

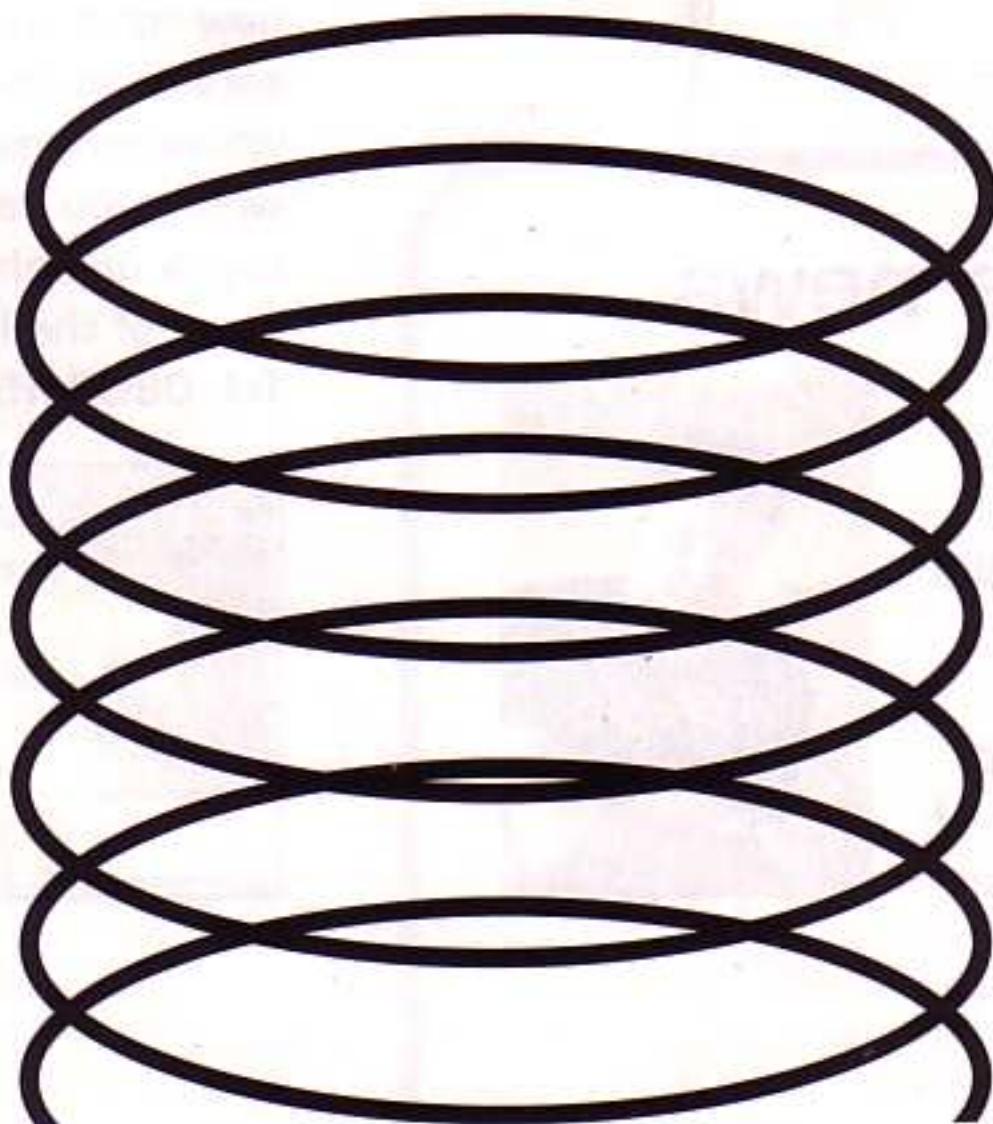
The right mattress, duvet and pillow can mean the difference between an average night's sleep and a deep, restful experience that'll leave you full of energy

THE

# BIG SLEEP

FEATURE BY SHARON DAVIES  
For stockists see page 116

**Sound, restful sleep** is essential to your well-being, but the quality of your sleep is often determined by your bed. The mattress is vitally important to ensuring a healthy night's shut-eye. Combined with a cosy duvet, supportive pillows and a crisp duvet cover, you'll have what can only be described as the perfect sleeping retreat.



