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In this bedroom, starting from Casa Paradiso, a low, beautiful, four-poster bed looks inviting and comfortable. White bed linens, softening white touches of color through cushions and accessories look nice.

Dream catchers

No more counting sheep and drinking hot cups of milk, for it's time to kiss sleepless nights goodbye. We'll help you create a restful snooze room.

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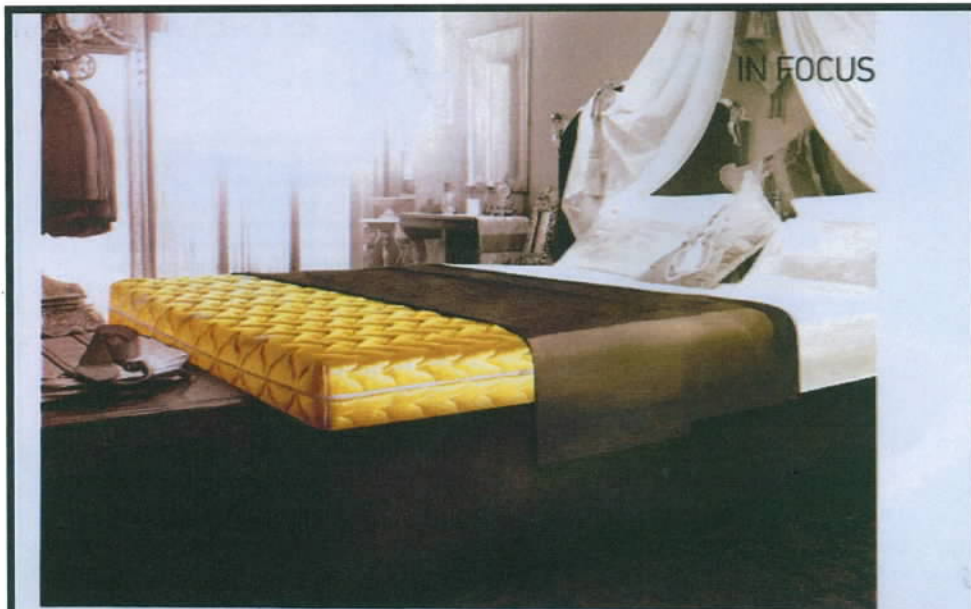
All of us have heard the fairytale of the Princess and the Pea. While the poor Princess made much ado over a petty pea, the fact remains that a mattress and a bed have the power to make or mar your sleep. If you are looking for the perfect slumber, experts say all you need to do is follow one simple rule: It's not what's between the sheets that's important but what's under it. Case in point: the bed and the mattress.

BLISS & BEDS

What's the first thing you notice when you walk into a bedroom? The bed, of course! You can enhance the look of your bedroom by choosing a size and type of bed that fits perfectly into the place, or ruin it with a mismatched one that is either too big or too small for the allotted area.

While the first known beds to man were nothing more than piles of straw, the variety of beds available in the market today are designed to provide even the most tired souls with ultimate rest and relaxation. Opt for a regal silver bed if you are in the mood to pamper yourself. Satin sheets will go perfectly with it. Just ensure that the carvings on the bed are not too heavy, for they can prove to be a distraction when you go to sleep. An antique brass bed looks as much at home in a vintage setting as it does in a contemporary one. A sleek iron bed (not a good idea if you live in a city by the sea or if you follow vaastu, which believes iron beds result in sleeplessness) when paired with the right mattress is ideal for modern rooms. "A wooden bed is the best option," says architect Kapil Aggarwal of Spaces Architects, adding, "Not only is it durable but also easy to maintain." MDF board with a good veneer on top is another choice, but Kapil does not recommend this not-so-long-lasting option.

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"Before you purchase a bed, ensure you take measurements of the room," says Kapil. For queen size beds are 5 ft x 6 ft; king, 7.5 ft x 6 ft; and single beds are 3 ft x 6 ft. "The classic rectangular beds are common in most homes. If space permits, then one can play around with circular beds or differently shaped beds. If you want to stand out, then opt for something new. Nowadays, people are going for longer beds to place shams and cushions," explains Seeta Kohli of Terra Sans Home Couture, who stocks beds from Fendi Casa and Ipe Cavalli.

MATTRESS MATTERS

Undoubtedly, the most important role in a bedroom is played by the mattress and therefore requires thorough research before buying one. Today, popular materials like cotton, coir, rubberized and latex mattresses have given way to spring and memory foam mattresses. Spring mattresses comes with different variants in comfort and support and available in two variants, Bonnel Spring and Pocketed Spring. Spring mattresses will have an outer padding and a middle padding, often composed of foam. Beneath the middle padding is the insulation padding (usually made of fibre or mesh) that lies directly on the springs. As the name suggests, this layer protects the layers above from being damaged by the springs. In any mattress, there may either be several layers of different types of foam or a solid uniform layer of foam. The core of the mattress supports the sleeper's body. The memory foam mattress is the latest innovation in the bedding industry and works on the theory of pressure relieving and not on orthopedic values. Cotton mattresses, though considered to be the closest to nature, do not provide any comfort or support and tend to sag under the weight of your body, often leaving a depression or valley after extended use. Rubberized coir mattresses are a low-cost substitute for latex mattress as the cost of latex had risen extensively. Though coir mattresses have been in the market for the last 30 years, they lack the comfort afforded by a modern-day mattress.



