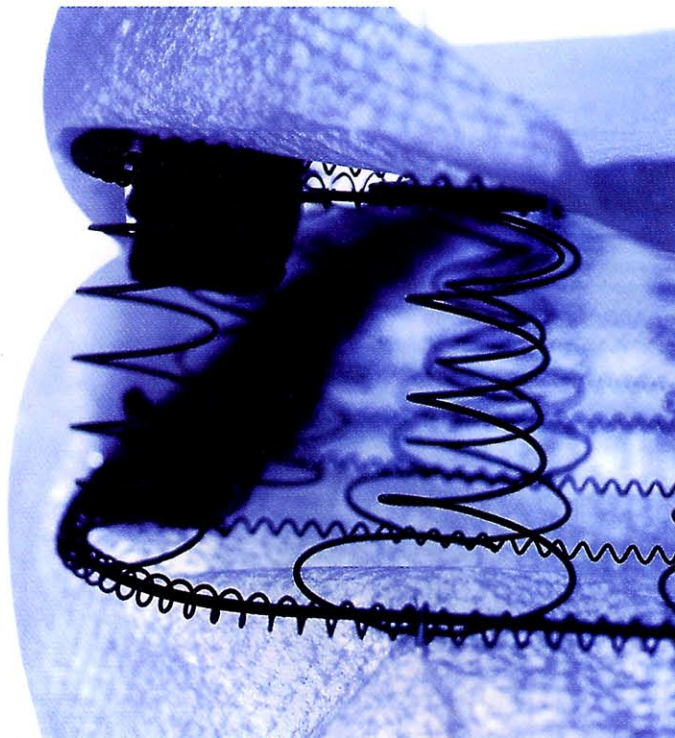




Clockwise from lower left: Duxiana pillow top; ticking by Stearns & Foster; McRoskey Airflex mattress and ticking; and McRoskey inner springs.



## HOW TO SELECT A MATTRESS

Couldn't sleep? Woke up with a stiff neck—again? It could be your mattress. Four experts offer their suggestions on when and how to select a new sleep set.

**Robin Azevedo** is president of **McRoskey Airflex Mattress Company**, which has been manufacturing mattresses and box springs in San Francisco since 1899.

**Jim Ross** is the director of marketing for **Stearns & Foster**, a division of **Sealy** which is headquartered in North Carolina. The company has been manufacturing luxury bedding since 1846.

**Carole Tarantino** is the owner of **Duxiana** stores in San Francisco, Palo Alto, and Walnut Creek, California. The Swedish company has been producing the Dux bed since 1926.

**Diane Utzman-O'Neill** is the vice president of brand management at **Sleep Number by Select Comfort** in Minneapolis, Minnesota. **Sleep Number** was founded in 1987.

### Is it time for a new mattress?

**Carole:** If you're tossing and turning, or your shoulders or hipbones hurt, that could be a clue that the surface of your sleep system is too hard for you. It's not giving, the springs are not compressing. The spring or air system needs to adjust to the shape of your body. Your body should not and cannot adjust to the surface of the bed.

**Robin:** See if there is anything visual that might give it away. If it is hollowed out, is badly soiled, or if there are body impressions, it is probably time for a new mattress.

### Too hard or too soft?

**Robin:** The idea that the harder the mattress the better is incorrect. You want suppleness in that mattress and box spring so that it can form to you. We encourage people to come in and really get comfortable. One of the things that makes me chuckle is that people come in, lie down, and cross their arms or hold them stiffly at their sides. It's very funereal. We encourage them

to roll around on the mattress, really get a feel for it all over.

**Jim:** We've identified four types of comfort feels: firm, cushion firm, plush, and ultra plush. The right comfort level depends on a variety of factors, including your body weight, size, activity level. Selecting the right mattress is like buying shoes. You have to find the one that's right for you by trying it out.

