

REI PRODUCT INFORMATION

SLEEPING

PADS

QUICK TIPS

The key factors to balance are insulating value, comfort, weight, bulk and durability.

Staying in a campground? Choose the thickest, plushiest pad you can afford. Backpacking? You'll need to balance your comfort needs with your desire to keep weight low.

Try out different pads! Comfort is an individual matter. Note: Women can select pads designed specifically for them.

Additional styles can be found at REI.com.

PADS: ESSENTIAL OUTDOOR GEAR

Sleeping pads provide two vital benefits:

1. Insulation
2. Cushioning

Cushioning might seem like a pad's most important function, but even more critical is its ability to insulate your body from cold surfaces by blocking conductive heat loss.

A sleeping bag captures air warmed by your body. Beneath you, though, its heat-trapping loft is compressed to almost nothing. As a result, you need a pad to buffer you from heat-depleting contact with the cold ground.

COMFORT VS. WEIGHT AND BULK

Unlike campground campers (with their load-toting vehicles), backpackers must consider a pad's weight and the space it occupies in their packs. Your choice depends on your priorities. Do you want maximum comfort or very low weight and bulk—or something in between?

CHOOSE A PAD SUITED TO YOUR STYLE

Minimalists and long-distance hikers seek out the lightest possible pad (often picking a 3/4-length model). Low weight and a small packed size override all other concerns.

Backpackers who want more comfort can pick from pads with greater thickness and durability at a modest increase in weight.

For family camping, boat or car travel, and other situations where size and weight are not the limiting factors, a thicker, larger mattress is an enjoyment-boosting luxury.

Winter camping requires more insulation.

On snow REI recommends the use of 2 pads: a self-inflating pad atop a closed air-cell foam pad. The foam pad adds insulation and offers insurance in case the inflatable is punctured.

COMPARE THE SPECS

Length: Shoulders and hips need to fit on a pad. Long (72"+) pads will insulate legs and feet—a big plus on chilly spring and fall trips. A shorter pad weighs less and packs smaller.

Width: Nearly every pad offers the standard width of 20". If you tend to roll around a lot, you may want a width of 25" or 30". Tapered designs reduce volume and pack smaller.

Women's pads: These pads are shorter, with added insulation at the hips and feet.

Packed size and weight: Many lighter pads (particularly 3/4-length models) fold in half and roll compactly; 20"-wide pads often are carried on a pack's exterior. When a vehicle or boat carries the load, space and weight matter less.

R-value: Insulation is measured according to its capacity to resist (that's the "R") heat flow. The higher a pad's value, the better you can expect it to insulate you from cold surfaces. The R-values shown on our chart (provided by manufacturers) range from 3.0 to 8.0.

R-values for pads, calculated when pads are fully expanded, reflect how much air a pad can contain and how freely that air circulates. High R-values indicate minimal air circulation.

PAD TYPES

Self-inflating pads: Pioneered by Therm-a-Rest®, these combine foam insulation and air.

PROS: Comfortable; excellent insulation; firmness is adjustable; very compact when rolled up. A popular backpacking choice.

CONS: Heavier than simple foam pads and more expensive. Can be punctured, though field repairs are not difficult.

Backpacking air pads: These pads use air for comfort and must be manually inflated. Some models integrate foam or fill insulation to reduce convective heat loss.

PROS: Comfortable and lightweight. Fine for backpacking or camping in warm conditions; insulated models can be used year-round.

CONS: Prone to punctures. (Field repairs are not difficult). Non-insulated models offer poor insulation due to free circulation of air inside.

Air mattresses: These car-camping mattresses use air for comfort and are much thicker than air pads. They are as close to a real bed as you can get and are usually sized to take regular sheets.

PROS: Extremely comfortable. Easy and quick to inflate with a pump. Suitable for car or boat camping.

CONS: Relatively heavy and bulky. Pump required for proper inflation. May be prone to punctures or leaks. No insulation; for mild climates only.

Foam pads: These basic backpacking pads feature dense foam with tiny closed air cells.

PROS: Lightweight, inexpensive, durable, excellent insulation. Won't absorb water.

CONS: Less comfortable. Relatively stiff, so they tend to be bulky.

TRY THEM OUT

Test out a number of models to get a feel for:

- the amount of cushioning you require
- the length and width you prefer
- a pad's weight and packability, and for a self-inflating model, how quickly it inflates

VISIT REI.COM
for more items and expert advice

MORE

FREE SHIPPING TO ANY REI STORE; SOME RESTRICTIONS APPLY.
FOR DETAILS, VISIT REI.COM OR CALL 1-800-426-4840.