[Top] With the Magniflex Gold mattress, you can literally sleep in the lap of luxury. It is lined with 22K gold yarn fabric and is made up of Merisiform Magnifoam, a material which adjusts to the body's contours to render maximum comfort. Also, its elastic structure is non-deformable, such that when sharing a bed, the movement of one does not disturb the other.

[Above] In this contemporary bedroom by Zéna, a simple straight-lined bed, shades of cream and white, and mood lighting make it restful and relaxing.

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DESIGNBYTES

The foremost role of a mattress is to provide ultimate comfort and superior support to your body informs Ashok Sharma, Director, SpringAir. "The former is mainly about pressure relief. Your mattress needs to conform to your body's shape and form a cradle that is deep enough to spread your weight over the surface of the mattress and relieve the pressure points. Superior support is mainly about spinal alignment: your mattress needs to control how far different parts of your body sink into a mattress. So whether you sleep on your back, side or stomach—or if you change positions during the night—a high-quality mattress fits you as you sleep. You get the support you need in any position." Additionally, select a mattress that gives you enough room to move freely, especially if you sleep with a partner (a healthy sleeper is said to change positions 40 to 60 times per night!). Also, it is always better to buy the mattress and the foundation (called the box spring) together. It will add life and another level of support to the mattress. Always keep in mind that though a warranty will cover your losses in case of defects, even the best mattress will wear out over time and there is no warranty for that! A good mattress that has been taken care of as per manufacturer specifications, should last only for about 8 to 10 years.

(Clockwise, from below left) Called Superior Bion, this frame bed from Hastens is known for its special, all-natural upholstery, heat-treated spring system and softness. Its pressure-relieving feature ensures a good night's sleep.

Hastens' sleep system comprises a frame of solid pine wood below, the Flax spring-system on top, cotton, wool and genuine horsehair over it. And finally, a top mattress in 100 per cent cotton.

Make your bedroom stand out with this circular bed from Fendi Casa. It has a revolving mechanism and is available in different options of fabric and leather.

While black and white drama can be quite stunning, monochrome magic works well in creating the perfect nooze room. The one featured here is from Zolijns.



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This elegant bedroom setting features soft hues and an interesting curved headboard. Called the Streamlined bed by Ipe Cavalli, it has been dressed with Streamlined Signature fabric.

PILLOW POWER

Just as your mattress should provide good support to your body, your pillow should give you the right cushioning to position your head and neck properly. It should hold your head in the same relation to your shoulders and spine — as if you were standing upright. If you sleep on your side, you may want a fairly firm pillow to give your head and neck extra support. If you sleep on your back, try a medium-firm pillow to cradle your head. And if you sleep on your stomach, choose a soft pillow to reduce the strain on your neck.

TIPS & TRICKS

However, for a truly restful siesta keep your bedroom clutter free. Junk, knick-knacks and other unnecessary items should either be thrown out of the room or placed in drawers away from your view when you are about to take a nap. Lighting with dimmers will help set the right mood. Automation is the key to a good night's sleep. This ensures that when you are feeling sleepy, you don't need to force yourself out of the quilts and switch off lights or turn down the blinds. Many-a-time, the process of getting out of bed results in making you feel wide awake. If you want to doze off without any problem, experts suggest ensuring that you choose the right furnishings. Soft, natural and easily washable bed linen is ideal. These days many companies have even introduced anti-fungal and anti-bacterial sheets. In addition to the above, you can also purchase

diffusers and essential oils that have been used since ancient times to catch forty-winks.

The colours of the room also play a big role in ensuring the big sleep. "Studies indicate that if you paint the walls with energetic hues like reds and bright yellows, chances of falling asleep are slim," says psychologist Dr Ritu Dangwal, according to whom blues and pastel shades work best to induce a feeling of calm and lead to a restful sleep. In fact, as per the ancient art of design and architecture, says vastu consultant Rameshwar Prasad, lighter colours are always better than dark shades. "The colour of walls in the bedroom should be light rose, blue, green or gray," adds Rameshwar. Besides recommending colour, vastu also says that a TV in a bedroom is avoidable. It is not only a distraction, if placed in front of the bed, it generates negative energy. Even the direction you sleep in has an effect on your body. "Sleeping with your head in the west causes bad dreams, illness, disturbed sleep and violent nature; while north causes sleeplessness and major illness," says Rameshwar. East is good because it improves health, knowledge and spiritualism; south is the best direction for sleeping, for it brings happiness, induces sound sleep and leads to wealth and prosperity.

Clearly, sweet slumber is now just a bed away. 