gas form during the chemical reaction that forms the foam. These pockets of gas are what offer the support by the foam comprising the mattress. Typically, the memory foam mattresses will arrive firmer than the mattress experienced at the show room, and this is because a support chemical has been sprayed on the foam to keep the tiny air chambers within the foam matrix from breaking down before arriving at the buyer's home. Once the mattress arrives, it is advisable to begin breaking down the chemical support either by turning up the heat in the bedroom or by

crawling around on the mattress on hands and knees. Other methods may also be effective in breaking down and releasing the tiny air pockets trapped within the foam.

Light sleepers may find a foam mattress, especially a memory foam mattress, difficult to adjust to. The body will sink into a foam mattress, leaving an indentation of the material where the sleeper was lying. If a person moves around much during the night, it might be necessary to lift oneself out of the cavity in which the body was cradled in order to shift positions. This can rouse a light sleeper from their sleep; it can then take another ninety minutes after the person has fallen back asleep to achieve the deep sleep the body needs in order to feel rested in the morning.

The third type of mattress is the **air-chamber mattress**. These types of mattresses are similar to waterbeds, but instead of water supporting the body, there is a massive air bladder within the mattress. The air bladders are typically swathed in foam supports and cloth. However, the air within the bladders is refilled by air pumps; again, light sleepers may experience issues with waking when the pumps kick on during the middle of the night. The cost of air-chamber mattresses is also somewhat prohibitive for most consumers.

Finally, the **waterbed** provides an often overlooked choice for the hard to please consumer. Contrary to popular belief there are still several vendors that manufacture waterbeds, and there is a die-hard consumer fan base that will sleep on nothing less. Waterbeds come in two primary styles. The softside waterbed mattress looks just like a conventional mattress, so if you think that you have to deck out your room in a 70's wood frame to enjoy the comfort of a waterbed, think again. The hardside waterbed is the type of water mattress that comes to mind when one generally thinks about a waterbed. These are

generally framed in a wooden box frame that supports the waterbed bladder. Both of these mattresses utilize baffles that can be adjusted to support and motion needs. The more layers of the material utilized, the less amount of motion that is generated when getting in, out, and tossing and turning. This allows the consumer to have everything from a free flow full water motion experience to a more restricted or almost motionless experience. While on the topic of cost, it is usually important to enter the mattress showroom with a ballpark figure for a budget. Things to consider when buying a mattress are the amount of time spent in bed; one third of a person's life is usually spent asleep. When considering the amount of money spent on a mattress, it is also important to consider how long the mattress is expected to last. A set costing \$2000 but that lasts for fifteen years will equal out to \$133.33 dollars a year for the lifetime of the mattress. Breaking it down further, that's approximately \$2.56 a week or about \$0.37 a day. That is cheaper than a cup of coffee! Just remember that a mattress is a long term investment, but that investment is also going to reap benefits in all other aspects of a person's life, all based on the quality of a good night's sleep.



Waterbeds are still a niche player in the mattress market. To this day, they still have a loyal following.

How to Find the Best Deal When Buying a New Mattress

Becoming an informed shopper always works best when making a major purchase, such as new mattress. Grabbing the first offer that is given is usually not advisable. These days, it is even easier to do research on a mattress set thanks to the internet. One thing the internet has done is given voice to millions of consumers. Not only can a person compare different types and styles of mattresses, they can also read reports and reviews on the products themselves. Some sites even offer consumers the chance to voice their opinions about the sales associates at various stores!

It is possible to be armed with knowledge before heading to the showroom to start shopping for a mattress. By checking the newspaper ads, it can be possible to amass information that will allow a consumer to be better educated and prepared for dealing with salespeople. The longer a consumer shops the ads, the more valuable information they will glean. Most of the flyers and advertisements can be found on editions printed on Thursdays and Sundays. Researching the advertisements for at least two weeks is a good idea; shopping them for two months would be ideal. This allows the consumer to see the cycle of the promotions and deals that are offered by department stores and independent dealers that advertise in the local papers.

When it is time to start physically shopping (if choosing to do so), it is usually a good idea to start at department stores. These stores will often have beds on display and may have limited number of staff around to hover around the beds and pressure the consumers into sales. It is a good idea to wear loose-fitting clothing that will drape around the body when lying in a prone position; it is also advisable to leave the children at home so that there are no worries about the little ones running around while trying to assess comfort levels on new mattresses.



Buying from reputable Internet Dealers is a Good Buying Decision that can save hundreds of dollars!

Typically, the first mattress to test drive is the firm mattress. Many consumers, after sleeping on a broken-down, sagging mattress will want to overcompensate for the deterioration of their current mattress by looking at the firm mattress. This is fine as it also provides a nice starting point. The key to shopping these mattresses, of course, is comfort. Taking the time to lie on the mattress so that the body relaxes--usually five to ten minutes--will give a shopper a good idea as to whether this is a mattress that will provide comfort and support throughout the

night. After spending ten minutes in one position, shift positions. Try the other side or perhaps lying on the back will give a reference to how the bed will feel throughout the night while the sleeper shifts positions.

