

How to buy the perfect bed

Choosing the best mattress is a dream with these tips



Dr Chris Reeves
Osteopath



Candice Deale
Fantastic Furniture

“They know your body the best, and will probably have good advice about buying a new mattress,” says osteopath Dr Chris Reeves. “Ideally, you should strive for optimal support and a mattress that keeps your spine in the most neutral position. But it should also ease tension and reduce any compression on your spine.”

You’re making a considerable financial investment that should see you through the next 10 to 15 years, so fact-finding is important.

TRY OUT MATTRESSES

Try out a mattress in the store. You’ll get an immediate feel for how much comfort and support it provides. “A lot of people rush when purchasing a bed but it’s really important to take your time, and lie on the mattress for as long as you can,” says Jaime Cramp, owner of Bedzzz Tweed Heads, NSW.

“While you don’t necessarily need to lie down for any set length of time, you do need to lay there long enough to let everything settle into place.”

Don’t be shy: everyone does it! “You may find it easier to shop at a store that only sells mattresses – every second person is lying down on a bed,” he says.

Ensure the base is similar to the one you have at home as a soft mattress on fixed slats feels different to an ensemble.

DON'T RELY ON LABELS

When selecting mattress firmness, Jamie advises not to rely on ratings and labels

alone. Too often, one brand’s extra-firm option may be the same as another brand’s medium-firm option.

“It’s better to ignore those words or numbers as much as possible, and just go on the feel of the bed,” he suggests.

The firmness should be determined by the initial feel you get when you lie down. “Generally, side sleepers should go for a slightly softer mattress and back sleepers need a mattress that’s a bit firmer,” he says.

But the rules don’t always apply, especially if you have an existing back condition. Also, don’t pay much heed to buzzwords like “orthopaedic” and “semi-orthopaedic” – unless they come from a reputable medical source, they don’t mean much at all.

FIND THE IDEAL SIZE FOR YOU

Choosing the perfect-sized mattress and bed frame can be a daunting task. While it might sound like a great idea to buy the biggest bed in the store, consider how much space it will take up in your bedroom. A good rule of thumb is to leave up to a metre of space around your bed, which allows for doors that swing into the room. And you should aim for the best-value quality mattress that suits both you and your partner’s size and shape.

If you can’t live without a king-size bed, Jaime recommends buying it as an ensemble. “A king ensemble is about the same size as a queen mattress and frame, which means you’re getting more sleeping surface without taking up as much space,” he says.



CHOOSE THE RIGHT FILLING

Mattresses have come a long way since their humble straw-filled days. “While springs themselves haven’t changed a lot in the last 20 years, there are now several new fillings to choose from, including pocket springs, foam, latex, and gel,” Jaime explains. “Ten years ago, it was all about memory foams because of that lush softness they give you. But in recent times we’ve moved towards gel-infused memory foams, which offer a cooling effect, too.”

Fabrics are increasingly being treated with anti-dustmite and antimicrobial properties to reduce allergies and prevent germs from spreading. But one of the most popular options in recent times is thermal regulation through moisture wicking and evaporation technology. “These fabrics are similar to athletic performance materials, such as cotton-bamboo mixtures, which are

designed to draw moisture away from the body to help keep you cool,” he says.

CONSIDER A HYBRID

If you can’t decide on a filling, a hybrid mattress may provide the best of both worlds. “Hybrids can be cheaper than many standard mattresses because they contain layers of latex, fabric, or memory foam rather than just spring coiling. But be aware the quality of the filler can affect sleeping comfort and support, as well as mattress longevity,” Candice says.

Jaime says the biggest downside to a hybrid is it’s one-sided, so you can’t flip it over. “A better option is to get two mattresses and join them with Velcro or a zipper, which is what they use for king-size beds in hotels,” he says. “That way you can flip them separately and configure them so you sleep on your preferred sides.”

Take advantage of at-home trials

Buying a mattress is a big decision, so look out for opportunities to give it a test run at home and make sure it comes with a good warranty. Generally, warranties range from five to 15 years. Some stores also offer a guarantee on comfort, which is a no-questions-asked return policy, in case you change your mind. Make sure you understand all the terms and conditions – such as return time frames, exchanges and money-back guarantees – before buying your bed.

“Thankfully in the bedding industry all warranty conditions are the same from supplier to supplier these days. So if there is an issue it gets sorted pretty quickly,” Jaime says.

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