

A Consumer's Guide on Memory Foam



Memory Foam: A Consumer's Guide

As a consumer, the seemingly endless array of memory foam products on the market today can get quite confusing. So we've created this informative document, with the help of some of our valued customers, to provide you with a brief overview of the memory foam industry, and help you make an educated memory foam purchase.

Memory Foam Purchasing Process

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2. Determine Budget
3. Choose Quality
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Memory Foam Info

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Memory Foam Purchasing Process

Step 1- Identify the Need

Determine your problem, pain or ailment that you want the memory foam product to solve, and create a list of products that fills that void.

For example: "I have back pain and stiffness when I wake up every morning."

The following products will help solve this problem:

- * Memory Foam Factory® Mattress Topper
- * Structure Mattress Topper
- * Isotonic® Mattress Topper
- * Isotonic® Sleep System (Mattress Set)
- * Extraordinaire® Sleep System (Mattress Set)
- * Memory Foam Factory® Contour Pillow
- * Isotonic® Contour Pillow
- * Isoperfect® Pillow

This list is a long one and purchasing them all would cost a small fortune so the next step is to determine your memory foam budget.

**Check out Great Memory Foam Products:
www.MemoryFoamFactory.com**

Step 2- Set Your Budget

The average sale amount of all first time customers is \$142.45. (As of 08/15/04) But repeat customers purchase significantly more memory foam products. It seems that memory foam customers are skeptical until they try these products first hand.

Everyone has a different budget so only you know how much you are willing to spend. But once you have decided on a budget, you will more effectively be able to choose your first memory foam product(s).

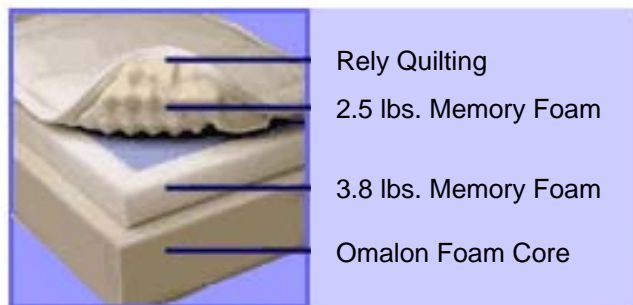
Step 3- Choose Foam Quality

After you've determined the type of memory foam product you wish to purchase, you must determine whether you wish to buy an extremely high quality memory foam product like Isotonic® or a generic memory foam brand. Some factors to consider when making this decision include how often you will use the memory foam product, whether or not the product will make direct contact with crucial areas of your body (pressure points), and whether or not you've had physical pain or soreness induced by low quality products in the past, etc. All Memory Foam Factory® products are classified using the "Good, Better, Best Classification System." This simplifies the purchasing process exponentially.

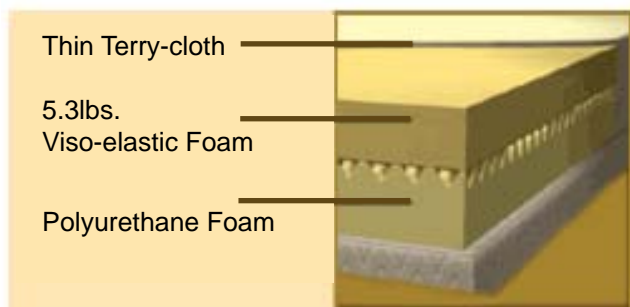
If you only plan to use the memory foam product on occasion, or your primary focus is price, then you are probably better off purchasing a generic memory foam product, or one that is low in density because these products are less expensive than high density items. (See memory foam density section below) However, if you plan to use your memory foam product on a regular basis, then you will be better served to spend a little extra money to receive a far superior memory foam product.

Our recommendation is that if you do purchase a high end memory foam product, be sure to purchase a product from a certified Isotonic® retailer. Conversely, a store forbidden by the Carpenter Corporation to carry the Isotonic® memory foam product line probably doesn't carry truly high quality memory foam products. (See industry Hierarchy section below.)

