

Eco-tip: Prevent waste with mattress durability

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If your sagging, lumpy mattress is causing you to wake up achy and tired, you may have to discard your old mattress and buy a new one. At Presidents' Day sales, you can reduce future waste by prioritizing durability among your mattress buying criteria.

Websites such as mattressclarity.com and mattressadvisor.com provide evaluations of durability based on quality of materials and multi-night sleep tests, but for a more extensive evaluation, see Consumer Reports, which claims on its web site to spend over \$80,000 per year testing mattresses.

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Their test for durability consists of pressing a "308-pound wood roller across the mattress 30,000 times" to simulate eight years of use, and they give an "Excellent" rating only to mattresses showing "no evidence of damage, sagging, or change in support."

However, national evaluations overlook locally made mattresses, which can be superior in quality because their manufacturing process is not compromised by concerns related to ease of shipping. Pacific Sleep Design is one such local manufacturer, supplying several retailers in Ventura County. Spencer Simcik, owner of Spencer's Mattresses in Ventura, one of these retailers, advises prospective customers to consult with family and friends regarding which brands worked well for them.

"There is no test like actual sleeping conditions, so base your evaluation on the reputation of the brand among previous customers," Simcik said.

Modularity is another option for increasing longevity. When a mattress wears out or is stained, a zippered casing enables customers to replace just the unwanted portion of their bed. Tony Hochschild, owner of Sterling Sleep Systems in Garden Grove, a manufacturer of modular beds, explains: "These beds are especially popular in the hotel industry, where a mattress replacement normally requires multiple staff. Also, replacing parts instead of complete beds saves thousands of dollars."

Some benefits of modularity can also be obtained from a regular mattress. Washable mattress covers prevent lasting stains, and a replaceable “comfort layer” placed on top of an old mattress can extend its life.

The type of mattress you choose is also important. Mattresses designed for flipping generally last longer than the “no flip” types because wear is more evenly spread, provided you actually flip the mattress, which is typically recommended on a quarterly schedule. Even a one-sided mattress can be rotated, spreading the wear of body impressions.

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Most mattress evaluation websites say latex lasts longer than polyurethane foam, but Memory Foam, a variant of polyurethane, is closing the gap. The wide variety of options with metal springs leaves open the question of how springs compare, but the highest-quality tempered steel springs clearly outlast foam.

Warranties are one basis for expectations. Top-quality beds have 20-year warranties including guarantees against sagging over specified measurements, provided the mattress was placed on a box spring or other sufficient support. Avocado Green, which manufactures a hybrid innerspring and latex mattresses in Los Angeles, offers a 25-year warranty, the first 10 at full replacement value.

When you buy a new mattress, recycle your old one. Four drop-off locations in Ventura County can be found through www.byebyemattress.com, and once-per-year free bulky item collection is provided through most curbside collection programs. If you buy your new mattress from a local store and they deliver it to you, they are required by State law to provide free collection of your old mattress, but if you buy your mattress online and it is shipped via common carrier, this requirement does not apply.

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