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INTERIOR DESIGN

What To Look For In Upholstered Furniture

We'd like to give you some Fine Furniture Buying 101 tips. We'll look at the Frame and the seat base, the cushions, and the fabric.

FRAME

Look For:

- Kiln dried hardwood frame
- A frame that is the shape of the piece
- Reinforced butt joints



Avoid:

- Plywood, softwood
- Foam used to create silhouettes (this foam breaks down)
- Joints that are not glued, double dowel, stapled, corner blocked or screwed in place



SEAT BASE

Look For:

- Coil springs of different gauges and heights
- 8 way hand tied springs



Avoid:

- This sinuous spring construction is commonly used in mass produced furniture. It does not support and balance the weight well and can lead to sags, lumps, and uncomfortable furniture.



This (above left) is an example of a well constructed base. The green colored coil springs in the center of the chair are highest gauge, the softest. The red colored springs are the lowest gauge and the tallest, which helps keep you centered on the soft middle springs. The yellow springs are medium gauge, designed to keep you from slipping to the sides or forward.

CUSHIONS

Look For:

- Much of your decision on cushion fill will be based on your comfort level. Manufacturers of fine furniture use high density foam that will hold its shape and many use recycled materials.
- Cushions that have springs inside will provide support and a down top layer to provide comfort (or down alternative for hypoallergenic options).



Avoid:

- Many big box manufacturers use low density foam inserts in the cushions. They quickly lose their shape and become lumpy, bumpy, and uncomfortable.



FABRIC

Look For:

- There are many options to consider, including which direction you'd like a print or pattern to run horizontally or vertically.
- Inquire about how a patterned fabric is sewed, since the seams must match exactly and you may need multiple sheets for one piece



Avoid:

- The type of fabric or leather will affect the feel and wear of the cushion. If you've tried out a cushion with one fabric but wish to purchase something else inquire about how that will feel.
- Low quality leather that will not have a nice look or feel. It will not age well over time.
- Ask about durability and stain resistance, particularly for furniture that will be used frequently.

