

Mattress Disposal Guide

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The Mattress Recycling Council estimates that Americans dispose of roughly 15 to 20 million mattresses every year. The average mattress takes up 40 cubic feet, which means that one year's worth of discarded mattresses will occupy more than 132,000 square miles of landfill space. To cut down on waste and preserve landfill space, mattress owners in the U.S. are encouraged to get rid of their old mattresses using alternative means. This guide will feature some helpful tips for donating, recycling, reselling and reusing old or used mattresses.

Mattress Donations

The average mattress has a lifespan of seven to eight years. Unless an old mattress is in complete disrepair, then you may be able to donate it to an organization that accepts used household goods. Some national charities that receive old or used mattresses and mattress parts include:

- **The Salvation Army:** This international organization has been serving families in need since the 1860s, and today maintains thrift stores and charity shops across the United States. The Salvation Army offers free furniture pickup services for anyone donating a mattress; goods may also be dropped off in person at any location that receives used goods. Donations to the Salvation Army are tax-deductible; single mattresses are valued between \$15 and \$35, while double mattresses are valued between \$12.50 and \$75.

- [Free furniture pickup services](#)
- [Salvation Army's tax deduction value guide](#)

- **Habitat for Humanity International:** HFHI is an international nonprofit organization that strives to provide sustainable and affordable living accommodations for people in need. The organization accepts a wide range of gently used household good and furnishings, including mattresses. HFHI sells donated goods at 'ReStore' home improvement centers located across the country; to donate a mattress to HFHI, contact the nearest ReStore facility and let them know you have a mattress to donate. You may drop off the mattress in person; many ReStore locations offer free furniture pickup, as well.

- [Donate goods to Habitat ReStore](#)

- **Furniture Bank Association of America:** The FBA's mission is to provide home furnishings "at little or no cost" to individuals and families living in poverty. The association operates nearly 80 donation centers in North America. Households are welcome to donate old mattresses to the FBA, although pickup services are limited to a 15-20 mile radius of the nearest bank's brick-and-mortar location; contact the nearest bank to see if pickup services are available. The association will make exceptions for large commercial or institutional donations; banks will usually drive up to three hours for these furniture pickups, and some banks have large semi-trailers capable of traveling up to 450 miles for large donations.

- [List of U.S. furniture banks](#)

- **Goodwill:** This American charity organization provides job training and employment placement services for people who face certain barriers in the job market. Goodwill also operates more than 3,200 thrift stores and donation centers across the country; in 2015, roughly 85% of revenue generated from donated goods was used to expand the organization's professional development and community outreach programs. At this time, Goodwill does not accept used mattresses or box springs; however, you are welcome to donate mattress pads, bed frames, bedding and linens.

- [Goodwill donor guidelines](#)

Additionally, you will often be able to donate an old or used mattress to a local charity organization. The website DonationTown.org allows visitors to [search for local organizations](#) that accept used mattresses and other household furnishings.

These may include:

- Homeless shelters
- Women's and family shelters
- Locally owned thrift stores

Mattress Recycling

Roughly 80% to 90% of mattress parts (by weight) can be recycled or repurposed to create new products. To properly recycle an old or used mattress, first locate the nearest recycling center that accepts them. A quick Internet search using your zip code will most likely yield at least one location within reasonable driving distance. Both the [Mattress Recycling](#)

[Council](#) and [Earth911](#) offer online aggregators that allow you to search for recycling centers accepting certain household goods (such as mattresses) in your geographic area.

In most cases, you will be charged a fee for recycling your old mattress. Expect to pay \$20 to \$40 per mattress if you arrange for pick-up services at your home, or \$10 to \$20 for each mattress you transport to a recycling center in your own vehicle. The criteria for acceptable mattress donations will vary by organization. Most centers will not allow you to donate a mattress that is wet, stained or infested with bed bugs. However, broken or torn mattresses can usually be donated.

State laws and regulations may apply. In California, Connecticut and Rhode Island, for instance, [mattress stewardship laws](#) require retailers to include an additional fee for all customers who are purchasing a new mattress; the money from this fee will then be used to pick up and recycle the old mattress at no expense to the customer. To learn more, the Mattress Recycling Council features an [interactive U.S. map](#) that lets you browse mattress-related laws and regulations by state.

Recyclable components of mattresses include the springs, foam, upholstery, wooden parts and the box spring. For more information on other uses for different mattress parts, check out the section below on breaking down and reusing mattresses.

