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## **What Are The Best Beds on Which to Sleep?**

How many times has our sleep been disturbed by low back pain? And, how often have we been restricted in the morning by neck stiffness? What can we do to reduce the discomfort and immobility?

One must address the best sleeping posture before commenting on sleeping systems. These are benefits from lying on one's back (supine) and elevating the legs at least six inches for the low back, and sleeping with a special cervical pillow for the neck. Just as important is the *bed* on which we sleep! It should provide optimal spinal support. Three of the most popular bedding systems are described below.

### **Traditional Mattresses**

The traditional mattress and box spring comes in standard sizes. Since there are many different styles, the American Chiropractic Association recognized the need to endorse those which provide, among other qualities, optimal spinal support. One manufacturer, King Koil, engineered a system that has a special low back support section. One can actually feel the center section's extra firmness. The preferred recommended sleep system is the Springwald Chiropractic mattress, box spring and frame. See their link on the "Informative Links" page for more information.

### **Foam Mattresses**

Forming, contouring mattresses, mostly known as Tempopedic, compress to accommodate the shape of the body. The support provided is not sufficient. They encourage side-sleeping which is not as beneficial as back-sleeping and the body parts which are pressing most into the mattress often feel sore after a time because their blood supply is compromised.

### **Waterbeds**

Our spinal discs require an ample blood supply to maintain flexibility and shock absorption. During daily activities, gravity forces this vital fluid out of the discs. *Waterbeds* encourage the subtle sleeping movements from breathing to pump blood back into the spine. Make sure the bladders, which hold the water, are filled so that the mattress is as firm as possible.

### **Futons**

A favorite for students, and most popular in the '70s, futons, also known as Japanese cotton beds, provide superior support. Their mattresses are constructed of thin layers of cotton fabric which rest atop hardwood frames. After lying on the bed for a few moments the small air pockets found between the layers of the material contour to the spine.

### **Which is Best?**

Mattresses which provide inadequate spinal support allow the back muscles to become overstretched and weak. This creates instability which predisposes us to chronic arthritic pain and injury. I recommend the Springwald Chiropractic mattress.

Therefore, whether you choose springs, foam, water or cotton, firmness should be the first consideration. Sleep well and have pleasant dreams.

In Health,

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