

South Dakota State University
**Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional
Repository and Information Exchange**

Cooperative Extension Circulars: 1917-1950

SDSU Extension

9-1930

Better Home Bedding

Mary A. Covert

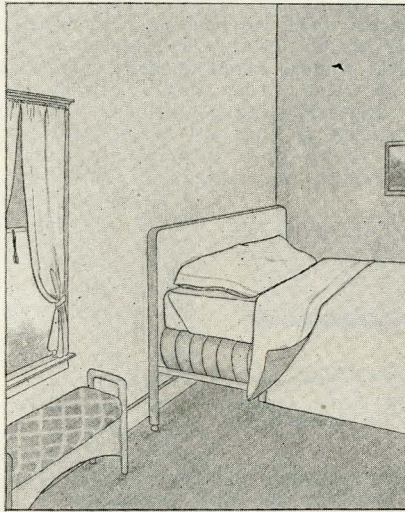
Follow this and additional works at: http://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_circ

Recommended Citation

Covert, Mary A., "Better Home Bedding" (1930). *Cooperative Extension Circulars: 1917-1950*. Paper 298.
http://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_circ/298

This Circular is brought to you for free and open access by the SDSU Extension at Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Cooperative Extension Circulars: 1917-1950 by an authorized administrator of Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. For more information, please contact michael.biondo@sdstate.edu.

Better Home Bedding



*“Brighten the corner where you are by
making the most of what you have.”*

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE
EXTENSION SERVICE
A. E. Anderson, Director
Brookings, S. D.

Better Home Bedding

By

Mary A. Covert

Extension Specialist in Home Management

If you do not "sleep well o'nights", the cause may be found in the bed or the bedding.

When one changes to a certain position, either erect or reclining, numerous changes begin to take place within the body. The fluids tend to settle in the lowest part of the glands. The large organs change their relative positions. They press upon each other and pull upon the ligaments which fasten them to body walls. The weight of the body presses upon large areas of skin and muscles. The skin under pressure is in such close contact with the bedding that ventilation is prevented and it becomes over-heated. If it were possible to lie still, one would soon create a tropical climate about oneself, even on the coldest night.

It is impossible, however, to lie still. A stir is the natural result of all these pressures and irritating conditions. After the stir one rests until a similar condition is built up in the new set of areas under pressure. Research shows that a normal person under favorable sleeping conditions makes an average of thirty-five changes during

a single night. One has about a dozen favorite sleeping positions which are assumed one after another in rather definite sequences. The length of time each position is held ranges from two minutes to one hour. Under favorable conditions, the changes are made unconsciously.

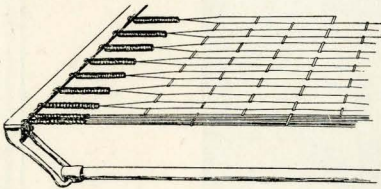


Fig. 1. Horizontal coil fabric springs localize the support to the middle of the sleeper's body.

circulation is further retarded and the call for change of position is more frequent. If there is too much resiliency or "give" to the bed, portions of the body sink into it. Contact of body with bedding is so close that ventilation of the skin is prevented. It soon becomes over-heated and calls for a change, but a change is difficult to make as portions of the body have made deep depressions in the bed. Heavy weight or too tightly tucked covering and insufficient bed space increase the difficulty of turning. When the changes become too frequent or too difficult, they cannot be made unconsciously and one awakens.

If the bed is hard and unyielding, there is a counter pressure upon the skin and muscles. The

The Bed Frame

Solidity and staunchness of structure, freedom from creak or sway are the chief requirements of a good bed frame. It should be of material, style and workmanship which lends itself to easy cleaning. Metal frames have gained preference because of their sanitary qualities. Fashion trend is toward lower beds without footboards. The frame should be high enough to permit free circulation of air and admit floor cleaning.

Bed Springs

Bed-springs are of two general classes based on the direction of their supporting coils.

Horizontal Coil Types.—The fabric spring (Fig. 1) is a system of inelastic steel links, tapes, or cables fastened to a frame at the

head and foot by rows of helical steel coils. This type of spring confines the support to the middle of the body and limits the number of possible positions and makes shifting of position difficult.

Vertical Coil Types.—The covered box type consists of upright coils fastened to each other, to the padding and to the border, by inflexible cords. The coils cannot act singly, adjacent coils being dragged down to form spotty depressions which prevent the distribution of body weight. It is the most expensive and most attractive type of spring, but it is not the most comfortable.

