

upholstery



did you know?

...that there is more to
choosing upholstery
than meets the eye!

All you need to know about upholstery

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When purchasing upholstery the selection appears endless with different shapes, styles, designs, materials and prices. The temptation is to select what looks good, feels comfortable (after only sitting in it for a short while), fits in with the colour scheme and meets your budget.

It is easy to overlook suitability, strength, durability and maintenance requirements of each model. Lifestyles have changed greatly and generally upholstered furniture gets a lot more use today than over the last 30 to 40 years. It is also important to note that price is not necessarily an indication of durability.

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

In order to help you to make the right choice our sales consultants will advise you on the characteristics of our ranges. When you start looking for upholstery there will probably be more questions than answers:

- Do you have children or pets?
- Do you watch a lot of TV? - even sitting in the same chair regularly just watching TV subjects upholstery to a lot of wear, especially the fabric!
- Do you like to slouch on the sofa? - an informal look may be suitable.
- Do you like head support? - you will perhaps need to look at high backed models.
- Do you prefer a formal or informal look?
- If you like to put your feet up - how about a recliner?
- Are you decorating? If so what colour schemes do you have in mind?
- How does it compare to what you have already, are there features of your existing upholstery that you like & would like to replicate or those that you dislike and wish to avoid?
- **Will it fit?** - not only should you take measurements to check that upholstery chosen will fit the room and that it doesn't 'overpower' the room, but also can we gain access for delivery? Some front doors and hallways can appear deceptively large but in actual fact have awkward turns or limited door width which means that we can't actually get the chosen upholstery into your home.



Please note that we do offer a service to check this for you free of charge. We can also dismantle and re-assemble sofas (chargeable) when access is really awkward.

Particularly with regard to comfort do spend some time sitting on each item of upholstery and consider how much support it gives under the legs, in the small of the back and to the head.

Construction:

Clearly the method of construction and materials used will have a bearing on comfort levels and durability as will the day to day use the upholstery receives. Our suppliers will use a variety of materials such as hardwoods (usually in stress areas) and softwoods together with plywood, particleboards and fibreboards. Component parts are either 'glued screwed & dowelled' or glued and stapled to give strength and stability.



The seating base will generally either be a serpentine spring unit or webbed arrangement. Alternatively it may be a coil sprung edge unit which gives extra durability and improved comfort levels.

Cushions:

Combined with the seating base and design, the type of cushion filling provides differing levels of comfort:

- Foam is widely used and is often wrapped in fibre to give a softer feel. It is important to note that cushions will soften with use and will need to be turned regularly to even out their use especially if one seat is used more than another.
- Feather, Fibre or a mixture of Feather and Fibre gives quite a different look and level of comfort. You tend to "sit in" them rather than "sit on". They will require a lot more maintenance to keep them looking tidy.

NB. It is to be expected that even with regular care cushions will soften and flatten over time with the use that they receive - this is not a fault.

Please bear this in mind if you choose a sofa with fixed seat cushions, as if you tend to sit in one seat of a settee you will find that it may feel softer than the ones that do not receive such use.

Upholstery Fabrics:

Whilst the construction and types of cushion are vitally important it is the cover fabric that usually attracts the attention and receives the most wear in day to day use. It is important that the characteristics of the type of material are understood.

- Leather as a covering for upholstery is more popular than ever as hide becomes more affordable. Please see our separate leaflet which explains its



characteristics, maintenance, types available and performance in use.

- Pile fabrics (such as chenilles and velvets). Chenilles are also very popular and as a pile fabric are subject to pressure marking during use. Light reflection may highlight this occurrence and may show as light and dark shades of the material. It is not a fabric fault, nor will it detract from its wearing properties. Regular maintenance such as light brushing will help lift the pile and it is recommended that cushions are rotated regularly to even out this tendency.
- Printed fabric, as implied by the name a pattern is printed onto a plain fabric



base - usually a Cotton or Linen Union.

Extra care needs to be taken when choosing from a sample especially if it is a large pattern as unless specified by the supplier pattern matches can not be guaranteed. Extra care needs to be taken to ensure that cushions are turned regularly (as below) and high wear areas such as arms are protected where possible with arm caps.

- Woven fabrics have their pattern generated during the weaving process. You will need to bear in mind that it is easier to snag a yarn in a woven fabric and sharp objects and pet's claws need to be kept well away!
- Flocked fabric is quite often used in upholstery and dining chairs to give a suede type effect. It will often have some inbuilt stain resistance but will require cleaning and maintenance strictly in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Extra protection;

Fabrics take the brunt of the wear of upholstery and careful maintenance will help them to maintain their appearance. However there are several precautions that can be taken to further protect your furniture (especially if you have children!):

- Premier care Warranty covers against accidents, spills, rips and tears (details available on request).
- Castor Cups or Felt Pads are advisable to help protect your carpet or hard flooring.
- The arms of sofas can come in for particular wear, some suppliers offer optional armcaps etc.
- Similarly the backs of sofas will also need to be protected from hair grease or gel.
- Extra fabric by the metre can usually be purchased from our suppliers for use as covering for extra protection.



Maintenance:

Your upholstery will require proper care and maintenance to help ensure that it retains its appearance and comfort.

Experience has taught us that even day to day soiling and general use without a care regime will rapidly have a detrimental effect on your sofa.

You should always first follow the manufacturer's instructions with regard to care and maintenance. The following guidelines are for general advice:

- Lightly vacuum upholstery once a week, less frequently for feather filled cushions. Dust removal can be improved by pre-brushing with a soft brush. Accumulated dirt will accelerate wear and dull colours.
- Regularly turn and interchange the positions of reversible cushions on constantly used upholstery. This will prevent excessive soiling and uneven wear. Where cushions are not interchangeable try to even the wear by using all the seats, not just your favourite one all the time!
- Smooth out creases in the cushions to prevent them becoming permanent and causing early wear.
- Avoid exposure to direct sunlight and/or heat whether direct or indirect for long periods of time as this may result in fading or degradation. Protect the

furniture by drawing curtains and blinds wherever possible.

- Avoid snagging the fabric: pet's claws, jewellery, buckles, zips/studs etc are all potential hazards.
- Pets are best kept off upholstery as animal coats can contain abrasive oils that accelerate fabric wear.
- Always follow manufacturer's instructions when dealing with spills and stains. If you have purchased a warranty that covers spills and stains contact them for further advice as soon as possible.
- Avoid repetitious wear on small areas of the fabric such as arms and front edges of cushions.
- Please note upholstery arms are not designed to be sat on and sofas and chairs are not designed as children's trampolines!!

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