Isotonic® Mattress Set



Tempur-Pedic® Sleep System



Pictured: Mattress Cut-Away Comparison

Step 4- Determine the High Quality Memory Foam Retailers

Even though there are about thirty e-commerce websites that sell memory foam products, not all of them sell high quality memory foam products. (See the "Density" section below) For example there are only a handful of companies that sell Isotonic® memory foam products because the Carpenter Corporation, the company that manufactures this product line, has recently implemented a rigorous qualification process for all its potential retailers.

This was not the case one year ago. Today, if you read various memory foam websites carefully you may notice that while they used to carry the Isotonic® memory foam brand, they no longer do. While the each website may state its own unique reason for this discontinuation in its product line, the real reason is that they failed Carpenter Company's evaluation test. As a quick rule of thumb, it's a safe bet that any company carrying the Isotonic® memory foam brand is a reputable memory foam retailer.

Step 5- Compare Competing Prices

After you've narrowed your search to the two or three reputable memory foam companies, and you know which memory foam product you wish to purchase, all that's left to do is find the lowest price. It's that simple. Ironically, the reputable memory foam companies are usually the ones that will match or beat any of their competitor's prices so this point may actually be mute.

Memory Foam Information

a. What is Memory Foam?

Memory foam was originally developed by NASA engineers in the late 1970's for pressure relief during space travel. Shortly after its development memory foam began to be applied to the medical industry for its therapeutic properties. It wasn't until the early 1990's, however, that it was first introduced to the consumer bedding industry. Since then memory foam has become one of the most popular sleep surfaces ever invented. As it is now hailed by chiropractors, sports therapists, and even world renowned athletes for its therapeutic healing power and unique molding characteristics.

Not surprisingly, this increased popularity has caused more and more companies to enter the memory foam industry. Today, many variations of "memory foam" are manufactured in various locations around the world. Because there are so many variations of "memory foam" it is very important for you, as a consumer to do your due diligence before purchasing memory foam online. 2004 has seen a dramatic increase in "low quality memory foam imports" from Asian Manufacturers. As the premier memory foam fabricator and retailer based in the United States, it has become increasingly difficult for The Memory Foam Factory® to portray the high quality of its products over the internet.

It is extremely important to note is that not all memory foams are created equal, and a high price doesn't always dictate a high quality product. Memory Foams differ dramatically in quality, density, hardness or softness, response to temperature, as well as in durability.

b. Low Quality Substitutes

Over the past few months, Memory Foam Factory® customer service representatives have begun to receive phone calls from people who purchased inferior products at large discount retailers in their area. Those inferior products did NOT come from any of our facilities. The Memory Foam Factory® only sells its products through this e-commerce site. Yet unknowingly, these consumers call us because they are dissatisfied with the quality of the product they purchased from one of our competitors and seek to find the manufacturer in order to lodge a complaint. If you are one of these individuals, we support your efforts. We encourage you to call the store you purchased your product from and complain. Let them know that you know they are selling an inferior product.

Large discount superstores do not buy high-quality, American made, memory foam because it is more expensive than the material they can buy overseas, especially in China. These companies serve a different memory foam niche with their products so it is very important not to confuse the two markets. Our manufacturing process is very expensive and includes significant quality control and R&D. The Memory Foam Factory® simply can't beat the prices of the Asian imports and frankly, we don't want to because our products are high quality differentiators, not low cost imitators.

Many discount superstores feel their customers won't know the difference between a high-quality American or Swedish made foam and its low quality American, European and Asian counterparts. Well, customers do know the difference. We know they do because they actually call us by mistake, figuring that we manufacture all memory foam mattress toppers, pillows and pet beds in the United States. We do not and we are only responsible for memory foam products purchased from this website.

c. Tempur-Pedic® - The First to Market

The first company to realize the potential of memory foam in the consumer bedding industry was Tempur-Pedic®. Tempur-Pedic® developed a manufacturing process that involves pouring the memory foam, while it's still in its liquid form, into molds that will eventually be used as beds, pillows, etc. Because Tempur-Pedic® utilizes a pouring process; their memory foam products have a plastic like skin on them that makes them slightly denser and retain more body heat than other memory foam products in the industry. This pouring process is also extremely expensive, so not surprisingly, Tempur-Pedic's® products are priced at extremely high levels.