The best type of vertical open coil spring has a foundation of steel slats joined to a rigid steel frame. The vertical coils which are unusually long are spring-tied together at the centers and tops by small coils of steel. This helps to eliminate dragging down the neighboring coils and distributes the support over a large area. The border is fastened to the frame preventing side sway.

The coils may be shortened and the center tie omitted at a decrease of one-third the cost, but with little decrease of comfort. When stiff wire ties replace the spring ties, neighboring coils are forced to act together as in the box covered coil spring and squeaking may occur. The steel frame and bottom are omitted from the cheapest form of coil springs and untempered wire is used for the vertical coils, making them very unsatisfactory.

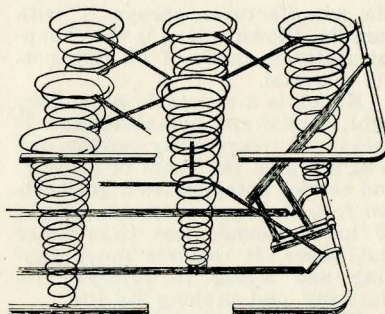


Fig. 2. Open vertical coil, top and center spring tied, steel foundation and frame, automatic brace connection.

Mattresses

The material and construction of a good mattress are such as affords general distribution of support, preventing excessive pressure on any part of the body. It permits adequate ventilation of the lower body surface and does not interfere with shifting of position. It keeps its shape and elasticity for a reasonable number of years.

Types of Mattresses.—Mattresses are of two general types—solid, and inner spring construction.

Solid mattresses are filled with straw, corn husks, wool shavings, mill sweepings, rags, old mattress fillings, jute, kapok, hair or cotton. Research has shown hair and cotton to be the most lasting and satisfactory.

Only horse tail is satisfactory for a hair mattress and its price is almost prohibitive. Hair mattresses selling for less than \$100 may justly be questioned as to their filling. A hair mattress tends to overheat the body much as feathers do and does not permit good ventilation of the lower body surface. Hair, while elastic at first, tends to pack and requires renovation every few years.

Good cotton felt is elastic. It packs eventually, but does not separate. It absorbs body moisture but does not insulate heat as readily as hair. Exposure to sunlight and air should be frequent to dry it and prevent its packing. The best type of felted filling is made of long staple cotton, pressed into a bat the length and width of the mattress but many times deeper, then compressed to the thickness of the mattress. (Fig. 3).

Blown cotton mattresses are made of short fibers blown into the mattress sack. It separates, packs hard and lumpy and is dusty unless

the manufacturer sprays it with paraffin. Blown cotton is the cheapest mattress made of all new cotton material.

Kapok is a vegetable fiber, very light, elastic and non-absorbant. It packs and wears away readily and does not give the years of comfort and service obtained from good cotton felt. A kapok mattress weighs 10 to 15 pounds less than other mattresses. It requires much sunning and airing to preserve its elasticity and prolong its life.

The inner-spring type of mattress (Fig. 4) is a recent invention, but it gives promise of outwearing either the cotton felt or the hair mattress. The principles applying to good bed springs apply to spring construction of an inner-spring mattress. The best type is made of hundreds of coil springs so fastened together that there is uniform distribution of body weight. It is soft but the quality of the padding, and the general construction of the mattress prevents overheating and clamminess. The interior contains an air pocket which compresses and expands as the sleeper stirs, making the mattress self-ventilating. It permits easy turning and seems to meet more nearly the whole list of requirements than any other mattress on the present day market.

The most satisfactory combination is a good type of vertical open coil springs and an inner-spring type of mattress.

Tailoring of the Mattress.—The ticking should be closely woven so that dust will not pass through it, strong so that it will not tear from strain on the tufts or stretch and let the mattress sag from shape. Printed ticking is less serviceable than thread dyed material. Brocades are less durable than plain weaves.

A rolled edge adds little to the strength of the mattress. Most of the better mattresses have three or four rows of side stitching. Some very satisfactory mattresses omit tufting, depending on some method of inner construction to keep the materials in shape.

Labels.—A label reading, "Made from new material", should be sewed to the ticking of every mattress. Often old materials such as old blankets, underwear, carpets, discarded mattresses from hospitals, hotels and residences are used in the filling. Most states permit their use if they are fumigated and labeled as such. The fumigating, however, is often inadequately done as a satisfactory process is expensive. Some companies advertise this renovated material as "Sanitary Cotton" with the intent to infer a superior quality. Old material cannot be depended upon either for quality or sanitation.

