

# REAL SIMPLE

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## THE PERSONALITY

# sheets

ARE YOU CLASSIC AND CONSERVATIVE? A WHIMSICAL FREE SPIRIT? LINENS CAN EXPRESS YOUR CHARACTER, BUT THE QUALITY OF THE FABRIC MATTERS, TOO.



1. Silky bamboo by VivaTerra, \$189 for a queen set  
TO BUY: [www.vivaterra.com](http://www.vivaterra.com).

2. Palm Beach Chelsea by Ankasa, \$225  
TO BUY: [www.ankasa.com](http://www.ankasa.com) for retailers.

3. Palermo by Olatz, \$410  
TO BUY: 212-255-8627.

4. Samode Pink by John Robshaw Textiles, \$175  
TO BUY: [www.johnrobshaw.com](http://www.johnrobshaw.com).

5. Dahlia by Calvin Klein Home, \$125  
TO BUY: [www.macys.com](http://www.macys.com).

6. Bulb Sea by Area, \$90  
TO BUY: [www.areahome.com](http://www.areahome.com).

7. Washed Linen Collection by Eileen Fisher Home for Garnet Hill, \$145  
TO BUY: [www.garnethill.com](http://www.garnethill.com).

8. Liseron by Yves Delorme, \$290  
TO BUY: [www.yvesdelorme.com](http://www.yvesdelorme.com) for retailers.

*Unless otherwise indicated, prices are for a queen-size flat sheet.*

Sheets are the workhorses of the bed, so take durability into consideration. Egyptian cotton is top-of-the-line, and lesser-known pima cotton, mainly grown in the United States and Peru, is also a standout. These two varieties boast fine, long fibers that create an uncommonly soft, strong fabric. Other sheets are made from ordinary cotton, a cotton-polyester blend (wrinkle-resistant but less soft and absorbent than pure cotton), linen (a lightweight option that wicks away moisture but wrinkles like crazy), silk (costly but oh so smooth), and flannel (coziness at its best). There are endless styles and three main weaves: percale (varies from matte to shiny), sateen (lustrous but may lose its sheen the more it's washed), and jacquard (matte or shiny, with a pattern woven into it). When you're buying sheets, thread count, the number of threads in one square inch of fabric, is a factor. "But a high thread count doesn't necessarily equal a better product," says Susan Dollenmaier, founder of Anichini, a fine-textile maker. Plies of yarn are twisted together to achieve super-high counts (400 and above), but that thicker, denser—and often hotter and less breathable—sheet isn't always comfortable. "It's the quality of the thread that counts, not the thread count," says Dollenmaier.

To maintain sheets, launder once a week, but take care when drying, as heat makes fibers brittle. Switch the setting to air-dry for the last five minutes.

### BED-MAKING TIPS FROM...THE U.S. MARINES

To pull sheets as tightly as possible on their "racks," or beds, Marines create hospital corners on all sides of the bottom sheet, then align the top sheet and the blanket with the head of the bed and make three six-inch folds down so 12 inches of the bottom sheet show. And, yes, you just might be able to bounce a quarter off it.

## THE HEART

# covers

WARM AND NURTURING, DUVETS, BLANKETS, AND QUILTS RANGE IN TEXTURE AND WEIGHT AND PROVIDE MUCH-NEEDED REFUGE.

Essential for snuggling on winter nights, covers include quilts (filled with cotton or polyester batting; some are machine-washable and some aren't, so it pays to check), decorative coverlets, and simple blankets. Not sure which material to choose? Cotton is breathable; fleece is plush (and often composed of polyester fibers made from recycled plastic bottles); and wool is dense, warm, and a natural insulator. (Virgin wool, which has never before been processed into a textile, is especially supple.) Look for blankets with borders; they tend to hold up the best. Comforters are usually filled with cotton, silk, synthetic fibers, or down.

If you're considering down, ask about the product's "fill power," or the space an ounce of down fills (550 is good; more than 800 is considered luxury). Also ask where the down hails from. "Geese from cold regions have bigger tufts of fluffy down," says Ursula Terrasi, owner of Scandia Down, a down retailer. For an ultra-soft option, Terrasi recommends eiderdown, which is collected from the eider, a Northern European sea duck. Opt for a lining that's downproof, meaning it has a weave tight enough to prevent feathers from poking through. Wash duvet covers weekly, or once a month if you use a top sheet. Launder down comforters twice a year, or every three to five years if covered. Throw a few clean tennis balls into the dryer to prevent the down from clumping, and fluff the comforter when you make the bed to redistribute the down.

### BED-MAKING TIPS FROM... THE FOUR SEASONS

Each flat sheet is tucked in with a three-inch "foot pocket" fold across the bottom so feet don't get squished. "In one *Seinfeld* episode, George went to a hotel and ripped off the covers because they were so tight," says Erik Wood, director of housekeeping in New York City. "No one has to worry about that here."

1. Celine brushed-cotton throw by Sferra, \$70

TO BUY: [www.sferralinens.com](http://www.sferralinens.com).

2. Suzani cotton quilt by Company C, \$285 for full/queen

TO BUY: [www.companyc.com](http://www.companyc.com).

3. Dahlia cotton-sateen duvet by Calvin Klein Home, \$350 for queen

TO BUY: [www.macys.com](http://www.macys.com).

4. Chunky Knit wool throw in mist by Pine Cone Hill, \$120

TO BUY: [www.pineconehill.com](http://www.pineconehill.com) for retailers.

