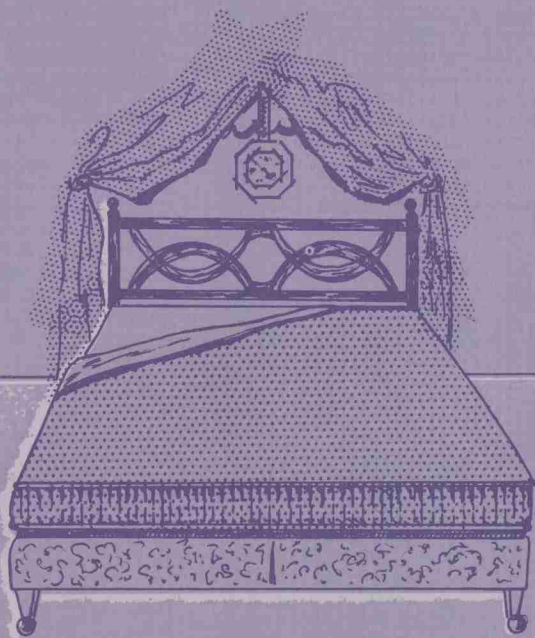


BEDDING BUYMANSHIP



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"If you live to be 75 and sleep eight hours a day, you will spend 25 years of your life sleeping or resting."

To feel fresh and rested each morning, you need a clean, comfortable bed. A good bed and the right bedding also contribute to good general health and posture.

Sleeping comfort is based on having a firm, level spring and mattress for the bed; plump, resilient pillows; smooth, clean sheets and pillowcases; sufficient, lightweight coverings and plenty of room in which to turn.

Bedding Size

Each person needs at least 38 inches of bed width and a length of 9 inches longer than he is. Is it any wonder a 72-inch man in a 75-inch space jams his pillow between the headboard and mattress and turns into a blanket-grabber? Yet a large majority of married couples sleep in double beds 54-inches wide; or just 27 inches per sleeper. That is the exact width of a crib.

Recent studies show that over the past several decades men and women have grown in height and stature. To accommodate the need and demand for extra width and length, the National Association of Bedding Manufacturers has established a wider range of standard sizes. You can now choose bedding items sized to fit your individual sleeping needs. Figure 1.

Mattress Types

The basic types of mattresses are: inner-spring with many different kinds of upholstery padding, such as cotton, foam, hair, or a combination of these; latex or urethane foam without inner-spring constructions and solid upholstered construction. These are made in many different price ranges, depending on quality of materials used, size, and amount and kind of workmanship.

A good mattress will offer firm, buoyant support. It allows the body to float on an even level with each change of position. When the mattress is too stiff to "give" to body contours, it is difficult to relax. If the mattress is too soft, the body is not aligned properly for sleeping comfort.

Test several mattresses by stretching out on them. You can't tell much by pressing the mattress with your hand or even by sitting on it. Overall balance is the crucial test. You have a choice of firmness in each type of mattress.

Innerspring

An innerspring mattress is constructed like a sandwich, beginning with the coils linked as the basic element. Figure 2. The number of coils is not so important as the gauge of steel used, the number of turns or spirals of each coil and how the coils are made and put together. The coils and a border wire, if the innerspring is designed to have one, are joined together by helical wires into a complete innerspring unit. Number of coils may range from 180 to more than 1,000. In some mattresses each coil is encased in a cloth pocket and then sewed or clipped together.

Gauge of coils, number of coils and type and amount of upholstery help determine whether a mattress is soft, medium or firm.