Examine a sample of the filling supposed to be in the mattress. Buy the mattress with the privilege of ripping a seam a few inches to see if the filling is the same as that represented by the sample. Refuse the mattress if the filling has been misrepresented.

Some states protect the homemaker by a sanitary bedding law which requires every mattress to bear a label stating whether the filling is new or old, the kind of filling used, its quality and the name of the manufacturer.

South Dakota, at present, has no sanitary bedding law and manufacturers using second hand materials may ship their product unlabeled into the state without restriction. Reliable bedding, however, is available as a number of manufacturers whose products meet the sanitary bedding laws of other states, ship into South Dakota.

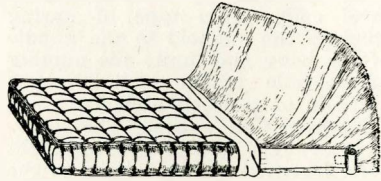


Fig. 3. Cotton felt mattress made of compressed layers full length and width of mattress.

Pillows

Pillows should be labeled as to new or old content. Buy your pillows with the privilege of ripping the case to examine the content. Old, used feathers lose their springiness and tend to be brittle. If light colored, they may have yellowed with age. If poorly processed, the feathers may contain dirt, dust, chaff and animal matter which decays and attracts vermin. The lighter the weight of the pillow—size and plumpness being equal—the greater the assurance that the feathers are new and properly processed, free from dirt, animal matter and feathers of improper size.

A good pillow is one which when taken by the corners and shaken, shows slack, gives easily under pressure and springs back to its original shape when the pressure is released, and remains full and plump when supported on the palm of the hand (Fig. 5). If it collapses and hangs limp and lifeless, the feathers are either worn and probably unsanitary from years of service or the pillow is not sufficiently filled with feathers.

Down pillows are softest, lightest and most desirable. Gray down is cheaper than white and is as soft and as durable. Goose feathers give longer service and are more comfortable than other feathers. A mixture of down and good quality goose feathers make a soft yet firm pillow.

Better grades of pillows are made with a ventilating vent to increase their comfort and sanitary quality. Pillows should be entirely inclosed in removable allcover coverings. They should be aired and sunned often, cleaned frequently with a vacuum cleaner, and washed when needed. To wash, place pillows one at a time in a large tubful of warm suds. Souse the water up and down through the pillow with the hands. Renew the suds as soon as it becomes dirty. Rinse until every bit of suds is removed. Hang the pillow suspended from its corners. Change the position when partially dry. Fluff up by shaking and working feathers with fingers to spread them uniformly throughout the case.

Pillow Cases.—Pillow cases should not crowd the pillow. A pillow stated as 20 inches wide should have a 42 inch case. They should be long enough to stay on well; 10½ inches longer than the pillow is the standard relation. The quality requirements for sheeting apply to cases as they are more of the same or similar material. The strong thread (warp) should extend lengthwise of the case. Plain hems are the most durable.

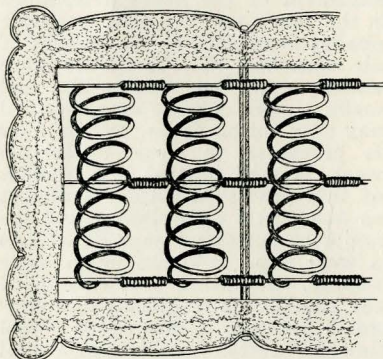


Fig. 4. Inner spring type of mattress, showing roll edge, side stitching, padding, tufting cords and spring construction.

Sheets

Sheets should be durable and ample in size to permit the tucking necessary to hold them firmly in place.

Durability is dependent upon tensile strength, thread count and weight. Tensile strength, relates to the quality and length of the raw fiber, size of the yarn from which the thread is made and the amount of twist in it. The thread count (number of threads—both warp and woof—to a square

inch) determines the fineness or coarseness of the sheeting. The weight is relative to the size of the thread used and the thread count.

Select a piece of sheeting which looks and feels firm. Rub a portion of it briskly between the hands to determine whether the firmness is due to closeness of weave or to dressing. Snap the material quickly, a fine, white dust shows the presence of dressing. Examine the cloth carefully again. It should appear as closely woven as before the rubbing and the threads should be uniform in size throughout their length. The difference between the number of warp and filling threads should not be great as there would be a tendency for the cloth to split.

