

Before you buy: Think longevity for your bedroom set

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The bed is a natural focal point. Use an upholstered headboard to make it stand out, says designer Linda Nolan, who decorated Richcraft's Addison model.

OTTAWA — Your bedroom is your private oasis away from the hustle bustle of the rest of the home. Creating your sleep sanctuary begins with selecting the right bedroom furniture. Martin Corcoran, owner of Ormes Furniture, says buying a bedroom set isn't as simple as it once was.

“It used to be that everyone bought a ladies' dresser, a mirror, a men's chest, a bed and two night tables. But with the size of houses changing, there's a lot more that now goes into choosing a bedroom set,” he says. Here are some things to keep in mind.

1. Bed size matters. Interior designer Linda Nolan says the size of the bed is the first thing to consider when furnishing a bedroom. Measure the room and sketch the dimensions of the bed to ensure you'll have enough space on either side and in front of closets and dressers to pull out and put away clothes.

2. Make the bed a focal point. As the largest piece of furniture, the bed is a natural focal point. Nolan likes to use an upholstered headboard to make the bed stand out. “(It) also softens the look of the room,” she says. To make the headboard pop, create contrast between it and the wall, placing a light coloured headboard against a dark accent wall, for example.

3. Choose the right mattress. The mattress is the one piece you can buy that will have the greatest impact on your quality of sleep. Christine Magee, CEO of Sleep Country Canada, says while organic wool, pocketed coil and memory foam mattresses continue to be popular, she’s seeing a large trend toward adjustable beds as people’s lifestyles change. “Their bedroom is becoming their haven that they’re watching TV in, reading and working on their laptops, so adjustability in their mattress is becoming increasingly important,” she says. The most important thing to do when selecting a mattress is spend enough time lying on them in the store to determine support and comfort fit.

4. Make the bed multi-purpose. The bed is no longer just for sleeping. Corcoran says storage beds have become very popular, especially in the condo market. Beds with drawers and lift beds that provide storage underneath the mattress are great options for those who lack bedroom storage space.

5. Mix and match furniture. Gone are the days when customers chose a five-piece set from the furniture store floor. Most quality furniture stores allow buyers to customize furniture, selecting from a variety of styles and finishes. “You can buy a bed from one set and a dresser from another and have them in the same finish,” says Corcoran. While wood furniture is still popular, Nolan says mirrored dressers have become very trendy as the boutique-spa bedroom look has gained popularity.

6. Invest in quality. Since a bedroom set isn’t replaced as often as living room furniture that frequently sees guests and rapidly changing styles, it’s important the furniture you buy will last a long time. Inspecting drawers is the easiest way to determine furniture quality. Dovetail joints (interlocking square teeth) are best, while anything held together with staples or nails is poor quality.