

Mattress buyer's guide

To Box Spring or Not to Box Spring:

There exists a myth out there that the box spring is not an important part of a mattress. If you believe that, I'm sorry to inform you that it's time to reconsider. Putting a new mattress on an old box spring might feel the same as putting it on a new one; however, it will only last 1/3 as long as it would if sitting on a new box spring. It's usually inexpensive to buy the entire set and it's well worth your money. Look for sales on mismatching sets if you don't care whether or not the box spring matches the mattress. It's an easy way to save money on the box spring but still ensure that your new mattress will last as long as it can. When looking at box springs, look for those with steel or reinforced springs. These will last longer, which will in turn make your mattress last longer.

What You Need to Know About Coils:

Most mattresses have metal coils in the mattress core. These coils are responsible for supporting your body and are very important to the comfort of your mattress. Here are some helpful hints on how to interpret information provided on the coils of a mattress.

Typically a mattress will boast how many coils are in it. The number of coils corresponds to how much support it gives. The more coils, the more support provided. This being said, a mattress with less coils is not automatically inferior to one with more. It is a matter of personal preference. For example, you may prefer the "give" of a mattress with only 300 coils, or the increased support of one with 700. There are variations on this depending on the type of coil used. It's important to try out a variety of mattresses and note what kind of support you prefer.

Besides the number of coils, the gauge of coils also varies between mattresses. The gauge equals the number of coils of that size it would take to make an inch. Heavy gauge coils are thicker and generally offer more support. Light gauge coils are thinner and offer less support. Beware of mattresses with low coil counts but heavy gauges being represented as firm mattresses. That combination often quickly becomes lumpy and uncomfortable. Compare the number and gauge of coils when trying out mattresses to see what range you prefer.

The Top Upholstery and Fabric Layers:

It's not just the inner core of the mattress that influences its support and comfort. There are a variety of top upholsteries that can prove to be very important for basic comfort. Choose a pillow top if you want to feel like you are sleeping on a feather bed but still get the support of a solid mattress. If you prefer very firm mattresses, look for thin upholsteries that don't interfere with the support of the coils.

The fabric that is used in the construction of the mattress is also very important in terms of comfort and price. You can choose mattresses with additional layers of wool, silk, foam and cotton. This can increase the comfort, but also increases the price. Look into your layers carefully and consult with a sales person. Sometimes, these extra layers of padding can be compressed and break down sooner than the springs, making your mattress feel concave or lumpy. Keep in mind that you can add some of these layers yourself with removable liners and pads that can be replaced should they break down. Look for the right balance between comfort and price for you.

Non Spring Mattresses:

There are several types of mattresses available that do not use springs and coils. Memory foam mattresses can sometimes be less expensive than other types, though the price can vary dramatically depending on the brand and quality. The foam molds to your body shape and is sensitive to your body weight and body heat. A great foam mattress can be wonderful to sleep on; a poor one can quickly break down and form permanent lumps or depressions, making them very uncomfortable. The heavier the foam, the more it will hold up over time.

There are also latex foam mattresses on the market today. This type of foam also conforms to your body shape and can alleviate areas of high pressure and be very comfortable. Latex also has some other great features, including that it is hypo-allergenic, anti-microbial, dust-mite resistant and breathable.

Latex foam mattresses are usually more expensive because latex is an expensive material. However, these mattresses can last much longer than spring mattresses, making them possibly cheaper over the course of their lifetime. Keep in mind that there are several types of latex foam mattresses available using different forms of latex.

The Extras You Really Do Need:

We know that you are looking for a comfortable mattress at a fair price. Don't be lured in with bottomed out prices that leave you holding the bill for the extra services that should be included when buying a new mattress.

Make sure you consider how your mattress will get to your home as well as what will happen to your old mattress and box spring. Most people can't fit their new purchase in their own vehicle and don't have a place to dispose of their old mattress and box spring. The store you buy from should have plans available to assist you with this.

Most mattresses come with a free frame to use if you are not putting it into an existing bed frame. Often times, setup of your frame, mattress and box spring come with your purchase for free or are available for a very modest price.

Also, look into financing options. A mattress is a big purchase that will last you for many years. You should be able to finance your purchase and make manageable monthly payments. And finally, check to see if a comfort guarantee (usually for 30-60 days) is offered.