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THIS WINTER: STAY TOASTY WHILE SAVING MONEY

Five easy tips for choosing and caring for a down comforter

New York, NY – For many people, one of the only things that makes the winter months bearable is sleeping with a fluffy down comforter. Down-filled comforters offer lightweight warmth that keeps you toasty while wicking away moisture. Sleeping with a down comforter even allows consumers to turn down the thermostat by 10-15 degrees, helping them to save as much as 10 percent on heating bills, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. What's more, with proper care, down and feather bedding will last for years.

The following information will help consumers make an informed decision in purchasing and properly caring for down and feather bedding.

Understand the labeling. In the U.S., any product that is labeled as a down comforter is required by law to contain at least 75% down. A comforter that contains less than that percentage must be labeled as a down and feather blend. As a general rule of thumb, the higher the down content the better the comforter.

Consider the fill power number. Fill power is a measurement that reflects how much insulating power an ounce of down has. Comforters with high fill power will keep you warmer with less weight. Although this information is not always listed, higher quality products will usually make a fill power claim on the packaging. Consumers should look for a fill power number of 550 and above when choosing a down comforter.

Choose a construction type. A good quality comforter should be constructed so that the filling does not shift with use. Consumers should look for either a sewn-through or baffle box construction. In a product that is sewn-through, the top and bottom fabric are stitched together, often in a box pattern. Baffle box construction features three dimensional boxes created with strips of fabric. Both of these constructions prevent shifting.

Make sure the comforter is downproof. In addition to preventing the down from shifting, it is also important to buy a comforter with a fabric shell that will prevent the down from leaking. A shell of 100 percent cotton is a good start, as is a minimum thread count of

230, but higher thread counts are not necessarily better. It is the weave of the fabric that is most important in making a shell downproof. Since the weave is often imperceptible to the casual observer, consumers should check the packaging for statements about downproofness or leaking.

Make your comforter lasts a long, long time. Covering a comforter with a duvet cover will keep it from becoming soiled and protect it from collecting dust. If a comforter is looking flat it can be fluffed up and the down will bounce right back into shape. A daily shake will restore its fluffiness and will help increase its performance. If you have the Drape a comforter over a couple of chairs outdoors in the sunshine – mild humidity, combined with sunlight, refreshes and fluffs a down comforter.

About ADFC

The American Down and Feather Council, a section of the Home Fashion Products Association, is a voluntary association of manufacturers of natural-fill bedding products, as well as dealers, buyers, sellers and processors of feathers and down for use in home fashion products. The goal of the ADFC is to further the common interests of the down and feather products industry, and to maintain and improve product quality. The objective of the ADFC Labeling Compliance Program is to ensure all natural-fill bedding products sold in the U.S. are labeled correctly and that the quality of the products meets or exceeds the claims made on the label or packaging.

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