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<https://www.loribeds.com/blogs/murphy-bed-blog/murphy-bed-vs-futon-what-s-the-best-space-saving-furniture-for-your-home>

Murphy Bed vs. Sleeper Sofa vs. Futon: What's the Best Space-Saving Furniture?

Two-in-one sleepers, like a Murphy bed or a futon, come in various shapes, sizes, and styles. Both offer **stowaway beds** but suit different needs depending on your lifestyle and living situation. If you're wondering how futons stack up against Murphy beds, this guide to space-saving sleeper furniture will help you find the best fit for your home.

By Kyle Marquardt **Aug 21, 2025** [1 comment](#)

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Stuck deciding between a Murphy bed vs. a sleeper sofa? Don't miss the rest of this post for the information you need to make the right decision for your home!

Maximizing limited square footage makes multi-purpose furniture a go-to for [small apartments](#), home offices, and spare guest bedrooms. These pieces take the guesswork out of finding an extra space to sleep the occasional overnight guest while still keeping the floor plan functional for daily use.

Two-in-one sleepers, such as a [Murphy bed](#), a sleeper sofa, or a futon, come in various shapes, sizes, and styles. Both offer **hideaway beds**, but suit different needs depending on your lifestyle and living situation.

Key Takeaways:

- A Murphy bed has a comfortable mattress and a whole bed experience for a restful night's sleep, something futons can't offer as they often sacrifice comfort.
- Murphy beds take up less valuable floor space when **tucked** against the wall.
- Murphy beds provide both seating and additional sleeping space in one furniture piece.

Choose the bed you want to add to your home.

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(Don't miss this post next: [Make a Tiny Home Feel Bigger With a Murphy Bed](#))

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Murphy Bed vs. Futon

If you're wondering how futons stack up against Murphy beds, this guide to space-saving sleeper furniture will help you find the best fit for your home.

What Is a Murphy Bed?

The Murphy bed or wall bed is popular today for the same reason that inspired its invention more than 100 years ago. William Lawrence Murphy came up with the idea for the stowaway bed around 1900 in San Francisco. He needed to conceal the bed in his studio apartment to invite over a love interest without being perceived as vulgar.

Murphy placed a full-size mattress on a metal frame that could be hidden when not in use. The wall bed allowed Murphy to stow his bed in his closet, transforming his one-room apartment from a bedroom into a parlor where his sweetheart could enter.

The invention was successful in more ways than one. Murphy later married the woman who sparked the idea for his invention, and today the Murphy bed is synonymous with [clever space-saving solutions](#).

Since the early 1900s, the wall bed has evolved, but the design is relatively unchanged for most companies. [The Lori Bed](#) is the modern answer to these common Murphy bed pitfalls.

(Learn more about [how the Murphy bed got its name](#) in this post.)

Unlike the traditional Murphy bed, the Lori Bed is a high-quality, space-saving Murphy bed with a gas-piston lift system, secure wall mount, and safety lock. Made from real plywood and steel, it offers optional level-surface shelves and a desk. Easy to assemble, it ships to your door and includes a lifetime warranty.

Purchase a bed from us!

Buy Now

Get The Lori Bed + The Lori Mattress

Despite your home's limited space, having the Lori Bed + the [Lori Mattress](#) can help you get a good night's sleep. It's a gel foam hybrid that combines comfort and support, making it an ideal sleeping solution.

The features include:

- A gel-infused memory foam at the top comfort layer keeps you cool and cushioned.
- High-density memory foam and individually pocketed coils for pressure relief and targeted support.
- The edge support coils prevent the mattress from sagging.
- The organic cover and hand-tufting give the mattress a luxurious touch.

Whether you want to convert a spare room into an entirely new space or need a mattress for your Murphy bed, the [Lori Mattress](#) is a perfect match. Or if you want a healthier mattress to save Mother Earth, another great alternative is the [Green Mattress](#).

What Is a Futon?



A futon is another common small-space sleeper. Futons are essentially a sofa that doubles as a guest bed. They're often associated with college dorms because most options are cheap and equipped with waif-thin mattresses. Considering its origins, that association makes perfect sense.