## MATTRESSES

The firmness and overall feel of a mattress is determined by several factors, including the filling, how it is sprung and the way it is finished.

### MATTRESS TYPES

The most common type of mattress is the sprung mattress. Constructed with a large number of springs, each spring is surrounded by different types of fillings – anything from wool and cotton to silk, foam and horsehair. Generally speaking the more springs a mattress has the better support it will give and the more expensive it becomes.

There are two types of sprung mattresses:

#### POCKET SPRUNG MATTRESS

Springs are individually housed in material pockets and linked together in a honeycomb pattern. Each spring moves independently as they are compressed, preventing you and your partner from rolling together. The design, coupled with better quality fillings, makes it a luxury choice (see photo 5).

#### OPEN SPRUNG MATTRESS

The less expensive alternative to pocket sprung, the open sprung mattress is constructed with rows of coil springs hinged together by individual lengths of wire. This concept distributes body weight evenly over the whole surface of the mattress (see photo 6).

## MATTRESS ALTERNATIVES

### LATEX FOAM MATTRESS

Foam mattresses have come a long way. Made from aerated rubber, a latex foam mattress is durable, offers good support and is also an ideal choice for allergy sufferers.

### TEMPUR FOAM MATTRESS

The latest development everyone is talking about is Tempur. When slept on it adapts to the shape of the body, relieving pressure from the shoulders, hips, arms and knees.

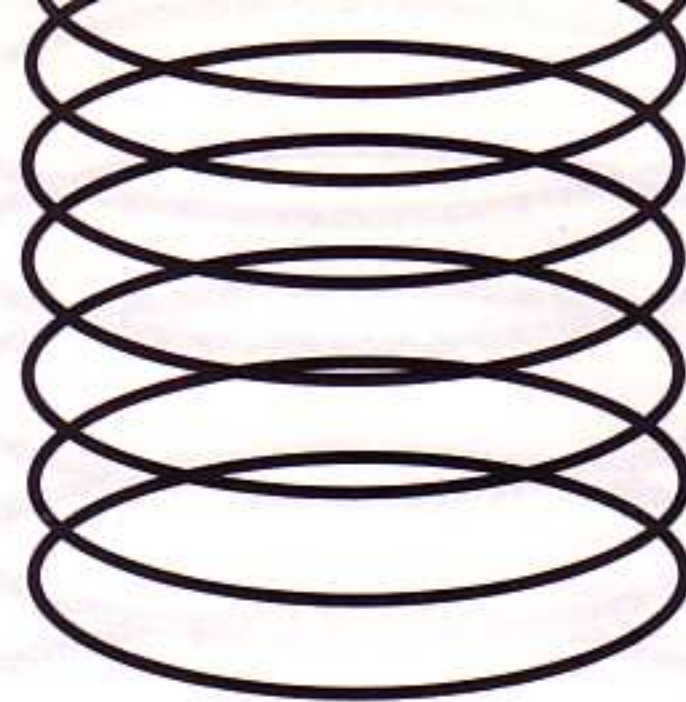
## MATTRESS CARE

Mattress turning is of great importance to ensure a comfortable night's sleep. Louise Peartree, Executive Housekeeper from chic hotel One Aldwych, adds: "Mattresses should be turned from top to bottom and upside down to avoid uneven wear. They need to be aired regularly by removing all the bedding and opening the bedroom window," she says. You can prolong the life of your mattress with a washable mattress protector. Available in a variety of choices from anti-allergy and waterproof to cotton, fleece and wool, protectors can create an extra layer of warmth, cushioning your body while you sleep.

## TOP TIP

**"IF YOU PREFER A SLIGHTLY SOFTER BED THAN YOUR PARTNER, BUY A FIRM BED AND PUT A FEATHER BED COVER ON ONE SIDE OF THE MATTRESS"**

**Physiotherapist  
Cindy Gaimster**

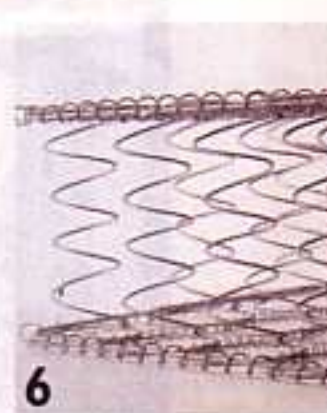


## MATTRESS-BUYING TECHNIQUES

Physiotherapist Cindy Gaimster says the only way to find the right mattress is to try lots out before you buy. "Don't be shy. Lie on the mattress for at least 20 minutes to half an hour. In terms of quality, buy the most expensive one you can afford."

