



Ruff night

Let sleeping dogs lie
in a bed of their own

CHRIS A RUSNAK

By **Debbie Swanson**

SETTLED INTO BED, you're about to give in to the welcome drift of sleep when your bed abruptly quakes. Standing over you, your dog circles several times, finally emitting a hearty groan before collapsing against your side. Soon he's snoring contently, his right paw twitching inches from your now-wide eyes.

While hunkering down together is not uncommon, for a sound night's sleep it's best if dogs and humans each have their own bed. Finding the right one for your dog can be key to harmony.

What's your style?

The variety of bed styles is endless. You can buy Fido anything from a round pillow to a nesting shape to beds made with memory foam. The choice is based largely on preference—both human and canine.

First, make sure the bed accommodates your dog's needs (see sidebar). Then, consider his habits. Does he like to be elevated or never leave the floor? Does he seek soft surfaces or collapse on dropped laundry? Does

your dog snuggle against something or sprawl?

"Some dogs do not like beds in which they get too warm. Some head for a cool tile floor, even in the winter. For these dogs, I would suggest a thinner surface with a breathable [cover]," says Costco member Dr. Faith Lotsikas, a veterinarian with Skylos Sports Medicine in Maryland.

The bed should complement the intended room. If you'll be moving the bed among rooms, consider mobility, or multiple beds, one for each room.

Finally, consider any health issues or limitations, such as the height of the bed (for smaller dogs) or a bed that may be too soft for dogs that have difficulty moving their limbs.

Keeping it clean

Ease of cleaning can affect the life span of your purchase.

"If the filling becomes soiled, [the entire bed] may need to be replaced," says Dr. Christine Hayes, a veterinarian with the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in New York.

Your adult dog may no longer have accidents, but daily dirt

and normal skin oils build up over time, creating odor. Look for a removable, laundry-safe outer cover; purchasing two will make laundry day easier. Also, seek a quality bed with a liner to protect inner materials.

Puppy problems

A puppy curled in a cozy bed is the picture of contentment. But proceed with caution: Most younger dogs are zealous chewers, and beds are prime targets.

Choosing an inexpensive bed may seem like a good solution, but there's more at risk than just your budget: Swallowed bedding is a hazard.

"Any bedding—discount or not—can be torn up. If ingested, it can cause a blockage in the puppy's digestive tract," warns Hayes, who recommends supervised use of the bed with young dogs.

With your dog's preferences in mind, you'll soon find a bed that has both of you sleeping in peace. [E]

Debbie Swanson is a freelance writer from the Boston area and contributes regularly to many animal publications.

Common mattress fillers

Mattress fillers range greatly in padding and attributes. Here's a comparison.—DS

Materials	Benefits
Gel	Shapes to the body. May be cooler. Thinner profile. Easily portable.
Memory foam	Shapes to the body. Added comfort for dogs that are older, athletic or have joint issues.
Cedar/wood chips	Provides a fresh scent. <i>Wood chips may cause allergies in some dogs.</i>
Orthopedic foam	Shapes to the body. May be more airy. Even padding.
Foam—basic flat	Shapes to the body. Even padding.
Recycled fiberfill	Softer padding. Environmentally responsible.

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The Costco Connection

Costco and Costco.com carry a variety of high-quality dog beds (pictured here), kennels and crates, and supplies for cats.