

Bedtime story: Mattress tells tale of good night's sleep

BY NANCY SUNDBSTROM
Special to the Record-Eagle

Although we spend about one-third each day pursuing sleep, experts say that most Americans only average about six or seven hours as opposed to the seven to nine they should be getting. In fact, millions of people deal daily with the consequences of a poor night's sleep, including higher stress, increased mistakes and difficulty concentrating.

There are many guidelines for achieving better quality of sleep, and a key component of that is your bed. You spend more time on your bed than on any other piece of furniture in your home. That's why finding a mattress that's right for you is of such great importance and a critical part of getting a good night's rest.

Listen to your body, says Ted Hooker, who has worked in the sleep technology area of Munson Medical Center's Sleep Disorders Center for the past seven years. Your body will respond to a comfortable, supportive mattress and will let you know whether or not what you're currently using is working for you.

"The bottom line is that you'll have a better, restful sleep if you wake up without aches and pains and that can be directly related to what you're sleeping on," said Hooker. "At our center, we do concentrate more on physical causes for not sleeping, but there are many factors that contribute to disrupting sleep architecture. We talk a lot about how many hours of sleep we should get, but it really comes down to quality of sleep, because that's what gives your body its repair and the energy you need for both work and play."

For the past 10 years, Jim Egbert, as owner of the Bedroom Company in Traverse City, has been in the business of "helping people get a better night's sleep by finding the mattress that is right for them."

Egbert says that one brand that has repeatedly proven itself with customers is the Tempur-Pedic, a Swedish mattress system with unique pressure-relieving properties that was created by NASA to relieve the enormous g-forces experienced by astronauts during lift-off and flight. After years of

research and collaboration, NASA and Sweden produced a viscoelastic, open-celled, temperature-sensitive material that conforms to the body with the unparalleled support of 100 percent energy absorption.

"There are a lot of great brands out there and we carry about four that we think provide the best level of support and comfort, but the Tempur-Pedic is above and beyond," said Egbert. "Its pillows and mattresses are made of a memory material that gets you as close as possible to weightless sleep and works by reducing pressure points. When you do that, you reduce tossing and turning and have less interruptions in sleep. It allows you to get the benefits of seven or eight hours of sleep in less time and aligns your neck and spine to give you supportive, healthy sleep."

Stan and Linda Smyka are a Traverse City couple who recently invested in a Tempur-Pedic mattress. Linda, who serves as mayor of Traverse City, and Stan, who is a dentist, were looking for one mattress that could meet both of their separate sleep requirements. She needed support for some arthritic conditions and he wanted an adjustable mattress. They had already purchased another mattress that was less than one year old when they saw the Tempur-Pedic at the Bedroom Company, and she says it has proved to be one of the best investments they've ever made.

"You don't really think about a good night's sleep as being 'phenomenal' until you have one you can describe as that, but this mattress has been like that for us," said Linda Smyka. "We not only feel more refreshed in the morning, but it's great to relax on or spend time reading or watching TV. My advice is to not just settle for a mattress, but to find one that really works for you."

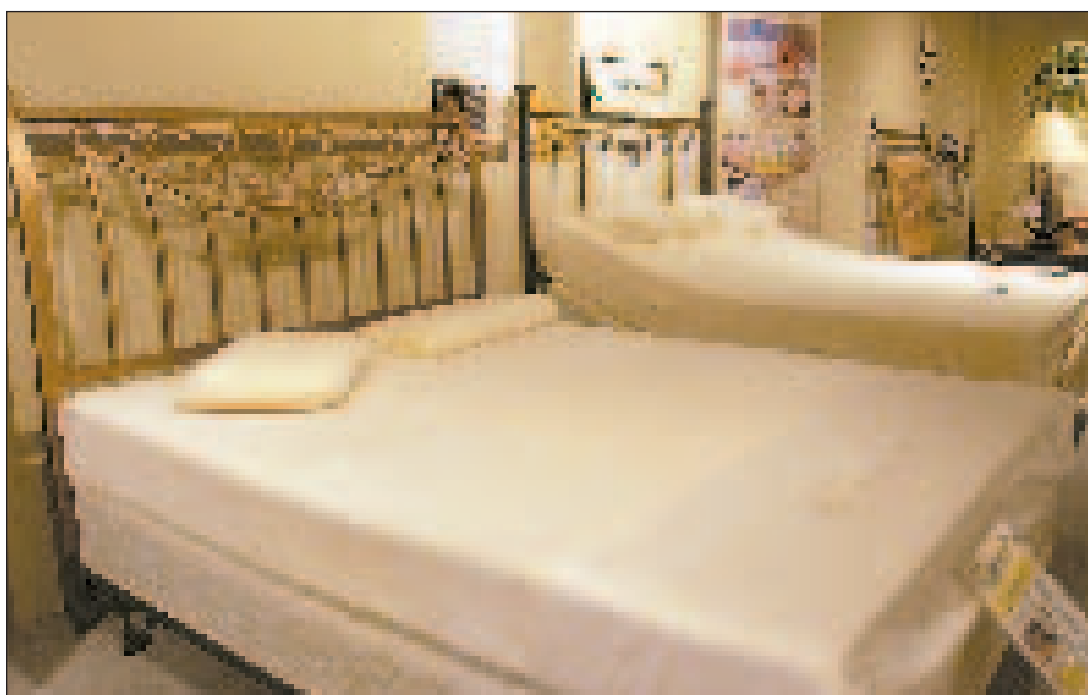
Mike Mahn, manager at Golden Fowler in Traverse City, says that much like Egbert and the Tempur-Pedic mattress, his business is proud to carry the Simmons Beautyrest line.

Simmons says that their products are engineered to ensure a solid night's rest by addressing one of the main causes of interrupted sleep,

which is partner movement throughout the night. Beautyrest reduces motion transfer across the bed by using Pocketed Coil Technology and maximizing the sleeping area so you and your partner can make use of the entire bed, from edge to edge.

"It can be tough to put your finger on what exactly comfort is," said Mahn, "so with this mattress, we especially encourage couples to come in together and try it out. What one thinks is firm another might see as hard, so we try to establish their physical needs and comfort preferences. We try to help buyers understand their needs and then encourage them to lie down and see how the mattresses feel. You learn a lot by doing that."

Nancy Sundstrom is a local freelance writer.



The Deluxe Electronically Adjustable Tempur-Pedic bed and the standard Tempur-Pedic bed are on display at the Bedroom Company in Traverse City.

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