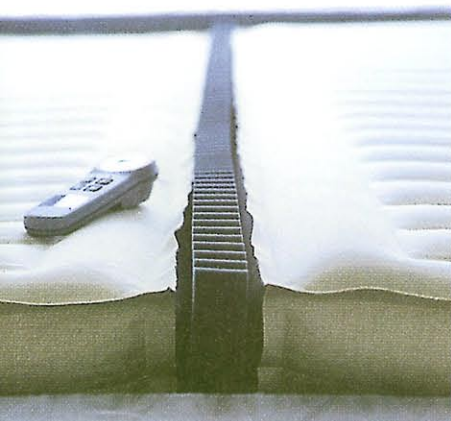
### Longevity

**Carole:** People want the things they buy for their home to last but longevity varies. If you're a single female who weighs 110 pounds, your mattress is going to last a long time. A couple who spends \$3,000 for a Dux bed should expect to have it for at least 20 years. At minimum, it will last twice as long as an American-made mattress.

**Robin:** McRoskey's has a 20-year warranty for any defect in construction or material. But the real answer to how long the mattress will last is for the consumer to ask if the comfort and size is still ►

## THINK IT YOURSELF

Clockwise from lower left: Inner air mattress from Sleep Number; McRoskey stuffing; cutaway of Duxiana's patented coil system; and Stearns & Foster "Pillow Touch" ticking.



serving them. If not, change it.

**Diane:** Our product lasts at least 20 years. They've proved twice as durable as the typical inner-spring mattress. Our chambers are really solid, and the air itself doesn't fatigue, break down, and lose its bounce.

### How much?

**Carole:** If you're looking for the maximum amount of rest, you're probably going to pay somewhere between \$1,500 and \$3,500 for a queen-size mattress.

**Robin:** There is a huge range. We don't necessarily pay attention to all price points. Our nicest quality queen size is \$2,220 and king size is \$2,760 for a mattress and box spring.

**Jim:** People can pay anywhere from \$600 to \$1,200 or as much as \$5,000. But if you think about it as an investment over time, you're really paying just pennies per night for something you're using for eight hours a night, seven times a week.

### Special features

**Carole:** Duxiana has a top pad

rather than a pillow top. The top pad weighs around 15 pounds and can be turned over, fluffed up—something that can't be done with an American pillow top mattress, which weighs around 300 pounds and can't be easily flipped.

**Jim:** We're bringing fashion-forward colors to our new Reflexions and Pillow Touch mattresses. The ticking colors in our Shades of Pale theme—Orchid, Candlelight, Ocean Breeze—these are colors you wouldn't really associate with traditional mattresses. The high-quality fabrics are imported Belgian damask.

**Diane:** About 90 percent of couples disagree on the firmness of their mattress. With Sleep Number, each partner can have his or her preference, because you can adjust firmness by automatically changing the amount of air inside the air chambers. You can go from 0 to 100, 100 being the firmest. Most people tend to find their number and stick to it. I've been a 25 ever since I found that magic number for me. My husband was an 80, because he thought he liked firmer mattresses better, but I kept

sneaking him down five points every night, and got him down to a 30. He's stuck there now and he loves it.

### Structure

**Carole:** In each Dux bed, there's a continuous piece of steel that goes from the head of the bed to the foot. It's manufactured much differently from conventional four-spring systems. It's finer, heat-treated steel and its coil doesn't lose its memory so it doesn't sag. You never have to turn the mattress over. There are three to four times more coils or springs than in an American mattress.

**Robin:** We make inner-spring bedding. There are springs in the mattress and springs in the bedding. We think this provides the best comfort and durability. The comfort levels come from the various coil construction methods and the way the mattress is filled. This is what makes the difference from firm to gentle.

### Materials

**Jim:** The Reflexions product has a latex core rather than an inner

spring. Latex has some good characteristics: When you lay on it, it springs back. And it's hypoallergenic.

**Carole:** Ninety-five percent of American mattresses are made from the same components that come from just one company. That company makes the springs, the covers, and the stuffing and sells it to all the different manufacturers. So basically you're getting the same thing. Duxiana has come up with a way to use natural rubber latex with just a minimum amount of other products. Latex is soft on the surface and it lasts. It doesn't break down or compact the way cotton or other fibers will.

**Diane:** With air technology, you can make a surface that fits human body contours much more comfortably. Inner springs were designed for durability, to last, but they often poke and prod and create pressure points and discomfort. Now we can create air chambers that are plenty durable, but forgiving to the body's curves, too. ■

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