

## *Ten Questions To Ask Before Purchasing A Sofa*

As published in *The Local Woman's Guide*, Autumn 2008 Issue 6

You sit down on the sofa after a long day at work, ready to relax and read the newspaper, only to hear the frame squeak as you sink down into your seat and feel the presence of a metal coil poking through to the cushion. This is certainly not your idea of comfort and relaxation. You later decide that it's time for a living room makeover and head out to the local furniture store only to walk away in a state of confusion. Does anything in this scenario sound familiar?

Choosing furniture can be a daunting and overwhelming experience if you are not sure what to look for. With the many choices of style, color, wood type, spring system, fabric choice and differences in quality, it's no wonder you're puzzled!

A sofa is one of the top "big ticket" items we purchase to furnish our homes, yet 80% of us buy a sofa solely based on appearance and not quality. In order to ensure that you are making the correct choice and paying a fair price, it's important to approach your shopping venture as an informed consumer ready to ask key questions. Here are some guidelines when shopping for a sofa:

1. Take measurements. Will it fit in your room? Don't be fooled by the store's beautiful room arrangements. Take my advice: that "I just have to have" sofa may look like it will fit in your living room when in reality it is much larger than you think. Remember, most often, once you've made the purchase you own it. Ask about the store's return policy.
2. Is it comfortable? On the average, consumers will own a sofa for 5-10 years and possibly longer. Comfort is essential when you are talking about a piece that is used every day for several years.
3. Is the frame made of kiln-dried hard wood? Kiln-dried wood lasts longer and is less likely to warp, crack or weaken with time.
4. What is the board thickness on the bottom side of the sofa? Anything less than 1 ¼" in thickness may cause the sofa to squeak.
5. Does the sofa have a five-legged frame? A fifth leg is located under the center of the sofa and provides additional support. Legs that are built into the frame versus screwed into the frame are sturdier.

6. Feel the weight of the seat cushion. A heavier seat cushion equals a higher-quality product.
7. Ask the salesperson to explain the spring system. S-type springs are standard with the springs running from the front to the back of the piece.
8. What are your fabric choices? If you have children or pets and the sofa is in a room that is used on a daily basis, fabric selection is key. Look for fabrics with a high “double rub” count. A fabric with 15,000 double rubs is a great place to start. The greater the double rubs, the better the wear. This information is usually found on the back of a fabric sample. If not available, ask the salesperson to provide this information. Microfiber is a popular choice these days due to its stain resistance, durability and soft suede-like feel.
9. How is the tailoring? Check to see that seams are even and that the fabric pattern matches. A higher-priced sofa will have matched fabric not only on the sides and front, but in the back as well. Look for nail heads and trim that line up correctly and appear symmetrical.
10. What are the manufacturer’s and retailer’s warranties? Often the frame is covered; however, a higher-quality sofa will have warranties that cover cushions and spring systems. Be sure to read the fine print on all warranties. Check the time frame for coverage and beware of wording such as “only to the original address.” If you were to move, your warranty would be negated. Many retailers offer additional coverage for a fee. Read the fine print knowing what is and is not covered and what the process is regarding repairs.

Asking these questions ensures that you are making a sofa purchase that fits your need. Once you have the product information, you will then know if the price is a true reflection of the quality. Remember that you only purchase a few sofas in your lifetime, so relax and enjoy your shopping experience knowing that you did your homework and spent your money well.

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