

Mattress Picks You Can Sleep With

Does a \$10,000 product give you better slumber than one a third its price? Here are some tips for making picks that rest well with you.

A comfortable bed is essential to a good night's sleep. But trying to understand precisely why someone would fork over upwards of \$10,000 for a mattress and box spring isn't easy. Perhaps it's just a perception that it takes 3,000 coils of springs and padding of pure cashmere to give you the perfect night's slumber. "If you can afford it, and you have any issue sleeping, I can't recommend anything more than this," says a retired stockbroker who recently bought an \$11,000 Hypnos mattress.

Experts say a steep price may bring luxury and bragging rights -- Hypnos claims Oprah Winfrey and the Queen of England sleep on its beds. But it's not necessary to spend that much to get a top-quality mattress and box spring. "For \$1,750 to \$3,000, you can get a wonderful bed, as good as anybody's," says third-generation mattress retailer Bob Long, president of Long's Bedding in New York.

INDULGENCE, NOT FUNCTIONALITY. All mattresses are basically made the same way, with a core of supportive material -- springs, water, air, or foam -- wrapped with padding, then covered in fabric. So how do you account for the \$10,000 model? "You get a far higher degree of hand craftsmanship," said Mark Owen, managing director of Windsor Bedding, a subsidiary of Simmons Bedding.

Owen says his mattresses use springs enclosed in individual pockets, which allow for more independent motion than continuous coils made from a single piece of wire. The pocketed springs lie under padding of cashmere or highest quality cotton, topped by a chenille cover, and finished by hand. Indulgence, he said, not functionality, justifies the price.

At \$4,000 to \$8,600 for a queen-size mattress and box spring, Owen's offerings aren't the most expensive. Hypnos asks \$8,000 to \$12,000 in total for the two items. VI-Spring, which boasts it was the supplier to the Titanic, charges \$12,000 to \$24,000. Duxiana, which claims to have established the U.S. premium mattress market in 1977, is now at \$4,000 to \$7,000 for a queen -- one of the lower-price premium entries.

More expensive products come with longer warranties, but they just cover defects in materials, not normal wear and tear. So if you wear out your mattress in 10 years, your 20-year warranty won't help.

SUBJECTIVE CHOICE. Whether or not price matters, if you're shopping for a mattress, spend at least 15 minutes in the store lying on each one you're considering, positioned the way you normally sleep. Besides being comfortable, you want to make sure the product can support your back properly. "When you're lying on your side, your shoulders and hips should sink in enough for your spine to stay straight," said, Dr. David Wong, a Denver physician and past president of the North American Spine Society.

The bottom line is that mattress choice is highly subjective. You'll sleep best on whatever feels right to you.

Queens Fit for a King

Mattress and Box Spring

Spring	Description	Price
Serta Perfect Night Monterey	Serta Perfect Night Monterey Its 924 coils of springs, doubled in areas that need more support, are wrapped in "memory" foam and fibers that help regulate body heat	\$2,999
Dux 7007 from Duxiana	Dux 7007 from Duxiana It has three layers of coils: foundation, mattress, then a topper with springs customized to body type	\$7,525
Hypnos Eminence	Hypnos Eminence 2,025 coils padded in hand-tufted cotton, wool, silk, and Dacron over a box spring of 1,000 more springs	\$10,000
Windsor Bedding Co. Slumberland 2800	Windsor Bedding Co. Slumberland 2800 Handmade with 2,740 coils wrapped in three inches of foam and padded with a 50-50 mix of synthetic fibers and cashmere over a 2,100-coil box spring	\$15,000
VI-Sprin Magnificence	VI-Spring Magnificence Two layers of coils totaling 3,700 springs, wrapped in calico pockets and padded with hand-teased horsehair, lambs wool, and mohair, covered in silk and viscose fabric	\$17,820