1. Allow time when buying a mattress
The longer you try a mattress in store, the less likely you are to make a mistake on the firmness and comfort of the mattress. We recommend 15-20 minutes lying on your mattress of choice. First, lie on your back, then on your side. If you are with a partner, get them to move around to check the level of disturbance. Roll over on the mattress and ensure you are able to turn over with ease. Ask the sales assistant to check that you are lying in a healthy position and your spine is correctly aligned. The sales person can advise on the make-up of the mattress and can make recommendations, but only you can judge how comfortable it is.

2. Back care and other health concerns
If you suffer from back or neck pain, or have health issues affecting your sleep, it is very important that you visit a store where the staff are trained and competent in dealing with health issues. Ask your health professional for some guidance or visit a store that works with back care professionals.

3. “Top of the Range” doesn’t always mean best for you
The top of the range mattresses – the most expensive - are often very plush and this may not be conducive to you achieving a healthy sleep posture. And the soft, luxurious pillow tops can create a heat trap resulting in raised sleeping temperatures. Also, the more that goes into a mattress can also mean more to go wrong. Select the mattress that best suits your body frame and comfort requirements.

4. Biggest Brand – not always best
Some of the big brands produce lovely mattresses; however, they do at times focus more on the marketing and less on the quality of their product. So don’t be swayed by all the marketing hype – understanding the features of your mattress, and the benefits they give you, will assist in your final choice.

5. Purchase from stores that carry mattresses from multiple manufacturers
When researching mattresses it’s a good idea to visit stores that sell mattresses from various manufacturers. Every manufacturer has its own philosophy and technology; for example, 3-zone, 5-zone and 7-zone pocket spring mattresses all have different feels and provide different benefits.

6. Factory Direct – the pros and cons
Factory direct outlets have their place. Often smaller manufacturers will have outlet stores where they sell the mattresses they make. You may be able to pick up a bargain, but you may be buying factory seconds or overruns. It’s a great way to purchase for a spare room or holiday home where you don’t spend that much time. But be aware that small mattress manufacturers are often in business for less time than the warranties/guarantees that they offer.

7. Durability and strength of a mattress is important
If you are purchasing a quality mattress and want it to perform well for the duration of its life, a simple test is to sit on the corner of the mattress. A high quality mattress will have a firm corner and the mattress will be priced accordingly. This is not to say that softer edged mattress is of poor quality – it’s a question of what quality level you are looking for. Often you will find a mattress may look very expensive, but will fail the above test.

8. Beware high-pressure selling
We often come across customers who have purchased from high-pressure sales people and bought what the sales person wanted to sell rather than what was best for them. Support and comfort are the key factors for you in determining what is the best mattress. You may find that a $1,000 mattress is more comfortable than a $3,500 one, and provides good support for your body frame. The red light warning is when the sales person moves you to a more expensive range after you feel good about one of lower value.
9. **Crazy Mark-Downs - 60% - 70% - 80% off the price!**

There are often investigations by consumer affairs into bed stores offering huge discounts to attract business. Often the discount is never off a legitimate retail or normal selling price. The main driving factor is that a person only purchases a bed every 10 years so it’s important for them to believe that they are getting a bargain. That’s why bed stores have constant sales! Remember, bedding retailers tend to work on similar margins, so if you are getting 70% off the price (which is well below cost) either the mattress is of very low quality or they can’t sell it – either way you don’t want it.

10. **False and misleading advertising**

Beware the bed stores that offer, for example, a King mattress for the price of a Queen. Often the conditions are onerous and usually it’s a King mattress at the normal retail price of a Queen - but the store never sells the Queen at the normal retail price anyway! Ads for latex mattresses, for example, at $400 or $500 are, on closer scrutiny, mattresses with a cheap innerspring and a slim 50mm pad of latex on top. These attempts to get you into their store reflect the integrity and values of the business owners – how would they respond when things go wrong?

11. **Change of fabric (Ticking) on mattresses**

Stores will from time to time offer to reduce the price if you purchase the mattress with a different fabric or pattern than the one in the store. This should be avoided because a change in the quilting pattern or the fabric can alter the feel of the mattress dramatically and this may not suit you. The reason retailers do this is because manufacturers sometimes have an oversupply of unpopular fabrics and offer the retailer an incentive to clear them.

12. **The right base for your mattress**

Do consider what your new mattress is going to be resting on. Old bases, sprung bases and some slatted bases may not be compatible with some of the modern mattresses. A good sales person will discuss bases with you, but if not it is important to check this prior to purchase. The wrong base may compromise not only the feel of the mattress but also conditions of the warranty/guarantee.

13. **Always protect your mattress**

Mattresses can become a haven for dust-mites, microbes and other allergens. These can easily affect your sleep and your health. A good, quality protector will shield your mattress and protect it from stains, such as perspiration or spillages. This will keep you healthy and your warranty/guarantee intact.

14. **Always read the Care Instructions!**

Your new mattress will arrive with the Warranty/Guarantee, as well as instructions on how to care for your mattress. This includes how often you should rotate your mattress, which is important to get even wear from your purchase. Do keep this document safe, together with your receipt, in case you need to follow up concerns at a later date.

15. **Don’t forget a good pillow!**

The correct sleep posture is one where you achieve a neutral spinal position. For this to occur your neck has to be in alignment as well as your spine, so ideally you should be fitted for the correct pillow on the mattress you have chosen. Supportive, contouring neck pillows will feel different when tried on different mattresses.