The futon originated in Japan as a thin mattress meant to be placed directly on the floor or floor mat. The mattress could be rolled up when not in use, as explained by the design website [Living Spaces](#). The goal was — and still is — to save space.

The futon was initially hailed as a firmer, more spine-aligning alternative to the traditional American mattress when it was first introduced to Western society. Over time, futon mattresses became thicker, and today futon beds closely resemble regular couches when tucked away.

Space-Saving Benefits



Murphy beds and futons are solid choices when space is at a premium. To know which one is the best fit for your space, consider how you're planning to use the room.

A Murphy bed is the best option for rooms that genuinely need to pull double duty because Murphy beds are tucked into [a cabinet that tucks away on the wall](#). This takes up much less square footage than a futon, which is as wide and deep as a small couch.

[Murphy beds give you more room to move](#). They allow any underused bedroom to double as a home gym, office, [playroom](#), art studio, or anything else you can dream up.

Because futons take up more floor space and are designed to double as seating, the pool of possibilities gets smaller. Futons are typically best suited for living rooms, dens, and areas where sleeping and sitting must be done in the same space.

When in the upright position, some Murphy bed cabinets, like the Lori Bed, also have shelves for storage, which frees up additional space.

If you're looking for multifunctional furniture for a compact bedroom, a [Murphy Bed Dresser Combo](#) can offer both sleeping space and built-in storage.

Take a look at our innovative Murphy beds here.

Checkout Our Murphy Beds

Comfort Comparison



In terms of comfort, for the Murphy bed vs. futon, both can turn a room into a multi-purpose space. That solves a problem from a practical standpoint, but furniture — particularly the kind you sleep on — needs to be more than functional. It needs to be comfortable.

This is where wall beds have a distinct advantage. You don't have a big say in the type of mattress you're getting when you purchase a futon. Unlike Murphy beds, the mattress is built into a futon's sofa-like frame. This means you can't easily swap the mattress out if you find it uncomfortable.

Murphy beds provide greater [versatility in mattress selection](#) because mattresses are sold separately from the frame. That doesn't mean you have to go out and buy a special mattress if you choose a Murphy bed.

Any mattress that fits a traditional bed can be used in a Murphy bed. The mattress you're using now would likely fit perfectly. Each Murphy bed cabinet can accommodate a specific maximum thickness, which is listed in the product description. The Lori Bed can accommodate any mattress up to 10 inches thick. That's a relatively thick mattress that offers more cushioning and comfort compared to the average futon.

Ease of Use

One of the joys of [convertible furniture](#) is being able to transform a space with little hassle. It can be time-consuming to tear apart a room when a guest comes to stay the night, which is another reason why a Murphy bed is more convenient.

Murphy bed cabinets are designed for pillows and blankets remain in place when **hidden away**, which saves you the trouble of having to make the bed each time it's in use. It's simply a matter of lowering the platform for a wall bed to be ready. Another common complaint is that futons tend to jam unexpectedly, making the unit nearly impossible to use when an overnight guest pops in.

In the short-term, putting a futon in your living room is much simpler than installing a wall bed. It can take several hours to assemble and mount a wall bed while futons generally come pre-assembled. However, Murphy beds are far more versatile and easier to use in the long run.

Get the bed you want. Right here, right now.

Buy Now

Cost and Durability



Like most products on the market, there is a low-end and high-end price point for both Murphy beds and futons.

Typically, futons are made from less sturdy materials but are relatively inexpensive. This kind of furniture is generally associated with college dorms and starter apartments because it's low in cost and not made to last for any significant amount of time.

The futon's built-in mattresses tend to be on the thinner side and less durable because the mattress is in a bent position when it's not used as a bed. According to mattress

company [Purple](#), it can be difficult for a futon mattress to last a long time if you use it regularly.

There are “luxury futons” available from big-name retailers that are priced at upwards of \$1,400. These high-end futons are necessary if you plan on sleeping on them regularly.

