



THE Better
Sleep
COUNCIL 

THE Better
Sleep
COUNCIL
www.bettersleep.org 

The Better Sleep Guide

Start Every Day with a Good Night's Sleep.™



Stress. It's robbing many Americans of the good night's sleep they need to be healthy and productive.

And the consequences of a poor night's sleep – increased mistakes, difficulty concentrating, and irritability – only compound the stresses of life. But it doesn't have to be this way.

This booklet provides simple solutions that can help improve the quality of your life by improving the quality of your sleep. It covers:

- ◆ The Importance of Making Sleep a Health Priority
- ◆ A Comfortable Bed – The Foundation of a Good Night's Sleep
- ◆ Buying the Mattress that's Right for You
- ◆ Making Your Bedroom a Sleep Sanctuary

By taking control of your sleep environment and starting each day with a good night's sleep, you can effectively reduce stress and improve your quality of life.

Why wait? Start sleeping better tonight!

What is the Better Sleep Council?

Established in 1979, the Better Sleep Council (BSC) is a nonprofit organization supported by the mattress industry. The BSC is devoted to educating consumers about the role a mattress plays in getting a good night's sleep... and in their overall quality of life.

Better Sleep on the Web

For the definitive resource on sleep and mattresses, log onto the BSC's Web site at www.bettersleep.org.

Good Health Begins with a Good Night's Sleep

A good night's sleep is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. It affects all aspects of your day – from how you feel, to your relationships, productivity, and ultimately, your quality of life. While you sleep, your brain goes to work, consolidating the day's learning into memory and reenergizing the body.

The average individual requires 7-8 hours of sleep per night, but it differs for everyone. Some people may need as much as 10 hours a night, while others need much less. It's a safe bet, however, that if you sleep longer on the weekends than you do during the week, you aren't meeting your personal sleep requirement.

Better Sleep Begins with Your Mattress

Your mattress has the potential to make or break a good night's sleep. If you're tossing and turning more at night or if you're waking up feeling stiff in the morning, it could be a sign that your current mattress is no longer the best for you. Your body appreciates a comfortable, supportive mattress and will let you know if what you're sleeping on is not up to the task!



National Sleep Foundation/ Better Sleep Council Sleep Tips

We all have too much to do, so don't forget to take time out and recharge yourself through a good night's sleep. The quality and quantity of your sleep can make all the difference in how productive you'll be the next day. Here are ten tips to help you get the sleep you need and deserve.

1. Maintain a regular bed and wake time schedule, including weekends.
2. Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine such as soaking in a hot bath or hot tub and then reading a book or listening to soothing music.
3. Create a sleep-conducive environment that is dark, quiet, comfortable and cool.
4. Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows.
5. Use your bedroom only for sleep and sex. It is best to take work materials, computers and televisions out of the sleeping environment.
6. Finish eating at least two to three hours before your regular bedtime.
7. Exercise regularly. It is best to complete your workout at least a few hours before bedtime.
8. Avoid nicotine (e.g. cigarettes, tobacco products). Used close to bedtime, it can lead to poor sleep.
9. Avoid caffeine (e.g. coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate) close to bedtime. It can keep you awake.
10. Avoid alcohol close to bedtime. It can lead to disrupted sleep later in the night.



NATIONAL SLEEP
FOUNDATION

www.sleepfoundation.org

A Comfortable Bed – The Foundation of a Good Night's Sleep

You spend more time on your bed than on any other piece of furniture in your home, and you rely on it more for your feelings of comfort and well being. That's why it's so important to find the mattress that's right for you.

If you're reading this brochure, chances are you're thinking about buying a new mattress. But if you're unsure, consider these questions:

- ◆ Are you sleeping better or worse than you were one year ago?
- ◆ Are you waking up feeling stiff and sore?
- ◆ Did you have your best night's sleep somewhere other than your own bed?

You can avoid sleepless nights by carefully evaluating the comfort and support of your sleep set twice a year to make sure your personal comfort preferences are met.

To get started on selecting a good mattress – one that's tailored to your individual needs – it helps to become familiar with the basic elements of a comfortable bed.

Elements of a Comfortable Bed

INNERSPRING The most widely purchased type of bedding uses the support of tempered steel coils in a variety of configurations. Layers of upholstery provide insulation and cushioning between your body and the spring unit. The result of this basic approach, coupled with state-of-the-art technology, is a full range of comfort choices.



Quality tip: You can't judge the quality of a mattress solely on the number of coils it contains. A high coil count doesn't automatically mean it's a better product. It's a combination of a top quality innerspring system and superior upholstery material that makes the difference.

FOAM. Solid foam mattresses also offer a wide choice of "feels". They can be made of a solid core or of several layers of different types of foam laminated together. Advanced technology in polyurethane foams, refinements to traditional latex foams, and the new viscoelastic foams have added to the choice of comfort, support, and performance.

FOUNDATION. A good foundation or box spring is as important as a good mattress. Don't put a new mattress on an old foundation. When you select the mattress, purchase its companion foundation—the two are designed to work together to provide maximum comfort. In fact, buying the mattress without its matching foundation may affect the terms of the warranty.

OTHER CHOICES. There are many popular mattress alternatives to address individuals' comfort, support and space needs. Airbeds, futons, adjustable, and waterbed are a few of the choices offered at bedding retailers across the country.

Buying the Mattress that's Right for You

You need to understand your sleep needs before you start shopping. Take a moment and think about your lifestyle. How has it changed since you last bought a mattress and how might these changes affect your purchase?

And what about your body? Has it changed and how has this affected your needs for support or your comfort preferences? Finally, think about space needs and if you have a partner, take your partner with you to shop for a new mattress. It's important to find something that meets both of your support needs and comfort preferences.

