

## **PRI Mattress Recommendations**

Start with integrated support. Support for your body depends on coil count, coil type, and coil connection. More coils equal more support. Beds of same size will contain different amount of coils, depending on the gauge of the coil and the quality of the mattress. You should look for mattresses with these minimum quantities of coils: at least 450 in a king-size mattress, 375 in a queen-size mattress, and 300 coils in a double bed. Remember the more the coils the more overall support. Then consider the shape of the coils. Hourglass coils, which provide more resistance as pressure increases, are suitable for those who are not too heavy and want more softness out of their mattress. Continuous coil mattresses are made from a single piece of wire that is shaped to form a system of coils and are not recommended because of wire patterning over time with consistent imprinting. This is why I recommend switching sides with your partner if you sleep with one, or rotating the mattresses top to bottom at least quarterly. Open-ended or pocket-spring coils are recommended because they function as an integrated system with separate connections made out of wire or fabric pockets to allow each coil to work independently in responding to weight and pressure.

Next, immediately look at the warranty. Most warranties for brand name mattresses are 10 or more years. The more expensive the mattress the longer the warranty tends to be. Warranties are pro-rated, meaning that if a 10 year warranty mattress fails in the 8th year you will get 20% of the purchase price applied to your next mattress. I recommend purchasing mattresses with 12 to 15 year warranties if you can afford to do so, even if you plan on purchasing a new one in 10 years. The average person is using a mattress that is more than likely 10 to 15 years old.

The next consideration should be who is going to use the mattress. At least 12% of married couples do not sleep in the same bed, and a significant percentage of the other couples experience problems sleeping in a shared bed. Buying a larger bed does not necessarily help. Buying two single beds may help get a good night sleep. As baby-boomers grow older many are purchasing a normal couple-sized bed, a queen or king, and also a transition bed or a single bed with an appropriate mattress. None-the-less both partners need to lie side by side in the middle of the mattress, on their backs, without their trochanters or hips falling below the edge of the bed, if they plan on using the same mattress at the same time.

Once you know the integrated support system, the warranty and the size and number of beds you need, then you need to consider the firmness or "feel" of the mattress. This is the comfort layer. It is the layer that lies between you and the core or coil support. Unfortunately, many make the mistake of selecting a mattress on this comfort layer only. It is however, important to recognize that this is the layer that accommodates your zone of apposition needed for breathing and allows for passive tri-planar integration for healthy respiration when on your side or back. It also is the layer that dictates cervical pillow needs and contour types. Therefore, the comfort or top layer should be the fourth consideration before you consider price. High end mattresses will fill their comfort layers with down feathers, wool, silk, premium foam, etc. Lower end mattresses will construct the comfort layer of lower grade foam, coconut fibers, and reclaimed cotton fibers. These break down sooner and can become lumpy. You don't need to spend more for luxurious materials like silk and cashmere that may be used in small proportions to market the mattress as a high-end mattress. Pillow-top mattresses are usually a two-to-three inch top sewn on top of a mattress. Your euro-top mattresses are similar to pillow-tops but are more tightly

contained, which makes them less likely to shift and reduce edge sturdiness. A mattress should give full support all the way to the edge and the edge should feel just as firm as the center, if not firmer. This edge provides the support necessary to keep your pelvis neutral and your hip flexors and back extensors relaxed every time you sit to "get" into bed or "get" out of bed. The edge of the bed is the repositioning source of the mattress and the integrated coiled support of the mattress offers passive support for proper ventilatory retraining. Therefore this is the postural rest-oration step of mattress selection. Because of firmness descriptions varying from manufacturer to manufacturer, I recommend purchasing the mattress that is most comfortable to you (or you and your partner). A "medium-firm" feel is usually the one most selected but also the one I would recommend for active feed-forward appropriate rib kinematics during downright positional rest.

Finally the price. You will need to sleep on something 365 nights a year for an average of 30,660 hours of rest in 12 years. You don't want price to override the above sequenced considerations. Buy a high-end mattress if possible! If you are looking for a mattress for a guest room that is only used 3 to 4 times a year, there is no reason to buy a high-end mattress. I would remain skeptical of any queen sized mattress priced below \$1000, even if is marked 20% down. You must not look at prices first. The value lies in the construction and the qualities outlined above. A \$2000 mattress will cost you 6 cents an hour or 40 cents a night if you take in consideration the above example of a 12 year warranted mattress. You probably spend more a day parking your car per hour than your body, if you buy a mattress without taking these considerations seriously.

Other recommendations: Stay away from foam, water, futon, latex and air mattresses. I cannot find any reason to discuss or compare them to coil or inner-spring mattresses. And remember the bed market is a very competitive sector of the economy. The inner-spring market has the three "S" brands: not sacrum, sternum or sphenoid; Simmons, Sealy, and Serta. Each has a number of mattress lines from the basic to the high end. And there are a number of other brands that offer very good mattresses in this category, so lack of selection should not be a problem. I have found that the specialty mattresses such as Tempur-Pedic (memory foam) and Select Comfort (adjustable air) are greatly appreciated by those who like them and want a mattress to conform to them, and greatly disappoint those who purchase them and find that they don't prepare them for daytime activity because of poor re-positioning during normal healthy nocturnal active subconscious movement. One more suggestion; after purchasing your new mattress, take a permanent marker and write the date on the lower end side of the mattress, so you know when you purchased it and how many years your spine was supported by it.