



COMFORT ZONE: Consider who is going to use your sofa and how – is it a statement piece to impress, or a place for the family to lounge? However tempting the bargains, don't buy in haste and risk an expensive mistake.



ARE YOU SITTING PRETTY?

*The sales can be a great time to bag a sofa bargain. **Richard Bond** gives his advice.*

A sofa is a major investment, which should last a considerable time, and this time of year is perfect for helping considerably lessen the financial outlay.

However, put your heart aside and apply some hard logic to ensure your purchase is not an expensive mistake.

Firstly, consider who will actually use the sofa? Is it a statement piece for adoration or the centre of family life with all the stresses and strains that this may mean?

Next measure the physical space you have available and consider the clearance you need for other

furniture. There is nothing worse than bringing the right design in and finding it is over or undersized. Similarly, give a thought to the size of the people who are going to sit on it.

Take a tape measure with you. If you are unsure a sofa will fit, take the maximum dimensions and make a full-scale paper template.

Then lay this out on the floor to check it will fit within the confines of your room.

Measure ceiling heights, door widths and any awkward angles along the access route to help avoid choosing a sofa that you cannot physically get into your house.

Check with the retailer if the legs can be removed (even a few centimetres can be helpful when negotiating doors) and see if the sofa is constructed in sections that can be taken apart.

Then you can start to consider form. One of the key decisions is loose cushion or fixed back? The former tends to be a relaxed look, allowing you to sink into a sofa, while the latter is more supportive and formal.

Seat depth makes a huge difference to how a sofa will work for the user.

If it is to be lounged upon a wide seat can make it feel more like a bed – however, this can be unsettling for anyone who prefers to sit upright.

Ideally, you should be able to sit on a sofa comfortably with your feet

TOP TIPS

- Try lifting the sofa from the corner of one end. A good frame should not twist, creak or appear flimsy.
- Check the frame behind the back cushions, it should be thick and padded – you should not be able to feel the frame.
- Look under the seat cushions to see if it is the same fabric as the body of the sofa or a cheaper lining.
- Finally, ask your retailer to unzip one of the cushions to see if the fabric has been over-locked to prevent fraying.

touching the floor and the back of your knee just clear of the edge.

Your cushion choice is important, for comfort perspective and maintenance. Foam can be hard, but keeps its shape. Feather is indulgent, but requires daily plumping. I would generally opt for a combination foam-feather wrap seat cushion (a bit like a duvet wrapped around a foam centre). You get all the comfort with a bit more structure.

Style is vital, but consider impact on space and seating capacity; a scroll arm can look amazing, but needs a large room to carry it off and reduces the seating space.

Above all, do not buy in a rush. See it, feel it, sit on it. Go away and come back at least once. Keep a cool head and that real bargain is yours for the taking.