**David Willis is the Sales & Marketing Director at Slumberland. He says:**

"Don't be rushed into your decision – you're going to have to live with your choice for around 10 years. Opt for a reputable retailer that knows its stuff and is happy for you to bounce around on a variety of beds for as long as it takes to make your mind up. And if you're buying a bed for two people, make sure you try it out together."



## HEALTH TIP

**"FIDGETING IN BED IS A GOOD INDICATOR THAT YOUR BODY IS NOT GETTING THE SUPPORT IT NEEDS"** **Physiotherapist  
Cindy Gaimster**

**1** The Moonlight Bay is a traditional pocket sprung mattress from the Love2Sleep range at Slumberland.

Featuring a hand-tufted mattress and a layer of individual pocket springs, it provides excellent support, £349 for a double

**2** Zip-and-link systems are ideal for couples who prefer different levels of firmness.

Ivory Shield open coil mattress, £329 for a double, available from Sprung Slumber

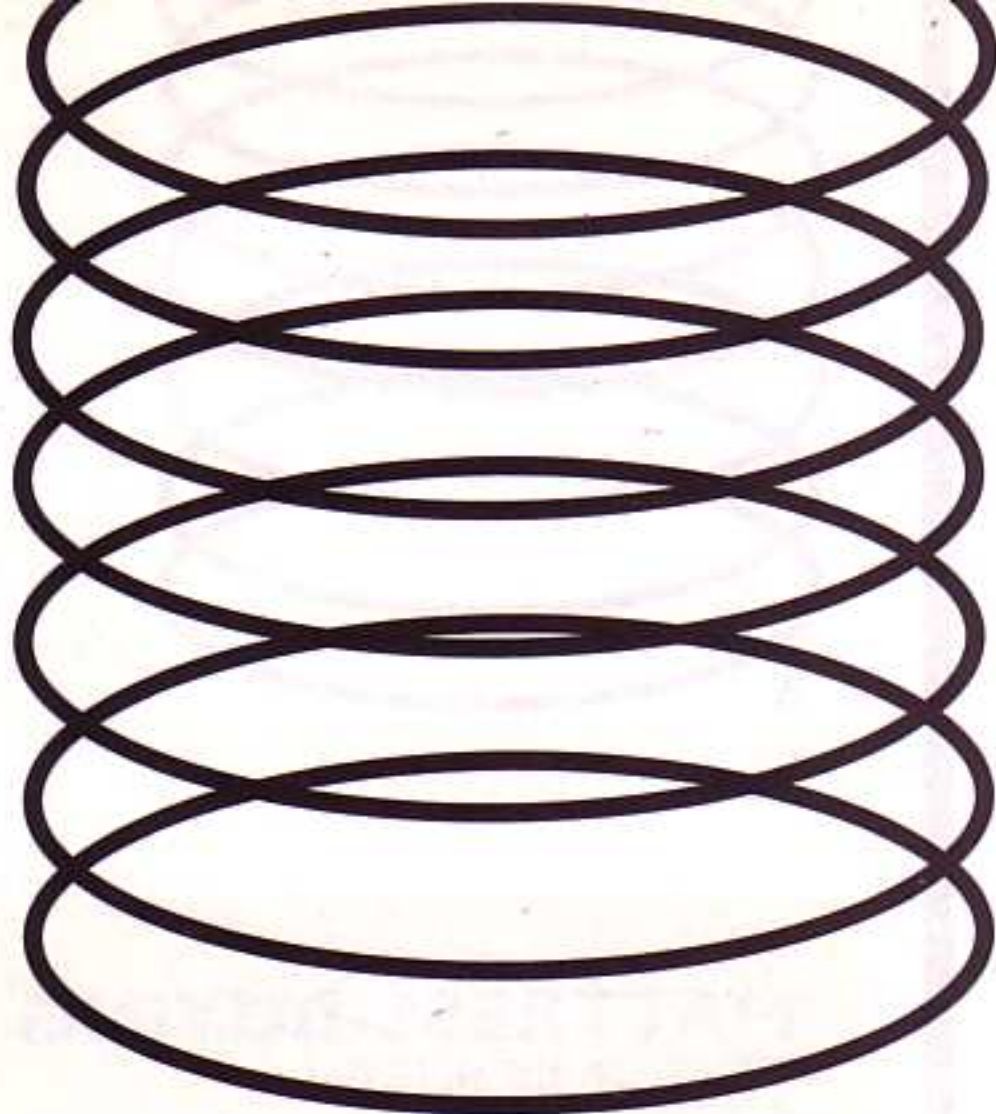
**3** The latest addition to the world of foam

