

Mattress Mary's
TaosLifeStyle™

The Ultimate Mattress Buying Guide

A good night's sleep begins with the perfect mattress



Introduction

You eat your fruits and veggies. You're properly hydrated. You get plenty of exercise. It seems that your daytime hours are in line with a healthy lifestyle, but what you may not realize is that's only half the battle.

To maintain an all-around healthy mental, physical, and emotional lifestyle, you also need a good night's sleep.

These nighttime hours are crucial to your overall well-being. According to a 2006 report by the Institute of Medicine, people suffering from insufficient sleep are more likely to experience obesity, depression, heart attack, cancer, diabetes, increased mortality, and reduced quality of life and productivity, just to name a few. The CDC's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey also shows that sleep-related difficulties affect everyday functioning, including concentration, memory, working, volunteering, and driving.

Fortunately, there is a clear solution.

An Oklahoma State University study proved that sleeping on a new mattress (compared to a 5-year or older mattress) reduced lower back pain (62.8%), shoulder pain (62.4%) and spine stiffness (58.4%), and improved sleep quality (64.4%) and sleep comfort (69.9%) after just four weeks. And a Consumer Reports poll in October 2009 showed that 72% of people said a new bed improved their sleep.

Want to get the best sleep? Start by getting the best new mattress.

This guide provides a step-by-step guide for buying the perfect mattress and helping you get the best sleep possible.

It's a simple way to greatly improve your quality of life.

Step 1. Identify need for new mattress

The path to buying a new mattress begins with evaluating the condition of your current mattress. For many people, there are telltale signs that a new mattress is required; for others, identifying the need is subtle. The biggest challenge is recognizing the issue at hand. With sheets and blankets covering the mattress, what is out of sight is often out of mind. Therefore, consider the 4 A's – the most common reasons for needing a new mattress:



Age. Even the best-made mattresses will not last forever. Constant usage takes a toll on a mattress and its support system weakens over time. Most mattresses will last between 5-10 years. At the 5-year mark and each year afterward, evaluate your sleeping habits and comfort level to determine if it's time for a new one.

Appearance. A new mattress always displays that perfect boxy, rectangular form. Over time, however, visible wear and tear may occur. Saggy spots may appear where bodies consistently lay, lumps may pop up in awkward places, and broken springs, open seams or leaks may occur. If your mattress appears broken, don't fix it – buy a new one.

Aches. When you wake up in pain morning after morning, it could be one of two things: a chronic illness or a poor mattress. Most likely it's that latter, so if you're waking in pain, it means you're sleeping in pain too. If you're experiencing any kind of aching, stiffness, numbness, or other pain, you need a new mattress immediately.

Alternatives. Anytime you spend a night in a hotel's or relative's bed, you get a taste for another mattress. If you enjoy a better night's sleep in those other beds, then it's probably a sign that your mattress deserves a second peek, especially since your home bed should provide the utmost comfort and best sleep possible.

Step 2. Know your sleep needs

Identifying your need for a new mattress is not simply about knowing it's time to make the purchase. Before you start the selection process, take the time to consider all the advantages and disadvantages of your current mattress – the feel, the look, the size, the style. Identifying positive attributes and pain points will help you narrow down your mattress choices at the store or online.

To help you find the mattress that meets your needs, follow the 4 S's:

Support. A good quality mattress will support every point on your body from head to toe, keeping your spine in the proper posture and keeping your heaviest body parts afloat. The support should extend throughout the mattress' entire surface area regardless of where you lie on the bed or how your body is positioned when you sleep.

Strength. You want a mattress that won't fall apart after the first year. Seek mattresses with durable materials and high-quality construction so that your mattress will maintain its structure and support beyond the standard 5-year term. Brand name mattresses have a reputation to uphold, so these are usually a good bet.

Size. The size of your mattress is vital to a good night's sleep. You should have ample wiggle room for routine and subconscious full-body movements and if you should have extra space if you share your mattress with a partner. Scan the following chart for more details:

Bed Type	Measurements	Ideal Sleeper(s)
California King	72" x 84"	Couples wanting space
King	76" x 80"	Couples wanting space
Queen	60" x 80"	Couples wanting closeness or tall/large singles
Full or Double	53" x 75"	Small/large singles
Twin	38" x 75"	Small singles
Twin X-Long	38" x 80"	Singles/Tall Singles

Sanctuary. Your bed is your sleep sanctuary and this can only be achieved by experiencing the ideal level of comfort. To create your sanctuary, you need to determine what mattress material offers such luxury. The next step (Step 3) details the various mattress options to help you identify the most comfortable mattress for you.

Step 3. Consider your mattress options

To achieve your sleep sanctuary, you need to find your ideal mattress type. There are several major types, including the standard innerspring, however technology has advanced rapidly in recent years and there are many new options available. Mattress options are listed below in order of most common:

Innerspring Mattress. This is the most widespread mattress, which uses a series of steel coils with layers of foam, fibers, insulation and cushioning. Mattresses can be soft or firm, including orthopedic style. Pillow tops can be included for an extra plush factor and additional comfort.