Muslin, bleached and unbleached, sheeting percale and linen are the standard materials used for sheeting and pillow cases.

Satisfactory color comes only in the higher priced materials. Tints of peach and green are the colors favored at present.

Pillow casing and sheeting should be torn instead of cut to insure straight edges and uniformity of shape after laundering. If the sheet is not labeled "torn", examine the hem edge to see if the same thread follows closely along the entire edge.

Plain stitched hems wear best. Sheets with equal width hems insure longer and more even wear as there is no distinguishing of head and foot. Sheets of uniform length are more economical and convenient.

Sheeting is designated by nine-inch "quarters". Six-quarter sheeting—54 inches wide—is used for cots. Eight-quarter (72-inch) is best for twin or three-quarter beds and ten-quarter for the double bed using a vertical coil spring. Ready made sheets are designated by their unhemmed length. Three yards (108 inches) is the uniform length adapted to a well made bed.

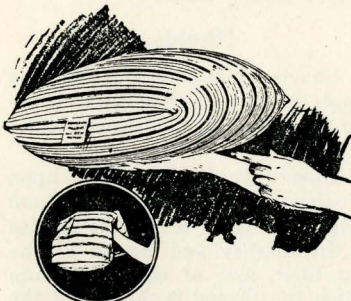
Bed Coverings

The covering for the fully equipped bed consists of an upper sheet, one or more blankets of ample size and a third sheet or an easily laundered light weight clinging spread. A decorative spread may be added if desired.

Blankets.—A blanket 60x84 is needed for a single or twin size bed. One 72x84 or 72x90 is needed for the double bed, the length depending on how high one likes the blankets to come over the shoulders.

A blanket whether cotton or wool should be light in weight, closely woven and thickly napped. The thicker the nap, the warmer the blankets, if napping fibers are fluffy. The arrangement of the fibers determines the amount of still air enmeshed within the fabric and the heat retaining

quality is relative to the amount of air enmeshed. Wool fibers are more elastic, curly and spring-like and make a more durable air enmeshed nap than cotton fibers. Cotton fiber is processed to closely resemble wool. A well napped new blanket of this processed cotton is almost as warm as a wool blanket, but the nap does not stand wear as well as a wool nap. It packs down more readily, decreasing the warmth of the blanket. It is difficult to distinguish between a new, good "wool finished" cotton blanket and a wool one. With practice a difference can be detected as one sights across the naps when a portion of the blankets are held horizontally over



"Copyright 1927 B.B.A. of A."

Fig. 5. If the pillow hangs limp and lifeless when supported on the palm of the hand, one of two things is wrong.

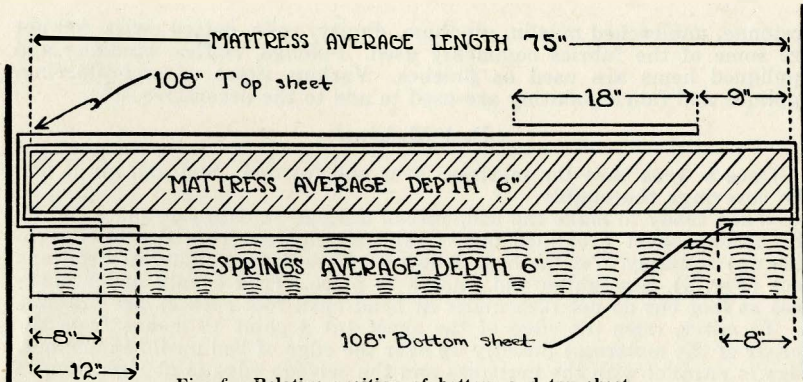


Fig. 6. Relative position of bottom and top sheet.

the palms of the hands at eye level. Cotton fiber is naturally smooth, round and straight. Wool fiber is scaly, curled and springy.

A good cotton blanket is better than a poor wool one. The fiber used in either wool or cotton blankets should be long as it assures a firmly interwoven nap. To test the wearing quality, try supporting the entire weight of the blanket by a pinch of the nap held between forefinger and thumb. A blanket with cotton warp and all wool filling is almost as warm as an all wool blanket since it is the filling which is napped. It retains its shape well as cotton warp does not shrink as readily as wool.

Wool blankets are made of new or used wool. "Virgin wool" simply means wool which has not been used before. It does not signify quality or grade.