To determine the mattress that's best for you, go to a retailer of your choice and take the "SLEEP Test" (see page 9) to help narrow your options. Compare the feel of different mattresses by lying down on them, while paying attention to three of the mattress' most important features: comfort, support, and space. The mattress that best fulfills the combination of these needs is the mattress for you.

What to Look for When Buying a Mattress

COMFORT. Gone are the days when a mattress had to be stiff-as-a-board to be good for you. And it's interesting to note that recent studies suggest that a medium-firm mattress is more likely to improve back pain than a firm mattress.

You'll sleep best when your bed helps you feel cradled in comfort. Today's top quality mattress/foundation ensembles are built for just that - superior comfort. Luxurious new cushioning materials and extra-soft surface treatments create more of a plush, comfortable feel. Additionally, it is normal for some body impressions to appear in the first few weeks of sleeping on such mattresses.



SUPPORT. Correct support is the essential ingredient for a healthy body. A good mattress and foundation will gently support your body at all points and keep your spine in the same shape as a person with good standing posture. Pay special attention to your shoulders, hips, and lower back—the heaviest parts. If there's too little support, you can develop back pain. But if the mattress is too hard for you, you can experience uncomfortable pressure.

A word about "firm." Don't rely on product labels to tell you which mattress will give you the right support. One manufacturer's "firm" may feel harder than another's "extra firm." The only way to find out if the support is right is to lie down and give it a try.

DURABILITY. It's the quality of the materials used and how they're put together that determine how long a mattress and foundation will provide the comfort and support you bought them for. The best assurance of good performance over a good many years is to buy the highest quality sleep set you can afford.

A word about the warranty. Don't look to the warranty to tell you how long to keep your mattress and foundation. The warranty is there to protect you from product defects, not against the gradual loss of comfort and support. Keep in mind that while a sleep set may still be usable after many years, it's probably not giving you the good night's sleep you deserve.

SPACE. Cramped quarters can turn sleeping into a nightly wrestling match. A healthy sleeper moves anywhere from 40-60 times a night, including some dozen full body turns. You need freedom of motion while you sleep and to help you relax while you're falling asleep. If you

sleep with a partner, be sure to select a queen or king size bed. Both are not only wider, but several inches longer than the standard "double" (full size), which offers each sleeper only as much space as a baby in a crib.

Mattress size chart

CALIFORNIA KING	72" X 84"
KING	76" X 80"
QUEEN	60" X 80"
FULL ("DOUBLE")	53" X 75"
TWIN	38" X 75"

(All dimensions may vary by +/- one half inch)

Take the SLEEP Test

Before purchasing a mattress, it's important that you and your partner take The SLEEP test to help ensure that you are selecting a mattress that's right for your comfort and space needs. Here's how you take the SLEEP Test:

- ◆ **Select a mattress**
- ◆ **Lie down in your sleep position**
- ◆ **Evaluate the level of comfort and support**
- ◆ **Educate yourself about each selection**
- ◆ **Partners should shop together**

Don't be embarrassed! You don't think twice about test driving a car, so you shouldn't think twice about "sleep testing" a mattress. Lie down on the mattress for several minutes and assess how well it provides support and how comfortable it is for you and your partner. The only way to tell if a mattress is right for you is to lie down on it!



Make Your Bedroom a Sleep Sanctuary

Your bedroom should be quiet and relaxing. Unwelcome noise or light, an uncomfortable or worn-out mattress and foundation, or a room that's too warm or too cool can prevent you from getting the good night's sleep you need.

Is your bedroom conducive to a good night's sleep? Take these four factors into consideration when evaluating your sleep environment - they make all the difference:

- ◆ **Mattress and Foundation.** Be sure your mattress and foundation meet your needs for both **comfort and support**. If you sleep with a partner, your mattress should allow both of you enough space to move easily.
- ◆ **Pillow.** Just as your bed should provide support for your body, your pillow should give you the right cushioning to position your head and neck properly. It should hold your head in the same position to your shoulders and spine as if you were standing with correct upright posture.
- ◆ **Light.** Light is one of the body's most powerful time cues. The rising sun can wake up the brain long before the alarm goes off. A dark room is the most conducive for sleep – day or night.
- ◆ **Noise.** Sudden, loud noises from inside or outside the home can disrupt sleep. Steady, low sounds, such as the whir of a fan or air conditioner, are soothing because they help block distracting noises.
- ◆ **Temperature.** The ideal bedroom temperature is 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit (16 to 18 degrees Celsius). A room that's too warm or too cool can disrupt comfortable sleep.

Resources for Help

Sleep Problems

If you think you're suffering from a serious sleep problem, such as insomnia, sleep apnea, narcolepsy or restless legs syndrome, consult your doctor or a sleep specialist. For general questions and inquiries about sleep and sleep disorders, request consumer information from:

1. National Sleep Foundation

1552 K Street, N.W., Suite 500

Washington, D.C. 20005

Phone: 202-347-3471

Fax: 202-347-3472

Web site: www.sleepfoundation.org

2. National Center on Sleep Disorders Research — National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute NHLBI Information Center

P.O. Box 30105

Bethesda, MD 20824

Phone: 301-435-0199

Fax: 301-480-3451

Web site: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncsdr

For a Free Copy of the Better Sleep Guide

Write to the Better Sleep Council Guide

P.O. Box 19534

Alexandria, VA 22320-0534

Or e-mail: bsc@sleepproducts.org

For Bulk Orders of the Better Sleep Guide

To receive information about ordering bulk quantities of the Better Sleep Guide, please fax a request to 703-683-4503 or send an e-mail to bsc@sleepproducts.org.

To Help Your Child Sleep Better

Send \$1.00 and a stamped, self-addressed business-size envelope to the Better Sleep Council and ask for the Parent/Child Sleep Guide.