Once the firm mattress has been tested, it is time to move on to the medium firm. Once more, fifteen minutes in each position will give the shopper a good idea as to the formation of pressure points, support from the mattress, and how well the body responds to the mattress materials. This can be done again with other firmness levels of the mattresses. Even if foam mattresses are outside the intended budget of the consumer, it might be a good idea to explore these types of materials just for the additional experience. One key thing to remember is that this is not the time to buy a mattress; these are simply data gathering exercises to give an idea as to what type of mattress will work best for the consumer. Remember, a person spends a third of their life asleep; that is twenty-five years spent on a mattress. Comfort of the sleeper should be the key.

With the necessary information in hand, it could be a good time to check the internet to compare the different mattress brands that had been fit-tested. If there are multiple complaints about a certain type of

mattress or manufacturer, it might be a good idea to shop around some more. If nothing negative stands out, it is time to start shopping around.

There are many different ways to purchase mattresses. Internet dealerships or 1-800 vendors might offer lower prices and free shipping. Reputable Internet dealers offer no hassle return policies with satisfaction guarantees. Often, several of the features that make the mattress more desirable have been left out of the manufacturing segment, lowering the price but the consumer is now not buying the mattress they intended. Independent dealers might be more expensive, but they typically handle customer service issues at their show rooms and often offer comfort guarantees that can last for several weeks or even months.

One type of dealer to avoid is the small, storefront mattress dealerships that offer "low, low prices" on "name brand" mattresses. Many times, these are repurposed or damaged mattresses that other, reputable dealers have declined due to defects. Sometimes, the mattresses have been used--sometimes heavily--and given a cursory steam cleaning before having new fabric stitched over the top of the old, hiding the urine and blood stains. One of the things to check when shopping for a mattress is the tag that comedians often joke about not removing. It is there for a reason, and all reputable dealers and salesmen will have the tags on the mattresses. If they are missing, it is a good sign that this is not a good mattress to buy. Also, if there is a black mark on the tag obscuring part of the wording, then the mattress is used and has been reconditioned or repurposed for selling.

Furniture dealerships are another potential location for purchasing a mattress. Typically, the furniture salesmen are not as knowledgeable about the product. Their job is to sell furniture, which earns them a better profit than selling a mattress. Oftentimes, the mattress is tossed in with a bedroom set and no thoughts to comfort level nor manufacturing goods are given. Sometimes, the deals may appear better at furniture dealerships, but the overall experience may turn out to be more hassle in the long run. Department stores are much the same, though their sales staff may know the product better than furniture dealers. Staff at a department store may also not have had any training with selling the mattresses, as they are expected to know about a little bit about all the products that the store offers and not just the mattresses. This is where the research done before shopping for the mattress pays off, as an informed consumer can quickly gauge the knowledge of a salesman by asking about various aspects of the manufacturing process, the materials and the qualities of the mattresses.

Typically, the best price to product ratio will be found at the independent dealerships or the Internet dealer. Smaller dealerships may be more expensive. This is where the research done by scanning and studying the ads in the local paper can benefit the consumer. Knowing if a dealer has a price-matching guarantee can be invaluable when trying to assess the value of a mattress and how that reflects on their



The Ultra 670 by Boyd Night Air provides unparalleled support and comfort settings that satisfy even the most fickle consumer.

Systems like Sleep Metrics take the guesswork out of online mattress shopping by helping consumers make more informed mattress purchasing decisions.



intended budget. Larger independent retailers might offer slightly reduced prices over their smaller competitors. It is important for the consumer to find a dealer with whom they are comfortable. Remember, this is an investment that could and should last for at least a decade, if not longer, not to mention

the impact it will have on the quality of life of the consumer.

Dealing with the salesman can be just as intimidating as researching and shopping for the mattress. There are typically two types of salespeople, those who engage the customer and trying to figure out the needs of the buyer and the ones who will work harder to make the consumer more comfortable so that they are more pliable and have a higher likelihood of caving in to the pressure of the sales associate. Be wary of salespeople who turn questions back on the shopper, especially if they focus on the pain and discomfort that their current mattress is causing. These are tricks to get the buyer to mentally associate suffering with their current condition, while the sales associate hopes that the consumer will quickly grab for the lifeline offered by the new mattress. The salesman experience is one reason for the increase popularity of purchasing online. Systems like sleep-metrics have helped to take the guesswork out of mattress shopping for those who abhor the experience, but many consumers already know what they want when purchasing online.

Another dangerous phrase to avoid is "are you locked-in?" This is typically a ploy by the sales associate to dissuade the consumer from the choice they have already made with hopes of steering him or her toward a different option that will net a larger profit for the dealership and a better commission for the salesperson. The research was done for a purpose: to find the best fit for a consumer's sleep style as well as working it into their budget. It is important to stick with what has been found to be the best option for the person who will be sleeping on the mattress for the next decade, not for the person who is selling the mattress.

One other aspect of the mattress-buying process is the delivery of the mattress. Many dealerships will offer delivery of the mattress as well as taking away the old set. This is usually a good idea. Thanks to the reemergence of the bed bug, places such as Goodwill and the Salvation Army are no longer accepting donated mattresses. If the dealership is offering to take away the old mattress, even for a small fee, it could be worth paying just to avoid the hassle of trying to find a place that will accept and dispose of the old mattress set.

Buying on the Internet is no longer the black box of mattress shopping. In fact, most of the sales channel growth will come from this medium. Free shipping and



The salesman experience is another reason why Internet Mattress sales are increasing.

satisfaction guarantees have taken most of the worries out of the online mattress shopping experience, but it will never be for everyone.