mattresses is Tempur. Made from viscoelastic temperature sensitive material, it allows air to circulate freely. This Tempur 20 is from The Iron Bed Company. A double costs £945

**4** These 100% organic cotton mattress pads give comfort and support while protecting your mattress. Available from The Natural Collection, it costs £125 for a king-sized pad

**5** A cross section of a layer of individual pocket springs

**6** A cross section of an open sprung mattress



## DUVETS

After your mattress, the duvet you choose is probably the next most important factor that will ensure a good night's sleep. But how a duvet feels largely depends on the fabric it is covered with. The choice is simply endless, from pure cotton and linen to more luxurious textures such as silk and velvet. Allergy sufferers should opt for organic bedlinen when selecting a duvet cover.

## FILLINGS

### NATURAL FILLINGS

Duvets with natural fillings are soft to the touch and have the advantage of being warm, light and comfortable. Down is the ultimate filling in terms of quality. Goose and duck are the two most popular fillings. Duvets can have either pure down fillings or are mixed with feathers. The life of a natural duvet is longer than that of a synthetic duvet but may be unsuitable for allergy sufferers. Duvets are also filled with cotton and wool, but check the label carefully for cleaning instructions.

### SYNTHETIC FILLINGS

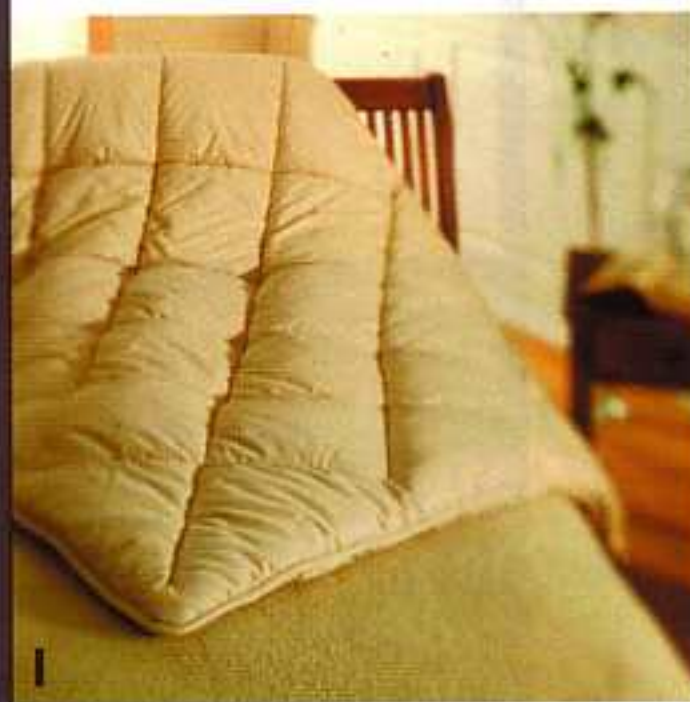
Synthetic fillings, such as hollowfibre, are a practical choice for allergy sufferers, or for young children who need their bedding washed frequently. Machine washable at 60° – the temperature that kills dust mites – synthetic-filled duvets are cheap to buy and easy to care for.