5. Chrysanthemum polyester-satin quilt in taupe by DKNY, \$190

TO BUY: [www.dkny.com](http://www.dkny.com).

6. Bamboo basket-weave throw by VivaTerra, \$79

TO BUY: [www.vivaterra.com](http://www.vivaterra.com).



## THE BRAIN

# mattress

IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE BED. DIFFERENT MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION OFFER VARIOUS DEGREES OF SUPPORT, SO SHOP SMART.

It pays to take your time when selecting a mattress, since "you'll spend a third of your life on it over the next 8 to 10 years," says Perry Davis, a division president at Leggett & Platt, a company that makes bedding components in Carthage, Missouri. There are three main types to choose from. Innerspring construction (steel coils topped with layers of padding) is the most common. One good measure of how well a mattress will support your body is the number of coils it contains. Davis recommends a minimum of 350 coils for a full-size mattress, 480 for a queen, and 580 for a king. Air-filled models (composed of air chambers surrounded by foam) let you adjust the firmness; opt for a top layer of high-density foam. Foam mattresses come in latex (made of natural or synthetic rubber), polyurethane (which varies in density), and viscoelastic (one example is memory foam, which molds to your body's shape). Foam retains heat well, so if you get hot while sleeping, look for open-cell construction for maximum breathability. Prices range considerably: For an innerspring model, expect to spend anywhere from several hundred dollars to \$2,000; for memory foam, from \$1,000 to up to \$5,000 (for a thicker mattress, perhaps covered in silk or satin).

A mattress is an investment, so care for yours well. Every few months, flip and rotate it for even wear, and vacuum the surface. Once a year, air it out by opening a window for a few hours.

### BED-MAKING TIPS FROM...A MATTRESS SHOP

Hästens, a high-end retailer, takes a minimalist approach when dressing beds. Its stores feature beds dressed in only mattress covers, fitted sheets, and down comforters. It's what's inside that counts: The Vividus mattress, at \$59,750 (yes, you read that right), contains braided, permed horsehair to provide extra bounce.

**1. Royal Pedic Organic cotton three-inch pillow-top pad**, ABC Carpet & Home, \$1,588 for queen  
**TO BUY:** 212-473-3000.

**2. SpringFree by Sealy Posturepedic mattress**, \$1,899 to \$3,199 for queen (includes box spring). Synthetic latex foam. Antimicrobial and dust mite-resistant.  
**TO BUY:** [www.sealy.com](http://www.sealy.com) for retailers.

**3. Royal Pedic Organic mattress**, ABC Carpet & Home, \$2,199 for queen. Organic cotton and wool.  
**TO BUY:** 212-473-3000.

**4. Queen Plush Innerspring mattress by Room & Board**, \$499. The cover repels both moisture and stains, and it's bacteria-, mold-, and dust mite-resistant.  
**TO BUY:** 800-301-9720.



THE PRETTY FACE

# pillows

WANT SOME EYE CANDY? DECORATIVE PILLOWS AND CASES GIVE YOUR ROOM A SHOT OF COLOR WHILE OFFERING PLUSH COMFORT.



1. Tiger Lily sham in coral by Lulu DK Matouk, \$108 for standard  
TO BUY: [www.gracioushome.com](http://www.gracioushome.com).

2. Flanged linen sham in sky by Pine Cone Hill, \$48 for standard to \$58 for Euro  
TO BUY: [www.pineconehill.com](http://www.pineconehill.com) for retailers.

3. Izabal breakfast sham by Designers Guild, \$33  
TO BUY: [www.designersguildusa.com](http://www.designersguildusa.com).

4. Butterfield neck roll in aqua by Matouk, \$65  
TO BUY: 203-629-3659.

5. Brown Leaves pillowcase by Plover Organic, \$33 for standard  
TO BUY: [www.ploverorganic.com](http://www.ploverorganic.com) for retailers.

Pillows do more than provide that essential cushion for your head; they add flair to any bed. In addition to standard sleeping pillows, there are also purely decorative ones, from European versions (typically 26 inches square) to bolsters (cylindrical in shape). The priciest models are usually filled with natural materials, which are resilient, such as down and feathers. Less expensive pillows contain synthetics, which offer more support, and include polyester and viscoelastic, or memory foam. Most pillows can be tossed in the washing machine; use the gentle cycle.

If you feel that a down pillow has lost its oomph, "have it refilled," says Ursula Terrasi. "That's less expensive than replacing it." Check with the original store, or look for a specialty retailer. If you aren't certain whether a pillow is past its prime, fold it in half and compress it. If it doesn't spring back, toss or refill.

As for thickness, pick a pillow that matches your sleeping style. "A pillow should cradle the head and the neck so that they're not tilted or crimped," says William Strassberg, M.D., a spokesperson for the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. Pillows about three inches high suit stomach sleepers; side sleepers need four to six inches. Back sleepers usually prefer something in between. Those with asthma or allergies should wash their pillows regularly and protect them with allergen-impermeable casings.

—Additional reporting by Allegra Muzzillo

#### BED-MAKING TIPS FROM...BLOOMINGDALE'S

Buy an upholstered headboard and use a bed skirt in a similar color for a polished look, says Guy Barbarulo, an interior designer for Bloomingdale's. He also suggests 100 percent cotton sheets and a duvet with baffled (sewn) boxes, which keep the down from shifting. Keep throw pillows to a minimum, he says.