Thickly napped single blankets, are more easily handled than paired ones. Plain stitched or blanket stitched hems and plain sateen bindings are the most servicable blanket finishes.

Blankets should be laundered carefully to preserve the depth and fluffiness of their nap. They should be washed before they get badly soiled so as not to require long or hard rubbing as it mats the nap and causes shrinkage. The secret of successful blanket washing lies in the abundant use of neutral suds, careful handling and proper drying. Select a warm, airy day for the washing. One blanket to a machine full of suds, washed three minutes, with a change of suds followed by a one minute run is more satisfactory than a continued longer run. Rinse thoroughly in soft or borax-softened warm water (borax is better than soap to prevent the hard water deposit which makes blankets hard). Run blankets through a very loose wringer. Hang evenly on the line. When partly dry, reverse the position. Squeeze out the water which collects in corners. Pull and straighten the edges into shape. When thoroughly dry, lay over a table and brush up the nap with a stiff brush.

Quilts and Comforters.—Quilts and comforters are not satisfactory as blankets since they are more difficult to launder. If used, they should be protected by deep removable washable bibs or all-over coverings. They require frequent sunning and airing. The method of washing blankets can be adapted to the washing of quilts and comforters.

Decorative Bed Spreads.—A decorative spread, long enough to tuck under the lower edge of the pillows and cover them, is used to give a "finish" to the bed and to tie it to the decorative scheme of the room. It matches or harmonizes closely with curtains and other textile accessories. It is usually in colors, plain or a combination of plain and print or brocades. Silks, rayons, pongee, sateen marseilles, pipplette, Japanese crepe,

cretonne, unbleached muslin, gingham, dimity, voile, dotted swiss and net are some of the fabrics commonly used. Puffings, ruffles, bindings and applique hems are used as finishes. Various types of embroidering, applique and fabric painting are used to add to the decorative note.

Bed Making

Once a week turn the mattress over end for end. Sun and air it and the coverings thoroughly.

When ready to make the bed, spread the pad smoothly in place. Fling the bottom sheet (108-inch one, fresh, unwrinkled from the line, right side up) squarely over the bed. Allow 8 inches to tuck under at head and foot (Fig. 6). Straighten and smooth to place. Tuck evenly under mattress at foot but do not tuck under at head until foot corners are mitered.

To miter, raise the edge of the sheet (at a point 18 inches from the corner of the mattress) directly up over the edge of bed until the hemmed edge is parallel with the mattress and the selvege edge is at right angles to it. A taut diagonal fold extends from the point held to the corner of the bed. Keeping the edges of the sheet in this position, lay portion held on top of the bed. Tuck the hanging portion securely under the side of the mattress. Hold the sheet firmly in place against the side of the mattress while the portion laid on the bed is dropped to natural position. A deep diagonal fold now extends from the foot corner to the selvege edge of the sheet. The miter is finished by tucking the hanging portion securely under the side of the mattress. (See cover page).

Do not try to make one entire side of the bed before going to the other side. A smooth, unwrinkled lower sheet, taut enough to stay in place, is too essential to sleeping comfort to sacrifice for a few steps. If securely placed, it will not require placing every day. Pull the sheet tightly at each top side, tuck under mattress at head, miter each corner and finish tucking sides under.

The top sheet is placed right side down, smoothed to place and 12 inches tucked under at the foot (Fig. 6). The blankets are placed about nine inches from head of bed and tucked under well at foot. (If too short to tuck well, a piece of outing flannel should be overhanded to bottom). Miter blankets and upper sheet together at foot corners, but let the top corners hang free. Place the top sheet or washable spread over blankets (top edges even and sides completely covering blankets and under sheet). Tuck under the end or let it hang free. Fold the upper or second sheet back over the top edge of blanket and spread (Fig. 6). If a decorative spread is not used, place the plumped pillow in position, flat on the bed.

REFERENCES

- J. M. Johnson—Selection of Bedding Equipment
- T. H. Swan—The Care of the Bedroom
- P. D. Sale and A. F. Hedrick—Measurement of Heat Insulation and Related Properties of Blankets.
- M. Attie Souder—Would You Sleep Well O'Nights?
Filed Commercial and Magazine Articles.

Extension Service
South Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts
Brookings, S. D.

Published and distributed under Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914, by the Agricultural Extension Service of the South Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, Brookings, A. E. Anderson, director, U. S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.