## DUVET JARGON

- Box construction duvets are oversewn into spaced compartments. This construction effectively distributes the duvet filling evenly across the entire duvet to prevent clumping
- One half of a duo tog duvet is warmer than the other – ideal for partners who have different body temperatures
- Combination duvets consist of two duvets that can be separated – a lightweight duvet for the summer and a heavier duvet for autumn and spring. Joined together they keep you warm in the winter and, used separately, cool in the summer

## HEALTH TIP

**ERGONOMIC STUDIES SHOW THAT COUPLES SLEEP BETTER IN A BIGGER BED**  
The Sleep Council



## TOG RATINGS

A tog rating describes the warmth of a duvet. The higher the tog rating, the warmer the duvet

- 4.5 tog is lightweight and is suitable for the summer
- 9-10.5 tog provides medium warmth and is ideal for year-round use
- 12-13.5 tog provides extra warmth and is perfect for the colder months

1 The Natural Collection's Four Season duvets are made from organic cotton and filled with wool from naturally reared sheep. A king-sized lightweight duvet costs £220

2 The Morpheus duvet has a cotton cover and filling, allowing it to be washed at a high temperature, which makes it a good option for allergy

sufferers. A king-size duvet costs £142 and is available from The Healthy House

3 This beautiful Arctic goose down duvet is covered in pure silk. Priced from £250, from And So To Bed

4 The cool, smooth cotton reverse of the Amber duvet cover complements the luxury of the cream woven jacquard. Priced £80 for a double, from Dorma

## TIP FROM THE TOP

**"WHEN BUYING NEW PILLOWS LOOK FOR NATURAL MATERIALS. PILLOWS FILLED WITH DOWN SHOULD BE CHANGED EVERY TWO TO TWO-AND-A-HALF YEARS. THEY SHOULD BE WASHED AND DRIED ACCORDING TO INSTRUCTIONS"**

**Lorraine Barnet  
Senior Linen Buyer  
from And So To Bed**

The White Company

## DUVET CARE

Daniel Browne, Managing Director of royal launderers and dry cleaners Blossom & Browne's Sycamore, has a few top tips to share with us:

- Make sure you invest in a duvet that can be washed safely in a washing machine or laundered easily. When washing, be careful not to let the filling become lumpy and air well to ensure it dries out completely
- Dry-clean only duvets are cleaned with solvent spirit and need at least a week to allow all the chemicals to evaporate from the duvet, so bear this in mind when buying
- Always wash matching duvet and pillowcase sets together so they get the same wear and tear
- Cotton and linen duvet covers are the best as they can be washed in high temperatures and linen gets better with washing and wearing and lasts for many years. Linen keeps you cool in summer and warm in winter

## PILLOW CARE

- Pillow protectors are essential for revitalising tired pillows and keeping them fresh and clean
- Fluff pillows regularly to keep the fillings even and plump
- Open the window and air pillows every week

## PILLOWS

Having the right pillow can make all the difference to the quality of your sleep. Some people prefer soft, plump pillows, while others prefer firmer, flatter ones. It's very much a personal choice

### NATURAL PILLOWS

Feather and down make a very supportive pillow with a squidgy feel. The softness of the pillow is dictated by the amount of down in the pillow and the firmness with the amount of feather. The more feather the firmer it is.

Other natural options include cotton and wool-filled pillows, although they do tend to flatten over time. A polyester blend will provide more spring.

### SYNTHETIC PILLOWS

For people who are allergic to natural fibres, such as feathers, synthetic pillows provide an ideal alternative. Easy to clean in large capacity washing machines, synthetic pillows are made from a range of materials such as hollowfibre, latex, Lycra and Tempur.

### HEALTHY PILLOWS

Most pillows are graded soft, medium or firm, and it's up to you to decide which is most comfortable as it will vary from person to person. A pillow should keep the tension off your neck and shoulders, and your spine should be fairly flat.

Physiotherapist Cindy Gaimster suggests. "One pillow may be enough for some people while others prefer two. It largely depends on how broad your shoulders are." She continues: "A lot of people just tend to put their head on the pillow, when in fact they should pull it right underneath their neck."

- 1 Pillows come in all shapes and sizes. This quilted companion pillow provides extra support when sitting up in bed. Priced at £19.50, from John Lewis Direct
- 2 Duck feather and down pillows are moderately priced. This pair of pillows, encased in a cotton cover, is priced at £15 for the set, from Peacock Blue
- 3 If you prefer synthetic pillows try the The White Company. A standard size hollowfibre pillow costs £17 for a medium soft or £9 for a medium firm



## USEFUL INFORMATION

- The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Tel: 020 7306 6666
- The Sleep Council Tel: 020 8994 9874 or visit [www.sleepcouncil.com](http://www.sleepcouncil.com)
- Blossom & Browne's Sycamore Tel: 020 8552 1231