Latex Foam Mattress. This breathable and resilient material, made from natural and synthetic rubber, is a great substitute to the classic coils. The strong support it provides is great for people with back problems and its resistance to bacteria, mold and dust makes it great for people with allergies. Pillow top mattresses can be added for excess comfort.

Memory Foam Mattress. With a core made of visco-elastic form, these mattresses offer varying densities that shape to your body and are ideal for supporting the spine and reducing pain. Due to its pressure relief, it reduces tossing and turning at night and minimizes the impact of your partner's movement. Can be infused with gel for a softer feel. Pillow top mattresses can be added for excess comfort.

Waterbed. Just like it sounds, this mattress features water inside a rubber or plastic core, plus layers of upholstery. A waterbeds' flexible structure makes it ideal for soothing back pains and maximizes comfort. Quality construction is key to the success of a long-lasting waterbed.

Air Bed. Also just like it sounds, this mattress features a chamber filled with air with a foam layer atop it. Air pressure is often adjustable and changeable, allowing users to soften or firm up the mattress. The flexibility coupled with comfort makes this a popular choice.

Adjustable Electric. These beds use electric power to alter the inclination of a sleeping body. Parts of the mattress can be elevated to assist in healing body parts or help you sleep in a more natural position.

There are other lesser-known mattress options too, including futons and organic mattresses. Choosing one is simply a matter of personal preference and user needs, particularly those discussed in the 4 S's.

Step 4. Select the perfect mattress

Now that you know what your body needs and what options are available, it's time to select your mattress. Today, there are two ways to do it – walk into a store or order online. Both methods have their advantages and disadvantages, but the most important thing is to take your time before you purchase. A mattress is a significant investment and you want to get it right the first time.

For people who prefer to walk into a store, the best thing to do is perform The Better Sleep Council's S.L.E.E.P. Test

S.elect a mattress
L.ie down in your sleep position
E.valuate the level of comfort and support
E.ducate yourself about each selection
P.artners should try each mattress together

Before you purchase any mattress, you should also consider the following in-store mattress purchasing tips:

- Use the S.L.E.E.P. Test on multiple mattresses and spend at least 10-15 minutes on (literally on) your top choices before making a final decision
- If you are sharing the bed with a partner, shop with your partner so you come to an agreement or compromise before a purchase is made
- Consult a mattress professional or salesperson about your mattress selection. Ask to be shown an illustrated interior of your preferred mattress so you know exactly what you're purchasing.

- When it comes to a heavily used item and long term purchase like a mattress, shop for the best value, not the best price.
- Consider purchasing at mattress at a store that offers additional services, such as a generous return policy, free delivery and old mattress removal.

For people who prefer to order online, you should consider the following online mattress purchasing tips:

- Do your research and consult your doctor if necessary before making any choice
- If you are sharing the bed with a partner, consult with your partner before making your decision
- Don't let prices or sales distract you from purchasing the best possible mattress
- Consider purchasing at mattress at a website that offers additional services, such as a free delivery and a generous return policy



Step 5. Initiate smart sleeping habits

A mattress may be the “foundation” for good sleep, but it’s not the only thing that will have you snoozing the night away. Initiating smart sleeping habits will have you focused on the most important things: your mind, body, and soul. Here are a few of the best tips:

- Create a quiet, comfortable environment – make your room a place you want to relax and keep it cool, dim, and quiet at night in order to sleep more peacefully. That also means removing distracting technology, such as work computers and televisions.
- Develop a weekday bedtime routine – weekends often have irregular schedules, but weekdays are more manageable. Create a daily schedule for going to bed and waking up and make sure to include plenty of time to calm down with a book or music.
- Avoid unhealthy late-night munchies – it’s easy to crave food and drinks during those slower evening hours, but it’s important to resist those cravings. Avoiding big meals, alcohol, and caffeine at night will make you sleep much better.
- Encourage your partner – oftentimes one partner stays up later or engages in more bad habits than the other. As the sleep-savvy partner, motivate your other half to make sleep a priority and explain (or show off) the benefits of getting a good night’s rest.



By acquiring the best new mattress and executing these smart sleeping habits, a good night’s rest will become the norm. It will improve your nighttime experience and give you the well-balanced quality of life you’ve always wanted.

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The Ultimate Mattress Buying Guide is brought to you by Taos Lifestyle featuring Sleep Sanctuary.

We are a complete home furnishing center offering an extensive collection of magnificent mattresses, upholstered furniture, home accents, and more, as well as superior services including online ordering, free local delivery, interior design consultations and more!

Stop by our store in Taos, NM, or visit our website for more information.

Happy shopping!

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