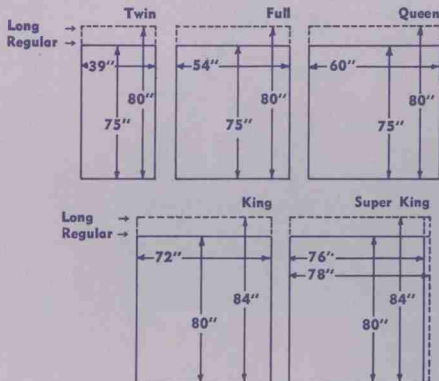


Figure 1

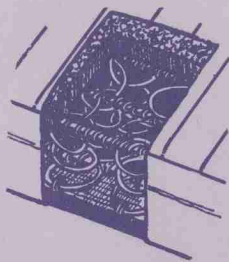


Figure 2

The coil unit is covered top and bottom with insulating material; usually a stitched sisal pad and/or steel wire mesh. This holds the coils in place and keeps padding from dropping down into the coil area. Two or more thicknesses of cotton felt, top and bottom, complete the inner construction. The padding gives a softer surface to the mattress. Some mattresses have an extra layer of padding in the center third, where most of the sleeper's weight is concentrated. A layer of foam latex or urethane over the cotton padding or in place of it is sometimes used to give an individually-different feel to the mattress surface.

The finished innerspring mattress is 6½ to 8 inches in height.

The smooth-top mattress and the quilted-top have to some extent replaced the once-common tufted top. Quality construction of a smooth-top innerspring mattress will have the inner materials secured firmly to the innerspring unit. This prevents shifting and helps keep the surface firm and tightly drawn. Tufting may be hidden under the top layer of padding. The top layer of inner materials of a smooth-top mattress may also be secured by a quilting process which machine-applies a decorative design to the cover at the same time.

If you feel the coils of an innerspring mattress, you can be sure construction is inferior.

Foam

Both latex foam and urethane foam are used to make mattresses without innersprings. Figure 3. While the method for producing each is different, the end products have similar characteristics. Each is light-

weight, non-allergenic, and mildew- and mold-proof.

Foam latex or urethane provides a "feel" totally different from the surface of an innerspring mattress. Both are actually composed of 80 to 95 per cent air, having interconnected cells that differ from most sponge rubber and breathe with every turn of the body—even quiet sleepers turn from 40 to 65 times a night.

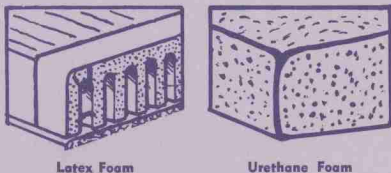


Figure 3

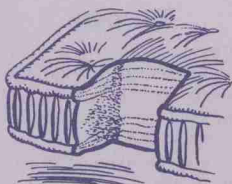
Density or compression determines firmness. Compression may not be easy to determine, though some mattresses are actually stamped with the compression number and it is possible that the shipping carton also carries this information. Compressions range in latex from 13 to 38. Anything below 17 is not recommended by quality manufacturers as they are too soft to provide support and compress to a point where you are literally hitting bottom. Most manufacturers feel a mid-range compression of 25 is suitable for the average person. Urethane producers are also developing compression numbers.

Just as the innerspring mattress offers different constructions, the manufacturers of foam mattresses offer different constructions. Some units are so molded that the center third provides greater support than either end. Other units are molded with a solid slab of latex sandwiched between core holes (open areas). Urethane foam is considerably lighter than foam latex.

While foam mattresses can be found in 4½- and 6-inch heights, don't let the height confuse you. The shorter unit can be excellent; if the spring foundation is resilient.

Solid Upholstered

Felted cotton, hair or rubberized hair are used in making solid upholstered mattresses. Figure 4. These fillings provide a firm mat-



Solid Upholstered

Figure 4

ress with less resilience than either the innerspring or foam mattress. A good hair mattress, made of tail or mane hair, is very expensive and must be a special order. There are very few craftsmen left who know how to work with this material.

An all-cotton mattress varies according to the quality of cotton used. A fiber-filled mattress tends to become lumpy and needs to be aired and turned regularly. They are not widely used in today's homes.

The mattress cover for each type mattress should be tailored carefully out of firmly-woven fabric. It should be anchored firmly to the base or filling material. It should have firmly attached handles for ease in handling.

Springs

The bedspring, the foundation for the mattress, provides one-third or more of the total resilience. There are three kinds of spring construction: the box, open-top coil and flat-link. Figure 5.

