

## CHAPTER 7

### Linen and Laundry

#### Bed Linen

Linen needs a chapter all on its own! I've bought Egyptian cotton for just over 40 years and love its softness, the cool sensation in the summer and the way it improves with laundering over the years. Some of my sheets are as soft as a baby's bottom! This does mean that you can't use value or cheap products for washing and conditioning. Coarse washing powder will fray the edge of pillow slips and not do the sheets any good. I'm going to show you how much linen for **1 double room** is required, although you will need at least **3 sets for each room** – one on the bed, one in the wash and one laundered in the cupboard ready for changing or emergencies. If you can store more, all the better, but you need to work out from the start, how much space the linen will take. My husband built 2 new linen cupboards for this purpose and I could still do with more. We went to the trouble of measuring folded sheets to make sure everything would fit in. I then realised I'd need additional storage for mattress protectors and toppers!



Here is the basic linen list:

#### **3 mattress toppers –**

These add fantastic comfort to the bed and are easy to launder. There is a huge range available, so it will take time to find the ones that suit your needs. I prefer the make with elastic straps at each corner to hold them on the bed. After tumble drying, they can hang outside on the washing line, if you are lucky enough to have one and then need airing at least over night. I have 3 "Sheila maids" or airing racks in the house. Sunshine helps to sterilize cottons and will make them smell delicious.

#### **3 waterproof or water resistant covers –**

Guests do not like to hear crackly sounds during the night or feel the heat of rubber under sheets. However, waterproofing is necessary and will help your mattresses last. I'm afraid stained or unhygienic mattresses are just not acceptable. As a nurse, our mattresses were covered in waterproof fabrics, so they could be cleaned between patients. A hotel or B & B cannot do that, so research into what is available is necessary. There are some great products around. I would suggest asking local hoteliers what they would advise, going to the large outlet stores and looking at the range. There are papery ones, padded ones, those with brushed cotton on each side, poly ones etc. There again, all are easy to launder and benefit from airing on the washing line if possible.

#### **3 mattress protectors**

Mattress protectors usually have fitted elastic sides, are padded and act as an extra barrier between the sheet and mattress, They also give that little bit of padded comfort that can make all the difference to a night's sleep. Like the water-resistant covers they are not expensive and easy to replace.

#### **3 bottom flat sheets or 3 fitted sheets**

I've always bought my sheets from a well known shop in London and love the quality. I wouldn't advise buying during the sales, as sale products can be shorter or smaller (which is why they are in the sale) or have tiny marks, neither of which you want. I thought that fitted sheets would be easiest, but of course, if you are doing the ironing, they are a nuisance. So I now use flat sheets.

#### **3 duvet covers**

I have standard size beds. If you are contemplating king size or super king, try to have a go at ironing these before you buy. I have a Pfaff rotary iron that is indispensable. The ironing drum measures just over 33 inches and takes folded standard double size laundry easily. King size would take longer to iron and be heavier for me to manage and extra king might require a longer iron. I would probably need some help, as well as additional space on the airing rack and washing line. There are hoteliers who much prefer king size, so it is a personal choice. Do check if the covers have plastic buttons on! They melt in the rotary iron, so I sewed white ribbons