

# THE MATTRESS

Choosing the right mattress is by far the most important decision you will make when buying a bed. Mattresses may look similar but, under the ticking, there are enormous differences in materials, construction and quality. The mattress is much more significant than the style of bed or the type of base, though the base will also have an impact on comfort.

## SPRING MATTRESSES

The most familiar of these are **spring interior** mattresses. Springs in heavier gauge wire give a firmer mattress; lighter gauge will give a softer mattress. The quality of the mattress is often determined by the number of its springs. Open coil and continuous spring versions are the least expensive and a budget mattress, unless made of foam, will be open coil.

**Open coil** mattresses contain rows of individual coiled springs joined with a helical wire. Continuous springs are made from one piece of wire and give a bit more independent support. For good, mid-priced continuous spring mattresses, try Miracoil by Silentnight.

**Pocket springs** are small individual springs sewn into calico sleeves. The pockets, rather than the springs, are joined, making the mattress more responsive to the sleeper. Also, when the bed is shared, the movement of one partner is less likely to disturb the other. The number of pocket springs in a mattress is one indicator of quality: a standard double mattress may have 600 to 800 springs or 3,000 or more. A larger number of smaller

pocket springs or a double layer often features from Savoir Beds and Vi-Spring.

**Interior spring** mattresses, whether open coil, pocket or continuous, are assembled similarly to a sandwich with the supporting springs between layers of cushioning on each side. The cushioning provides a barrier between the springs and the occupant. Fillings can range from inexpensive polyester to combinations of cotton, wool, horsehair, silk, mohair and cashmere, as well as better quality foams, including latex or visco-elastic foam. Deeper mattresses will have more fillings, offer greater comfort and be more expensive. Hand-stitched sides, found mainly on handmade beds, extend the sleeping area to the edge. Not all mattresses need to be turned over, but all should be rotated regularly so that the head end becomes the foot end.



## NATURAL MATTRESSES

The finest handmade mattresses, such as those by Hästens Savoir Beds and Vi-Spring are constructed only from natural materials. They combine wool, cashmere, mohair and horsehair as fillings because these particular fibres are resilient and wick moisture away for speedy evaporation. Norris Bedding, which also crafts mattresses by hand in natural materials, offers a pocket spring mattress, at 150cm wide, for £1,320. Welsh company Abaca creates handmade pocket spring, natural latex and combination latex/pocket spring mattresses using certified organic materials. ▶

**Snowdon organic pocket spring mattress** containing 1,100 springs, £995; **divan base**, £717; both 150cm wide, Abaca.



## WHAT'S IN A LUXURY MATTRESS?

100 per cent cotton fabric, genuine horsehair, wool and cotton.

As above, partly upholstered in cotton stretch fabric.

Patented Hästens spring system, 13cm high with reinforced corner springs.

100 per cent cotton fabric, flax, wool and cotton.

Plywood base with motors and castors.

