

Tool #12 Choosing a Mattress for Back Pain and/or Sciatica

Finding a comfortable mattress is a very personal choice, but here are some guidelines:

- The base of the mattress should be firm enough to support your spine in a straight position (s-curve as opposed to c-curve).
- The mattress does not allow sagging. Look for sagging in the mattress to compare supine straight and supine sagging, side-lying straight and side-lying saggy, prone straight and prone saggy.
- The upper layer of the mattress should be comfortable and conforming, reducing the pressure at the contact points.
- Medium-firm mattresses have been found to be better for back pain than firm mattresses.
- If you are a smaller person with less prominent curves, you will probably tolerate a moderately firm foundation mattress with a firmer top. You won't sink into the mattress easily because of your size. And because you have less prominent curves you tolerate a firmer top.
- If you are a heavier person with prominent curves, you will probably require a firm foundation mattress with a less firm top. You will tend to sink into the mattress easily because of your size and because you have prominent curves you will benefit from a less firm top.