

# Fabulous FURNITURE 2001

## Mattress should offer both comfort, support

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STAFF WRITER

It is said we spend one-third of our lives in bed. A good night's sleep is part of a healthy lifestyle. So it's important to be conscious of the available choices in mattresses, as well as in the linens and other pieces that cover them.

"Comfort and support, that's the main thing," said Dan Putz, sales associate at McLaughlin's Furniture, with stores in Novi and Southgate.

"You definitely have to come in and lay down and see how well it supports you."

Be sure to stretch out on the mattress, and see that it supports you evenly all along your spine, he said.

If you wake up fatigued, and aren't getting proper rest, it could be a sign that your mattress is old and needs to be replaced, Putz said.

Mattress size matters. Research shows that a healthy sleeper turns between 40 and 60 times a night, according to the American Innerspring Manufacturers, a non-profit group that provides free information on restful sleep and sleep surfaces.

Standard mattress sizes are twin, 39 by 75 inches; double, 54 by 76 inches; queen, 60 by 80 inches; and king, 76 by 80 inches.

Mattress construction consists of the:

■ Foundation, or box spring - The box spring supports the mattress. The whatthebest-mattress Web site recommends that the mattress and box spring be bought as a set. A mattress on an old box spring will last 1/3 as long as one on a new box spring, the Web site said.

■ Mattress core - This supports the sleeper. It is made up of coils. It is important to know the number of coils in a mattress, the gauge of the coils (number of coils to make an inch) and the connections between the coils.

A mattress can have from 300 to 700 coils. The number of coils should correspond to how much support the mattress gives. In general, more coils means more support.

The heavier the gauge, the more support the mattress will give. A mattress with a low coil count and heavy gauge wire will become lumpy quickly because it doesn't have enough coils, according to the Web site.

Interconnecting wires keep the coils in their proper place in the mattress. A mattress with too few interconnecting wires can lose its shape more quickly than one with an adequate amount.

■ Upholstery on top of the mattress - The choice of upholstery should be made by what

feels the best when you try the mattress.

If you want to feel as though you are sleeping on a feather bed, select a "pillow top." If you prefer to feel as though you are sleeping on a board, look for thin upholstery.

What you put on top of the upholstery can make a difference.

Cristions Fine Linen & Down, with locations in Michigan Design Center in Troy and in downtown Birmingham, presents "bed perfect" seminars for the public that show suggestions for the well-made - and maybe best dressed - bed.

"Just keep it simple," said Kathy Thornton, Cristions owner. "People don't have a lot of time to make the bed."

A comforter cover (or duvet cover), sham and coverlet (or bedspread) are among components of the well-made bed. You can give the bed a rounded look by using such elements as a down comforter and an assortment of pillows.

"You can really use your existing pillows and add a couple pieces here and there," Thornton said.

A bed at Cristions' MDC show-

room featured a variety of pillows standing against the headboard.

The pillows included Euro shams. A sham is a decorative cover for a pillow; it isn't designed to be slept on. A Euro sham contains the European style, 26-by-26-inch pillow.

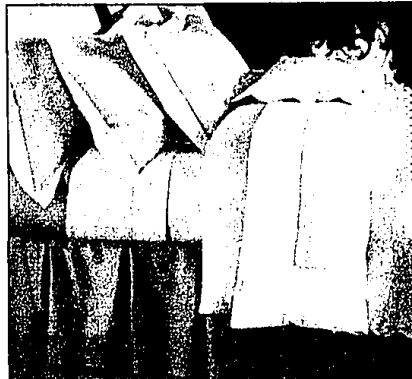
"These are functional pillows," Thornton said. "You can lean against them. They give you that support."

Matelasse and piques are ideal coverlet fabrics, according to Cristions. A matelasse has a raised surface with a "quilted" look. A pique is flatter and less puffy in appearance.

Stay neutral with your color tones, Thornton said. That way you can easily change the look by adding accent colors. Other basic advice: A dust ruffle should just touch the floor.

Delicate linens should be washed separately. Items containing polyester will shed on natural fibers, diminishing the smoothness and softness of the fabric. Garments with buttons or zippers can damage the fabric.

Some detergents are too strong for linens. Linen wash, or soap made for baby laundry (such as Dreft or Ivory), is recommended.



**'Bed perfect':** This bed presents a glamorous look in a soothing neutral palette. An assortment of pillows, and a dust ruffle that just touches the floor, are among the components of a well-made bed, according to Cristions Fine Linen & Down.

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