

# Would you buy that mattress again?

17,000 subscribers rate their beds and where they bought them

**B**UYING A BED is no picnic. Comparison shopping is almost impossible because different retailers rarely call a model by the same name. And you're apt to make that expensive decision after trying out a bed for just a few minutes in the store.

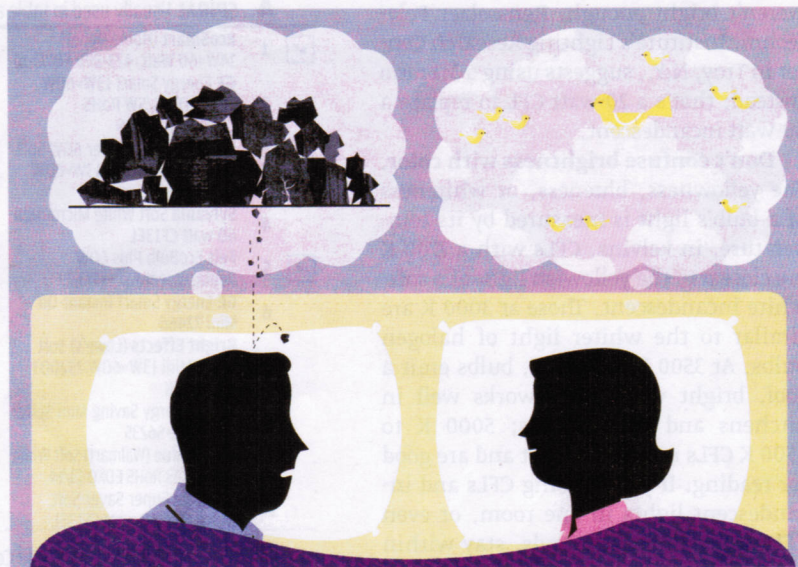
But our new survey might help. We found real differences when we asked 17,444 online subscribers who bought a bed in the past few years about their satisfaction with the brand and the store.

Forty-one percent said they'd definitely buy the mattress brand they currently own if they had to do it over. Forty-three percent said they'd probably buy it again. An unhappy 16 percent said they'd probably or definitely pick something else. Here are the details:

**Some brands were better.** Respondents who bought Tempur-Pedic, Original Mattress Factory brand, and Select Comfort mattresses were much more satisfied than those who bought Spring Air and Stearns & Foster models. They were significantly more likely to say they would definitely buy those brands again.

**Any new mattress beats an old one.** Seventy-two percent of readers said their new bed improved their sleep. If yours is uncomfortable, consider replacing it even if it's only five or so years old.

**Satisfaction at what price?** Seventy-eight percent of those who spent more than \$4,000 said they were highly satisfied with their purchase. But 66 percent of



those who spent less than \$1,000 were also highly satisfied.

**Problem sleepers had a preference.** Among those who said they had problems sleeping, 78 percent said that a new bed, any new bed, improved their ability to get a good night's rest; 42 percent said the new mattress greatly improved their sleep.

Problem sleepers said Tempur-Pedic (made of memory foam) and Select Comfort (a line of adjustable air mattresses) provided the most relief. More than 60 percent of long-suffering sleepers who bought either of the two brands said their sleep was very much improved. Conversely, Stearns & Foster and Spring Air disproportionately aggravated the difficulties of problem sleepers, worsening the condition of about 10 percent of those who bought them.

**An in-store tryout is a good idea.** Seventy-two percent of those who invested at least 10 minutes (for instance, lying down on each side, back, and stomach) were highly satisfied with their mattress purchase compared with 62 percent who didn't. A rest test isn't foolproof—12 percent of those surveyed were at least somewhat dissatisfied with their new mattress

even if they tried it first—but at least it gives you a fighting chance.

**Don't pay full price.** The suggested retail price of a mattress is pure fiction. Discounts of 50 percent or more are common. In our survey, only 36 percent of respondents tried haggling. Among those who tried, 72 percent got a lower price.

## Rating the retailers

Most respondents were pleased with their purchase experience. Seventy-one percent were very satisfied; 32 percent said they were completely satisfied.

The top-ranked seller, The Original Mattress Factory, was a standout for both service and selection. Costco was also highly rated, even though it (and Sam's Club) earned the lowest scores for service and selection. Across the board, Costco had a slight edge over Sam's Club. It earned its high rating on the strength of its low prices. Eighty-nine percent of those surveyed said mattress prices at Costco were very good or excellent (84 percent gave similar praise to Sam's prices). Overall, readers had few gripes; 70 percent said the transaction went smoothly.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Myth:

**Older backs need firmer beds.**

**Reality:** The best bed is the one that's most comfortable to you. There have been no well-controlled studies to indicate the best firmness overall.