[Junk removal](#)

If you do not live close to any thrift stores, recycling centers and other facilities that accept used mattresses, then a junk removal service may be your best bet. These options include national companies that serve households across the country. Local junk removal specialists are widely available, as well. Due to the recent emphasis on landfill conservation and green disposal methods, these companies will often attempt to recycle or donate used mattresses before sending them to the dump.

Let's discuss the step-by-step process for hiring a company to remove your mattress

1. Check your warranty before getting rid of an old mattress, as the seller or manufacturer of the mattress may offer complimentary buy-back and/or disposal services.
2. Calculate the weight of the mattress. Some junk removal companies charge by volume, while others will assess a flat per-item fee.
3. Research national and local junk removal services available in your area, and perform a cost comparison for all viable options. Note that some companies charge an additional fee for home-based pickups, on top of the per-item removal costs.

This should yield a thorough, ordered list of junk removal services. Some of the companies that offer nationwide pickups include:

- [1-800-GOT-JUNK](#): This company will remove any old household goods and furnishings, including mattresses. Simply call the number (800) 468-5865 and set up a time for a uniformed truck team to visit your residence. In most cases, appointments are made with a two-hour window. 1-800-GOT-JUNK offers upfront, all-inclusive pricing based on the overall volume of all removed items. The company will accept mattresses with bed bugs if the customer gives advanced notice.
- [Junk King](#): Junk King offers both bulk and singular pickup services for individuals with old or used mattresses. Call to make an appointment at (888) 888-5865. The company's mattress disposal team will pay a visit to your home and offer a full cost estimate before removing the mattress. According to the company's price estimator, each twin, queen- or king-sized mattress will incur a fee of roughly \$99 to \$148 although this price will vary by location.

Break it down and reuse it

Next, let's look at some ways you can break down an old or used mattress and reuse certain components for different purposes.

- The average mattress contains 25 pounds of **steel**, most of which is found in the springs. Steel can be melted down to create a wide range of parts and products. Simply remove all springs and other steel parts from your mattress, then bundle them together and sell them for scrap. You can locate scrapyards and metal recyclers in your area with a quick Internet search.

Rates will vary by location, but expect to earn roughly \$10 for 100 pounds of scrap metal.

- The **polyurethane foam** in mattresses can be shredded and repurposed around the house for carpeting, car seat cushions, pillows, pet bedding and other types of padding. **Memory foam** and **latex foam** can be reused in a similar fashion.
- Most mattresses include a mix of **natural fibers** like cotton, wool and silk, and **non-natural fibers** like polyester and rayon. Most natural and non-natural fibers found in a mattress can be recycled. Like foam, mattress fibers can also be reused to make padding or insulation.
- The **wooden parts** of mattresses can serve several functions once the mattress has been taken apart. In addition to firewood, this wood can be shredded and used as a gardening or lawn mulch.
- **Nails, screws and other small metal parts in reasonable condition can be removed from the mattress and reused for various household projects.**
- **Buttons, braiding** and other decorative features can be repurposed for DIY sewing projects and other household designs.

When disassembling a mattress, please exercise caution: innersprings contain many sharp parts that can cause bodily injury. For a detailed step-by-step guide for taking apart a mattress, check out this [eight-minute video](#) posted by YouTube user Canadian Treasure Hunter.

[Clever solutions](#)

Finally, let's look at some fun, creative ways to repurpose your old or used mattress.

- Mattress springs can be used for a wide range of arts and crafts. These include decorative candle and plant holders, wall sconces, photo frames and backyard trellises.
- If you enjoy decorating for the holidays, mattress springs can also be used to create metal wreath displays and tree ornaments.
- An old memory foam mattress can be used to form a comfy bed for your dog or cat.
- Other uses for old memory foam padding include plush household items like bean bags, chair cushions, pillows, dishwashing sponges and stuffed animal filler.
- Green Diary suggests using old mattress components to improve your [backyard compost pile](#). Simply construct a sturdy compost bin using the wooden slats, and then scatter mattress stuffing and fibers around the compost to protect it from pests.
- The durable fabric upholstery of an old mattress is ideal for making throwaway rugs for your foyer, garage, shed or utility room.
- The DIY design website Pinterest features [more than 1,000 postings](#) about projects involving old mattresses.
- Use your old mattress as the canvas for a painting or other art project. YouTube user KIPTOE offers some inspiring ideas in a 2016 ['Mattress Street Art' video tutorial](#).

