



## Selecting Decorative Pillows

Fashionable home furnishing accessories play a key role in decorating. They provide color, help to carry out a decorating theme, and add the finishing touch to the overall decor. Decorative pillows come in an unlimited variety of designs, colors, and fabrics. Since they can be changed quickly and inexpensively, they are a favorite way to provide a change or update a room with touches of the newest colors.

### Start With Style...

Pillows can be either decorative or functional...or both. Throw pillows for the sofa and small pillows with a homespun or personal quote are mainly decorative while floor pillows used for extra seating and small head rest pillows hung over the back of rocking chairs serve both decorative and functional purposes. Bed pillows and large cushions serving as pet beds are examples of functional styles.

Styles of pillows range from quite simple to most elaborate. Many are now being shown with fringe, trims and specially crafted designs. The design affects the amount of time invested in making the pillow and this in turn affects the price. Common styles of pillows are shown in this chart.

Style	Description
Knife-edge	Most simple style made with two pieces of fabric stitched together around edges. Finished pillow is plump in the center and flat around the edges. May have closure to allow for removing cover.
Corded	Knife-edge pillow with matching or contrasting cording (piping) sewn in the seams.
Shirred Corded	Gathered cording is inserted and sewn in the seam around the edges of the knife-edge pillow.
Box	Has added depth created with a straight or shirred boxing strip. Side strip can be soft for decorative pillow or firm for a chair cushion or floor pillow.
Mock Box	Is a variation of the knife-edge pillow with shaped corners to add depth. Corners made using a gathered style are tied inside the pillow. Inverted pleats and mitered corners are also often used to add depth without a separate boxing strip.
Shirred Box	Has shirring to gather both edges of a boxing strip to make a softer shaped pillow than a traditional box pillow.

Style	Description
Flange	Has a flat single or double layered self-border about 2-3 inches wide. Frames the edges of a plump knife-edge pillow.
Ruffled	Features gathered ruffles or lace made in single or double layers of matching or contrasting fabric. Often used to frame pillow tops of quilting, embroidery or other needlework.
Neckroll	Small round bolsters often trimmed with lace or ruffles. May have a drawstring closure at each end of a one-piece tube.
Speciality	Large floor pillows in animal shapes, tooth-fairy pillows (featuring small pocket for the tooth) and weatherproof outdoor cushions for patio furniture are examples of pillows made for specific uses.

### **Focus On Fashion... Outer Coverings**

Both fashion and classic fabrics and trims are used for decorative pillows. The possibilities are limitless. You'll see cotton, polyester blends, rayon, acetate and linen used in plain and patterned fabrics. Texture is important! Some weaves are tightly woven while others are open and have a hand-crafted appearance. Velvet, sheer shadow cut designs, chenille, sateen and fake fur help to round out a wide range of surface finishes. Quilted pillow tops range from white on white to colorful patchwork. Needlepoint and applique pillows are also featured.

Look for trims of all kinds to add interest and emphasize lines and shapes. Fringe often outlines edges and seams while both large and small tassels decorate points and corners. Decorative buttons, envelope flap designs, ribbons to tie bolster ends and imaginative designs from border prints provide other style variations. Many have a casual elegance and more upscale look.

Pillows are available in the latest fashion colors and patterns. Light golden yellow, moss and loden green, subtle dark red, spice, cinnamon, paprika, and blue are popular. Textured neutrals, white and black are good mixers with soft "brights". Colors that appear softly aged and time-worn combine well with antiques and a feeling of nostalgia.

Consider your decorating scheme, the type of wear the pillow will receive and the care required. Many have stain-resistant finishes that help to keep them looking fresh. Pillows receiving light wear can be made from silk-like textures and loose weaves. Fabrics for pillows receiving heavy wear should have a tight weave and a texture that is pleasant to the touch.

### **The Inner Story... Forms and Fillings**

Pillows get their shape from forms and loose fillings. Since the density varies from firm or over-fill to soft, select the firmness or plumpness you prefer for the intended use. A polyester foam tends to spring back to a firm shape while feathers and polyester fiberfill have more give. As you feel the pillow, check the corners to be sure each corner is well-filled.

Sometimes washable fillings are stuffed directly into the pillow covering with the outer cover stitched permanently in place. A better quality pillow, however, will place foam forms and polyester fillings in a separate liner made of lightweight muslin or lining fabric. (Lining fabrics for down and feather fillings must be woven tight enough that feathers do not escape.) This inner cover helps pillows last longer and look better. It also allows the outer decorative cover to be quickly removed for cleaning by using a zipper, hook and loop tape or button closure.

Read tags and labels for filling content and recommended care. Some are now marked "fill content or fiber of unknown textile." Many common fillings are described in the chart below.

<b>Materials Used Pillow Fillings</b>		
<b>Type Of Filling</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Down, feathers (Down is washed, quill-less feathers from the breast of geese and ducks)	Excellent loft Luxurious	Expensive Not readily available May cause allergic reaction
Polyester forms	Washable Nonallergenic Do not bunch Many have muslin or polyester outer coverings	May be square, round or rectangular in sizes from 10" to 30"
Polyester Fiberfill	Inexpensive Nonallergenic Readily available Easy to clean	Compresses unless evenly distributed
Polyurethane foam Available in sheets ½" to 5" thick High density foam for extra firm cushions	Inexpensive Available in wide variety of shapes and sizes	Shape holding qualities depends upon density & quality of foam. Difficult to cut – have cut to size in store or use electric or serrated knife with silicone lubricant sprayed on blade.
Pressure Sensitive foam	Adjusts to shape yet gives support Relieves pressure Excellent resilience	Expensive Harder to find
Shredded Foam	Inexpensive Readily available	Hard to handle because of static May look lumpy
Cotton	Readily available Inexpensive	Not as easy to clean Tends to lump
Shredded fabric	Inexpensive	Can be hard to wash Colors may bleed
Kapok (Vegetable fiber filling)	Fairly inexpensive Soft	Mattes with use Messy to work with in sewing Not readily available
Buckwheat	Provides firm support	Speciality item...Harder to find

## Care Considerations –

Read labels and hang tags for recommended care instructions. Some are washable and some are not. Spot and stain resistant spray may help keep them clean, especially needlepoint pillows or those marked as spot clean only. Be sure to test the spray in a less conspicuous area first for any color or texture change, however.

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