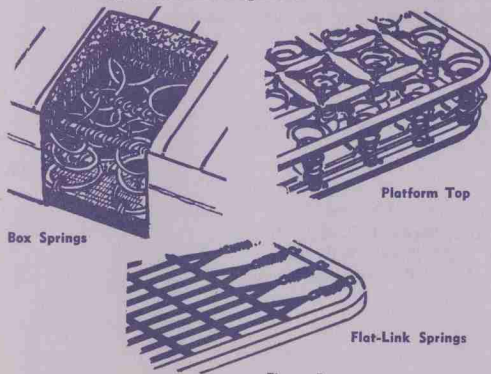


Figure 5

Box springs, the most commonly used, have steel spring-wire coils mounted to a wood-frame base and are padded and covered with ticking. The best ones have coils tied securely to each other and to their base and border.

Most bedding experts strongly recommend that mattress and springs be purchased at the same time. In the coil-on-coil units there are the same number of coils in both box-springs and mattress. Other springs are specially engineered for the foam mattress.

The cover used on the spring should be of a firmly-woven, durable fabric. Since the same type of fabric is used to cover both spring and mattresses, they make an attractive set when purchased together.

Metal coil springs may also be purchased without the covering. Some have steel bands placed over the top of the coils to form a semi-closed surface over which either an innerspring or solid upholstered mattress may be used. Stabilizers are needed to prevent sagging and squeaking. This type of spring is difficult to keep clean.

Link springs are used primarily on cots and fold-away beds. They are inexpensive and tend to sag with use.

Mattress Maintenance

A quality mattress should last 10 to 15 years, depending on the kind of use it gets.

Always use a pad or pad and cover on the mattress and, if you prefer, a cover on the boxspring. These help protect bedding from dust and soil.

The major purpose of the mattress pad is to absorb the moisture your body produces during a night's sleep. Without the pad, this moisture goes directly into the mattress.

When the pad and mattress cover are combined into a single unit, the pad is held firmly in place and does not shift on the bed.

Bedstead

If you must budget, most of your money should go into the purchase of good springs and mattress. These can be mounted on inexpensive legs or a frame until you can purchase the headboard or bedstead of your choice.

This may be one of a variety of attractive designs in wood to match or complement other bedroom furniture. Or, you may wish

to consider one of the other materials, such as brass, rattan, woven cane or wicker and wrought iron.

There is no rule that says you must have a headboard. There are any number of imaginative and attractive backdrops you can use for the bed, such as oversized bolsters, colorful pictures, swags of fabric, wallpaper and similar materials.



Figure 6

Pillows

A good pillow is light-in-weight, resilient, odorless and free from stiff quills and lumpiness. It should spring back to a plumpness readily and hold its shape when balanced on the outstretched hand. Figure 6.

The filling materials may be down, feathers, foam or one of the man-made fibers. Down and goose feathers are the best of the feather fillings. Foam may be either molded or shredded. Like mattresses, foam pillows vary in firmness.

Man-made fiber fills have become increasingly popular. The Textile Fiber Products Identification Law provides helpful information as to content and care. Foam pillows and man-made fiber fillings are recommended for persons with allergies.

Ticking should be a closely-woven fabric, feather-proof, free from sizing and fast in color.

Pillows should be protected with a cover over which the pillowcase is slipped. In this way the pillow is easily kept clean.

Summary

A good night's sleep is a necessity for your personal sense of well-being and attractiveness. Keep in mind that the most important constant factor that determines how well you sleep is your sleep equipment. The selection of just the right comfort is a personal matter. Buy the best bedding you can afford because it is an investment that will pay big dividends for every family member through the years.

Acknowledgment: Manuscript was reviewed by members of the National Bedding Association

Other References: Linens for Bed and Bath, H.E. 106
Bedspreads You Can Make, H.E. 6
Furnishing Your First Home, H.E. 76
Furnishing Your Home: Buying Case Goods, H.E. 78



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