Overall, Murphy beds are sturdier than futons. Wall beds can range in price point, from flimsy particle board units that cost a couple of hundred bucks to ultra-custom wall beds priced at more than \$2,000.

Unlike its counterparts on the market, the Lori Bed delivers high quality at a reasonable price point. Each Lori Bed is made from cabinet-grade poplar plywood, ensuring its stability and durability. (We also talk about comparing Murphy beds to cabinet beds [in this post](#).)

When comparing Murphy beds to futons, consider comfort, usability, longevity, and price. Quality Murphy beds, like the Lori Bed, are sturdier, last longer, and take up less floor space than futons. While futons offer extra seating at a cheap price point, they are much less durable and take up more floor space, which will eat into your square footage.

Murphy Bed vs. Sleeper Sofa

Consider the space, comfort, and functionality when you choose between a Murphy bed and a sleeper sofa. Both are versatile solutions for small spaces and your guest room, but they vary in some areas. Here's a concise comparison:

Space Efficiency

- **Murphy Bed:** Frees up floor space when **stowed against the wall**.
- **Sleeper Sofa:** A regular sofa by day and a bed at night. Just like a regular bed, it takes up more space than a **hideaway Murphy bed**.

Comfort

- **Murphy Bed:** Gives a full mattress and is more comfortable for regular use.
- **Sleeper Sofa:** Sofa beds tend to have a thinner mattress and may be less comfortable.

Aesthetics

- **Murphy Bed:** A Murphy wall bed can blend into the cabinetry and walls of your house, giving your space a streamlined look.
- **Sleeper Sofa:** A sofa bed or a pull-out couch is a visible piece of furniture and adds to the room's existing décor.

Ease of Use

- **Murphy Bed:** **Stowing** Murphy wall beds up and down takes effort, but it's simple.
- **Sleeper Sofa:** Some of the mechanisms of sleeper sofas are tricky, though they can easily be converted between a bed and a sofa.

Durability:

- **Murphy Bed:** Built for long-term use for their sturdiness.
- **Sleeper Sofa:** May wear out faster due to being used as a bed and seating.

Cost

- **Murphy Bed:** More expensive with installation and customization.
- **Sleeper Sofa:** Less pricey and available at various price points.

Comparing Murphy beds and sleeper sofas, futons, and even sofa beds can make you see their advantages and disadvantages. While the other beds may cost you less, they take up more space than Murphy beds.

Murphy Bed Pros and Cons

When comparing space-saving furniture, it's not just about price or size. It must also be about functionality, comfort, and long-term value. To help you decide, here's a quick breakdown of Murphy bed pros and cons:

Pros	Cons
Saves floor space and is ideal for small homes	Requires wall or floor installation
Can include added features like bookshelves, desks, or cabinets	Some models can be expensive compared to futons

Stylish and modern designs that blend with décor	It may not be ideal for the elderly or children due to lifting
Provides a full, comfortable mattress for nightly use	Manual models require effort to lift up and down
Excellent for guest rooms, home offices, or multifunctional spaces	Professional installation is sometimes needed

Final Thoughts

When it comes to Murphy bed vs. futon vs. sleeper sofa, the best choice depends on your priorities:

- If you want maximum comfort and long-term use, a Murphy bed is the winner.
- If you need a budget-friendly solution for occasional guests, a futon can work.
- If you prefer dual-purpose seating and sleeping in a living space, a sleeper sofa may be your pick.

Still, **Murphy beds like The Lori Bed offer the best combination of comfort, durability, and space-saving design, which makes them the smartest investment for multifunctional living.**

Find the bed you'd love here.

Checkout Our Murphy Beds

Did you learn a lot about a Murphy bed vs. sleeper sofa vs. futon in today's post?

Here are three more to read next:

- [Move Over, IKEA: Here's Why 100% Real Wood Murphy Beds Are The Future Of Furniture](#)
- [Murphy Bed Guide: Can a Wall Bed Ruin a Mattress?](#)

This article was updated just for you in 2025.