

MATTRESS TYPE GUIDE

When shopping for a mattress, there are many options and it can seem confusing. Knowing what construction types exist beforehand can be extremely useful. Armed with this guide you will avoid this confusion when you start visiting stores.

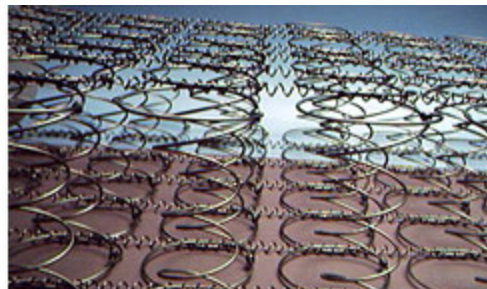
Innerspring Mattresses

Innerspring mattresses are the most common type of mattress sold today. They consist of wire coils inside the mattress, with a section of padding on top of this for comfort. The coils, depending on how they are constructed and how many of them are present in your mattress, will go a long in determining the firmness of a mattress.

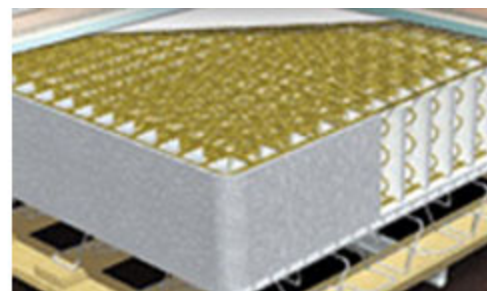
Many people believe that coil mattresses that are firmer give the best support. This is true in the case of people who sleep on either their back or stomach, but for people who sleep on their sides, mattresses that allow for the body to sink in somewhat and allow the spine to assume a proper alignment have been shown to be the best option. Mattresses that have individually wrapped coils provide the best side sleeper support of all the innerspring types.

Coil Types

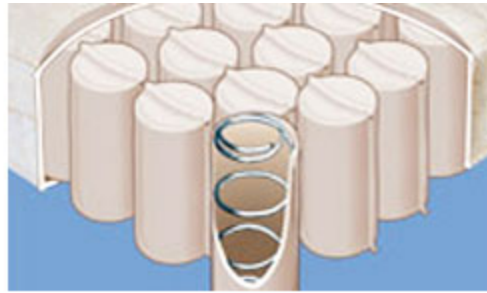
Open Coil: This is the oldest type of coil, and still the most widely used. Adapted from the design used to make seats in buggies in the 19th century, this type of coil is hourglass shaped, and joined to the coils next to it by small wire spirals known as helicals. These springs work well when they are new, but may wear out more quickly than some of the more modern coil designs.



Offset Coil: This coil type is like the open coil, but it has a squared off head as opposed to a round one. This allows the mattress to contour better than with the traditional circular coil head of the open coil. The coils in this system are more cylindrical than the open coil, making them more durable than their predecessors. Mattresses with these coils are usually found in better, high end sets, than other coil types.



Pocket Coil: This type of coil contains cylindrical springs that are each individually wrapped in fabric pockets. The construction of these types of mattresses is designed to provide the best contour possible (this is why this coil type is best for those who tend to sleep on their sides). Since the springs are not linked in the same way as open coil or offset coil springs are, you will feel your partner move much less than you would with other coil types. However, this also means that since each coil takes all of the weight that is put onto it by itself, and with no support from surrounding coils, the coils will provide less support for heavier people.



Continuous Coil: The continuous coil is made of rows of single wires attached to each other by helicals. The idea behind this design is that each coil deflects a larger percentage of the weight on it to other coils surrounding it, meaning less stress is put on each coil. Consequently you'll find these mattresses may keep their shape longer, causing these mattresses to have a longer lifespan than other innerspring categories.



Memory Foam Mattresses

In the 1970's, NASA launched a project to develop a substance that could be used to relieve the extreme g-forces that their astronauts were subject to during lift-off on space flights. They discovered that to reduce these g-forces, they needed a material that conformed to a person's body, not merely cushioned them. What they required was something like a mold, but without the rigidity, as a hard mold would create painful pressure points as the astronauts moved or were shaken around. They discovered a type of foam they named viscoelastic – that is, it would conform to a shape when pressure was applied, but would return to its original shape when the pressure was taken away. A consumer version of this material became available to the general public in the 1980's. Now every major mattress company manufacturer's models utilizing memory foam.



As with innerspring mattresses, foam mattresses are available in varying firmnesses. Generally speaking, foam mattresses that are firmer have a longer life than those that are softer. For some people a memory foam mattress can seem warmer than any other bed type and a lengthy in store trial of at least fifteen minutes is recommended.

Latex Mattresses

Latex foam mattresses have a higher elasticity than memory foam mattresses.

This causes them to feel springy, as opposed to those made of memory foam, which feel solid. Memory foam will not feel like it is pushing against you to return to its normal state, whereas latex foam will feel like it is trying to return to its uncompressed form. For many individuals this is a good thing as they will experience less memory foam cratering during the night, caused by slow bounce back.



For some people, latex would seem out of the question due to allergies. Triggering of this allergy, however, requires skin contact. This is unlikely with the latex blends that are currently used in foam mattresses. It is also believed that the proteins that trigger latex allergies are washed during the preparation of the latexes which are used in the making of mattresses today, making the triggering of these allergies even less likely.