

PILLOW FIGHT

Acquiring a new mattress and a few pillows used to be an easy, low-tech process.

When I was about to go away to college, for instance, I bought a single-bed-shaped foam cushion that was rumored to have a few springs of some kind inside it. I picked it up at a garage sale for about \$10 and it served me well for four years. I believe I had to burn it after graduation, but that's not important. The point is, it was a straightforward transaction. I swiped a pillow from my bed at home and I was all set. When we got married, my husband and I simply used the mattress and pillows that he had bought with his queen-sized bed several years before, and then in the early 1990s we just followed the pack and did what almost everyone else did: we bought a waterbed mattress. When we reached the point that we needed a crane every morning to hoist ourselves out of the v-shaped groove in the middle of the bed, and the pillows we were using had lost their will to live, we knew it was time to go shopping.

One step into a mattress store and it became immediately apparent that I had not kept up with the many advances in "Sleep Technology." I didn't know my sleep number. Or the difference between independent spring coiling and pocket coiling. I didn't remember what memory foam was. I stared blankly at a TV while some talking sheep tried to teach me about the importance of "body contouring" and "edge support." And then there was the dizzying array of reversible pillow-top options. Clearly, I had been asleep at the wheel when I should have been paying attention to such high-tech developments in the mattress industry. Thank goodness for those persistent Swedish Scientists. They're the one who, perhaps because they enjoy more hours of darkness in their climate, dedicated their entire *careers* to mattress research and development for the sole purpose of giving me another reason to hit the snooze alarm in the morning.

Once we carefully compared all the features and benefits of each mattress and chose one to fit our lifestyle and body mass index needs perfectly (OK, we chose the one that LOOKED the most comfortable), we were ready to pick out pillows. Times have changed in the pillow industry as well. The first lesson in modern pillow shopping is that if there is more than one adjective used to describe the pillow, the price is allowed to triple, or correspond directly with the number of adjectives, whichever is greater. For example, a standard "down pillow" will cost you approximately \$9.95, while a "Sleep Zone Ultra Select Organic Gel-Coated Microfiber Pillow" will cost you approximately one month's salary. The second lesson is that you are now required to take and pass the manufacturer's special online "Pillow Profile" assessment before the appropriate pillow can be released into your custody with completed adoption papers. Thanks to our Pillow Profile, now everyone in cyberspace knows I have allergies and a freak-of-nature neck problem, and that dear hubby is battling a slight tendency to snore (and I am being *extremely* kind with that description).

When we finally brought our state-of-the-art purchases home and set them up, we discovered the old sheets didn't fit the thicker mattress and the old pillowcases weren't big enough to hold all that organic microfiber.

I'm told I'll have to go buy some 100% Egyptian Combed Cotton Extra Deep 400 Thread Count Hypoallergenic Fitted Sheets with Satin Piping and Coordinating Ultra King PillowSurrounds.

It's enough to make a person lose sleep.

Mary Beth Weisenburger lives in Putnam County with her natural family and her adopted pillows.