

## What to Consider When Choosing a Mattress

Tossing and turning in bed night after night is not an activity most individuals look forward to. For many, avoiding this predicament can become an obsession. Knowing the kind of mattress you are purchasing and its features and limitations can help prepare you for what to expect during the night. When it comes to mattresses, there is not one "best" kind of mattress for all individuals. Instead, the goal of mattress shopping is to figure out what is "best" for you.

There are five primary types of mattresses: innerspring, air mattress, foam mattress, water mattress and futon mattress. Each of these types of mattresses has distinct features, making them different from one another, not necessarily better or worse, just different. Innerspring mattresses are constructed with layers of foam, wool and other similar fabrics on the top of the mattress's interior. Below those layers is a complex system of coiling wire. As a general rule, firmness of the mattress is defined by the thickness of the coil (the coil's gauge). The lower the gauge number, the thicker the coil, and more firm the bed. There is however, an exception to this general rule. The exception exists within the way the coils are connected. Most innerspring mattresses are constructed with a significant enough number of coils to keep the bed firm, and prevent sagging. However, if the coils are not connected correctly, even the thickest coils will not be very firm. The interconnecting wires in a mattress have a great effect on firmness. This information, however, is very rarely published by manufacturers. Therefore the general rule of thumb for an innerspring mattress should be gauge number.

Air beds have been used in hospitals and nursing homes for many years. These beds are designed to provide pressure free comfort and support, and thus have been favored by these institutions. In recent years these mattresses have made their way into the commercial market. Air beds separate themselves in terms of comfort, because they do something that innerspring and foam mattresses cannot do. All mattresses absorb body weight to create comfort, but air mattresses actually displace the weight over the entire bed. This makes them very adaptable to the particular sleeper.

Foam mattresses share the adaptability of air mattresses, and do so due to the style of their construction. Foam beds are constructed as basically as the name implies: they are made out of layers of foam. Two specific types of foam, natural and synthetic, are used in construction of foam mattresses. Natural foam has tiny holes which provide ventilation, and helps to keep the user cool and comfortable. Synthetic foam is flexible enough to be used in adjustable, molding beds, but lacks the ventilation of natural foam. This can create unnecessary and unwelcomed heat over the course of the night. Again, there is not a better or worse type of foam; instead the best foam mattress is a matter of personal preference.

Waterbeds were, without a doubt, a trend of seventies and eighties. These beds use water layered within either a soft or hard side to comfort the user. In most cases, hard sides have been used. These sides keep the mattress in proper shape and form. In soft-sided waterbeds, the mattress is a hybrid of a regular mattress and a hard-sided water mattress. These mattresses have chambers within them surrounded by foam and other fabric padding. These chambers contain the water and provide comfort.

Both hard and soft sided waterbeds have two primary features. The first is that they are safe and relatively easy to heat. This can make them very comfortable, especially for people living in cooler climates. Waterbeds are also beneficial for those who suffer from allergies because the inside is filled primarily with water, making it harder for dust mites to be absorbed.

The final style of mattress is the futon. Futons are best known for their popularity with teenagers, college students and those who live in small apartments because of their ability to be folded in half and made into a couch. This dual function goes hand-in-hand with their low price to make them a very budget friendly option. The mattress is constructed in essentially the same way as an innerspring mattress, just without the springs. Futons tend to be very heavy, and rather firm.

Buying a mattress is a very important decision. For the most part, mattresses are only replaced once every seven to ten years. Personal preference is crucial when buying a mattress, but there is more to the process. One must also be careful to choose a quality made and form fitting box-spring. Placing a new mattress on an old, shabby box-spring can ruin your investment. When it comes time to choose your mattress be sure to get a fitting box-spring to accompany it and rest easy knowing you made the "best" choice possible.

## About the Author

Nick Kakolowski is a freelance writer who writes about topics concerning home improvement and decorating, often focusing on specific topics such as [Mattresses](#)