

Chiropractors are often asked about how to choose a good bed or whether their bed is a problem. This leaflet aims to address these issues.

People come in different weights, sizes and shapes, so there is not one bed that is suitable for all. Remember that we spend about a third of our lives in bed, so making the right choice is very important.

The temptation is to think that a hard mattress is better for a bad back. In fact the mattress that is right for a 15 stone person is not right for a 7 stone one.

If you are lying on your side, which is how most people sleep, the spine should be completely horizontal. There should be enough give in the mattress to take the curves of the hips and shoulders so the spine is parallel to the floor. If the mattress is too soft, your spine will sag. If too hard, it will bow.

When choosing a mattress, allow a good hour to lie on the mattress you are considering to get an impression of whether it is right for you.

Lie on the bed as you would if you were settling down to sleep

The best conventional mattress is made with pocket springs. These will just compress the springs that you are lying on and are independent of each other—so that the other springs can support you.

It therefore follows that:

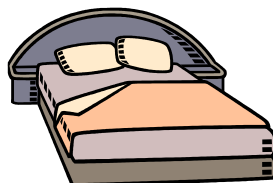
- **the more springs in a bed the better the support**
- **a lighter person needs a softer bed as they haven't got the additional weight to compress the springs**

This does not mean that the best bed is the most expensive. Some quality beds have hand stitching and superior fabrics on the surface, which do not improve the support the bed will give.

## Size Matters!

Did you know the standard double bed in the UK, usually described as a "four foot six" gives two occupants just 2ft 3in each to sleep on - less than the size of a baby's cot! Bigger really is better when sharing a bed with a partner. Ideally, the bed should be 6in longer than the tallest person and allow both to lie side by side, hands behind heads, without elbows touching.

Beds that have different levels of firmness for differing sizes of partners are available. Many beds should be turned very frequently when new. Turning a new 6' X 6'6" bed is no mean feat for a healthy individual but for someone with a bad back can be impossible. Many double beds are available with a zip to separate the two sides to ease turning. Remember to turn top to bottom as well as over.



*Shropshire McTimoney Chiropractic Group is run by Avril Sanders Royle, an established chiropractor who has been in practice since 1984.*

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*The Natural Health Centre has chiropractors available six days a week in a busy multi-disciplinary complementary health centre. Avril Sanders Royle is available on Mondays Wednesdays and Thursdays at Rock House.*

*All chiropractors in the Group are graduates of the McTimoney College of Chiropractic and are registered with the General Chiropractic Council.*

*For any further information contact*

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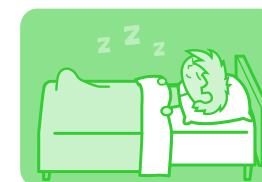
14/05/2011

# BACK TO BED



**The  
Natural Health Centre  
Shrewsbury**

**01743 248878**



## Types of Bed

### Conventional

Look for a divan base and pocketed springs—the more the better. The traditional horse hair over the springs is very good as it absorbs the moisture we all lose from our skin during sleep

### Adjustable

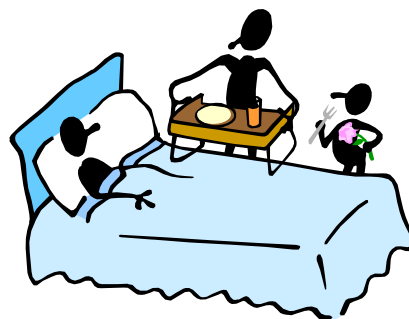
These beds are made with controls to raise the legs and / or the upper body and are particularly suitable for less able individuals. However, these days they are regularly sold to younger people who like watching TV in bed!

### Water

These beds give fantastic support and last for a very long time. They are not like being "at sea" as they contain baffles to prevent this. They are adjustable in that more or less water can be added

### Memory Foam

These beds have become very popular in recent years. They do give good support and patients of mine report that they are good. However a minority of people comment that because they slowly recover their shape, they can be irritating to become supportive again when changing position. A number of patients find them too hot. They are not able to absorb perspiration in the same way as a conventional mattress. Many of this type of bed are designed not to be turned.



### BED TEST

1. Is it seven years old or more? The critical 'Seven year itch' can be a make or break moment for many marriages and mattresses.
2. Did you have your best night's sleep recently with a different bed?
3. Are you waking up more frequently unrefreshed and aching?
4. Have you got enough space to move freely without disturbing your partner or being disturbed by them?
5. Does it still look fresh?
6. Does it feel lumpy?
7. Does it make suspicious noises in the night?
8. Is it sagging - do you and your partner roll towards each other unintentionally in the middle of the night?
9. Are the base, legs or castors lumpy, worn or wobbly?
10. Would it be embarrassing if someone saw it without its covers?

### HOW TO KEEP COOL ON HOT SUMMER NIGHTS

Having trouble sleeping in the summer? It's not surprising, considering how unaccustomed we are to hot nights. The Sleep Council has the following tips to help Britons keep their cool. Some may seem obvious but research indicates that the majority of people do not take even these simple measures.

- Open windows - and doors - to create a draught (only 60% of us do this)
- Get rid of the duvet and blankets - just use a cotton sheet, if anything. Or a duvet with a low tog rating (one in five dispense with covers altogether - but just 13% try thinner ones)
- Wear light cotton nightwear - if anything (10% sleep nude in Summer)
- Have a cool shower or bath before bedtime
- Drink plenty of cold water and keep a glass handy (a mere 2% choose this option)
- Avoid too much alcohol or a big meal - both can make you hot and steamy in the middle of the night through dehydration and over-active digestion
- Fill a hot water bottle with ice cold water
- Put your pillow case in the fridge before bedtime
- Use an electric fan - the remedy for 20%
- Invest in an air conditioning unit
- Next time you buy a new bed, make sure it's big enough for two of you to sleep without disturbing each other: 5ft should be your minimum.
- Choose a bed with Warm and Cool sides