More recently, a more energy saving, efficient means of manufacturing high quality memory foam has been developed to produce a "skin free product." But Tempur-Pedic® still uses this pouring process as the company believes their product is a unique one. Also the company has already invested millions in equipment to produce their products in that manner, so any process alteration would be extremely expensive.

**Check out Great Memory Foam Products:
www.MemoryFoamFactory.com**

d. Industry Leaders

There are only two premier brand names in the memory foam industry, Isotonic® and Tempur-Pedic®. These companies manufacture the highest quality memory foam sleep systems in the industry. There are a few copycat companies with names that resemble these two companies, but their products are not of the same quality as the previously mentioned two.

The Tempur-Pedic® and the Isotonic® memory foam sleep systems differ slightly in that the Tempur-Pedic® bed has a completely flat "foam like" exterior layer and the Isotonic® sleep system covers this foam layer with a more "traditional style" stitched and textured mattress covering. Many people feel that the Tempur-Pedic® sleep system is slightly softer than Isotonic's. But the difference is relatively subtle. Isotonic products are available for sale at The Memory Foam Factory®- www.memoryfoamfactory.com, and all Tempur-Pedic® products can be found at www.tempur-pedic.com.



ISOTONIC®
THIS IS THE STUFF DREAMS ARE MADE OF.™

e. Memory Foam - Scientific Origins

Memory foam is one of the most unique materials on the planet. The material's unique properties stem from the unusual properties of its cell structure. Unlike standard foams that only partially compress when under pressure, memory foam cells fully compress fully when pressed upon by another force, then they spring back to their original shape very slowly, (hence the name memory foam - The foam appears to remember the shape of the last object placed upon its surface.) This slow recovery plays a major role in the materials therapeutic properties. Memory Foam will mold itself to any surface, and hold that shape (without sticking) as long as the object remains pressed to it; thus reducing pressure points on a users back, neck and legs. No other material has this custom shaping properties that memory foam does.

In addition, memory foam is temperature sensitive. This means that at lower temperatures it is harder (more viscous), and at higher temperatures it is softer and bouncier (more elastic). This is the reason memory foam is also known as visco-elastic foam. This temperature sensitive quality accounts for the "melting" feeling that you get lying down on memory foam (because it reacts to your body's temperature) and also accentuates the custom molding affect of the foam itself.

f. Memory Foam Density

The quality of a piece of Memory Foam is determined by measuring its density. The denser the material the heavier and firmer it is to the touch. Also, the denser products usually take a lot longer to recover from a compressed state and are therefore thought to be more supportive than less dense memory foam. Because of this slower recovery, and increased support, denser foams are more expensive than materials that are less dense. Likewise, the denser the memory foam, the higher the manufacturing and fabrication costs.

The density alone will not tell you everything you need to know about the feel or comfort of the memory foam itself. In it simplest terms, density simply tells you how much the particular piece of memory foam weighs. A 4 lb. density simply means that a one foot cube of this material would weigh 4 lbs. Each memory foam brand has its own unique feel and recovery time. (See the difference between Isotonic® and Tempur-Pedic® above.) Higher density memory foam tends to have more of the unique memory feel that makes the foam more supportive. A 2.5 lb. density memory foam doesn't have enough density to give you the same feel that you get from a 4 or a 5lb. block of memory foam. And there is no substitution for name brands like Isotonic® and Tempur-Pedic®.

A Special Thanks to the memory foam customers that gave their time and effort to help make this memory foam industry report possible. You know who you are.