

Buying the best bed for you

cover story

It does pay to get the best you can afford, writes **David Killick**.

We spend a third of our lives in bed. Eight hours a day. If you reach 90, you will have spent 30 years in bed. For this reason, a good bed is a sound investment. Buy a good one and you can keep it for decades.

However, mattresses probably won't last as long as the base. It depends a lot on the kind of mattress, your weight and other factors such as the room environment, but 10 to 15 years is generally considered the maximum. Latex mattresses are likely to last longer than coil spring mattresses.

If your mattress feels lumpy, or you wake up feeling sore, now is the time to buy a new one.

Before you buy, visit a store and try different kinds of mattresses such as pocket springs, latex or memory foam. The mattress you prefer can be a personal choice, and it will also



Test run: Try out a variety of beds in the store. The differences can be surprising.

depend on whether you sleep on your side, back, or front (not recommended for people with back problems).

It's also a good idea to buy the biggest bed you can fit in your bedroom, especially if you sleep with a partner. Nobody complains that they have too much space.

You can buy either a box base or a slat base. A slat base – either with flexi or solid slats – will last indefinitely. A box base will eventually need replacing along with the mattress.

Slat beds have another advantage, too: They are lighter and much easier to move. This

makes a real difference if you are shifting, either temporarily for earthquake repairs, or to a new house. If your bedroom is upstairs, slat beds can be disassembled and carried around corners.

For the same reason, large mattresses can also pose problems when moving or in multi-storey houses. A European solution is to have two side-by-side single mattresses. A bonus of this is that each mattress can be slightly different (one firmer, for example).

Another European approach is to use two single duvets, and

dispense with a top sheet. It means an end to fighting for supremacy over the duvets.

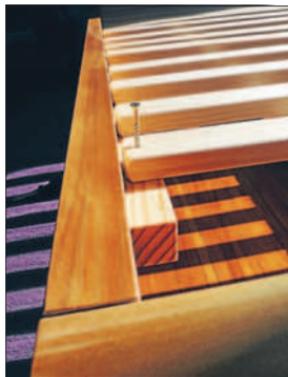
For a relaxing sleep, buy comfy bedwear such as goosedown, wool or silk duvets, high-thread count cotton (preferably organic) sheets and duvet covers; wool pillows; and wool or silk mattress protectors.

Natural materials are becoming increasingly popular. Russians Sukhita and Natalia Derova founded In Nature in 1995, specialising in eco-friendly furniture, available online throughout New Zealand (innature.co.nz). The Auckland-based company has also made beds for luxury yachts.

In Nature does not use plastics, adhesives, solvents, flame-retardants or formaldehyde, and materials are also free from "electromagnetic stress".

Natural latex, coconut fibre, and wool are hypo-allergenic, anti-microbial and dust-mite resistant – good news for asthma and hayfever sufferers. Silk is also hypo-allergenic and lightweight.

To create a comfortable sleep environment, ensure your bedroom is well aired. Most people prefer a cooler – but not cold – bedroom, about 18 degrees Celsius.



Slat base: Will last several lifetimes.



All natural: A super king slat bed in Fijian kauri with twin natural latex mattresses, wool mattress protectors, and wool pillows from In Nature. Wool duvets by Fairydown; duvet covers in 100 per cent cotton from Linen House; and a 600-thread count cotton sheet.