

5 things you need to know... about sheets

CeCe Easter, owner of Buckhead luxury linens shop **Belle Chambre**, gives us the lowdown on creating a proper turndown.

1 Thread count doesn't determine quality. "Thread count" is a marketing tool. The focus should be on fiber, and the best are traditional cotton, linen, poly-cotton, and Modal, a new fiber made from beech wood and bamboo that feels like silk but washes and wears like cotton.

2 The best cotton is 100 percent Egyptian cotton that is woven in Italy. The 100 percent part is very important, because some sheets just say "Egyptian cotton," but it's a blend—that affects quality and wearability. And you get the softest, finest fabric—even in lower thread counts—if it is made in Italy.

3 Look at the fit and construction before buying. Fitted sheets need to have elastic all the way around. Also, the stitching should be tidy and tight, as in close together. You can usually see the hem of a pillowcase in a clear package—look to make sure the stitching isn't crooked.

4 Know the difference between sateen and percale. Percale has a soft, cool, crisp feel to it, and no sheen. The higher the thread count, the thinner and finer it feels. Sateen is more silky and relaxed in higher thread counts, but it's also warmer and thicker.

5 Wash your sheets on the gentle cycle. There's less tension and stress, so the sheets will not be as twisted and will last longer. And you can use any detergent as long as it doesn't have whitening agents or bleach in it. —J.S. Belle Chambre, 318 Pharr Road, 404-816-5333, bellechambre.com

