

## HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT MATTRESS

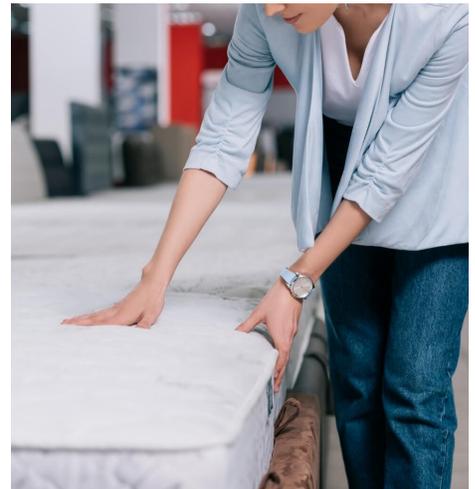
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Choosing the right mattress can go a long way in determining the quality of your sleep. Using a mattress that does not provide adequate support and comfort can also be a significant source of muscle and joint pain, especially in the shoulder, back, and hip regions.

The right mattress is usually defined as any mattress that helps a person sleep well, so that they wake up feeling rested and without pain and stiffness. However, there is no single best mattress for everyone as there are a variety of factors that go into choosing the right mattress.

Below are some useful tips that can help you find the mattress that's right for you:

- **Consider how the mattress is made.** Mattress support is determined by the internal architecture of the mattress. This can include innerspring coil mattresses (most common), memory foam, latex, and air mattresses. Some manufacturers also include additional padding on top of the mattress for extra comfort, but this may not be necessary for all individuals. Each of these mattress types offer unique advantages and disadvantages, along with different degrees of support and comfort.
- **Sleep experts recommend replacing your mattress on average every 8-10 years or sooner.** Look for visible sagging and/or material breakdown as a sign to replace your mattress. Over time, an old mattress that had originally been comfortable may no longer be providing the support it once did. In addition, mattresses collect dust mites and other germs that can exacerbate allergies and impact sleep.
- **Consider your physical health.** Sleeping with painful conditions such as osteoarthritis, hip bursitis, and degenerative disc disease can be minimized by choosing the right mattress that offers the correct support where you need it.
- **Sleeping position(s) can play a role in determining the mattress firmness and support you need.** So try before you buy. Lay on a variety of mattresses (i.e. *firm, medium, pillow top*) for at least 10-15 minutes in several simulated sleep positions to get a sense of how the mattress feels. Generally speaking, back and stomach sleepers tend to prefer a more firm mattress than side-sleepers.
- **Shop at stores that specialize in mattresses.** These stores will offer a diverse range of choices and other important factors such as manufacturer and comfort warranties.
- **The right mattress achieves a balance between comfort and support.** A mattress that is too firm may cause discomfort in pressure points such as the hips. A mattress that is too soft may not offer enough support and cause pain and stiffness. Most people do well with a medium-firm mattress. However, at the end of the day, a person's overall comfort level will determine which mattress is right for them.



If you experience muscle and joint pain that is causing difficulty with your sleep, you should contact a licensed health professional who deals in the diagnosis and treatment of these conditions. For more information, visit [www.nhwc.ca](http://www.nhwc.ca).

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