

Cushion Foam Buying Guide

PRODUCT	FIRMNESS	DENSITY (LB./CU. FT.)	WATER DRAINAGE	TREATMENT/ ADDITIVES	COLOR	RECOMMENDED USES	QUALITY	PRICE
Polyester Fiberfill - 15 Denier	Soft	Variable	***	Slick, Anti-bunch finish	White	Pillows, seating backs, pet beds, crafts	*****	\$\$
Fairfield Poly-Fil Nu-Foam (Compressed Polyester)	Soft	Not rated	***	None	White	Cushions, futons, chair pads, light upholstery, playpens	**	\$\$
Medium Density Polyurethane Antimicrobial Foam	Medium	1.8	*	Biocide/ Antimicrobial	White	Cushions, marine seating, mattresses (occasional use)	***	\$
Fabric Backed Sew Foam	Extra Firm	Not rated	*	None	Pink	Headliner/hull liner, helm seats, automotive upholstery, coaming	****	\$
Dry Fast Open Cell Foam	Medium, Firm	1.8 - 2.2	*****	Biocide/ Antimicrobial	Off-White	Cushions, marine seating, berth cushions, mattresses (occasional use)	****	\$\$\$
Closed Cell Flotation Foam	Extra Firm	3 - 5	N/A	N/A	Cream	Cockpit cushions, bosun's chairs, life jackets	*****	\$\$
High Density Polyurethane Foam	Extra Firm, Firm, Medium	2.8	*	None	White	Cushions, mattresses, upholstery (high traffic use)	*****	\$

FIRMNESS

A foam's firmness is measured by a value called Indentation Force Deflection (IFD). The IFD represents how many pounds it takes to compress a piece of foam by 25%. IFDs are listed in the foam descriptions. Here, they are generalized in firmness: soft, medium, firm and extra firm.

DENSITY

Density is a measurement of how little air is in the foam and is expressed in pounds per cubic foot. Generally speaking, the higher the density, the better grade of foam. However, for occasional use in marine seating or patio furniture, a high density can be considered excessive for the amount of wear the cushion will see.

WATER DRAINAGE

Foam that easily drains water has a ranking of 3 stars or better. Closed cell foam absorbs almost no water at all, and can be used for flotation. For a foam that does not drain well, we recommend wrapping it in silk film as a protective layer to keep the foam from getting wet.

TREATMENT/ADDITIVES

Some foam has a biocide/antimicrobial treatment to prevent mold and mildew. This treatment is recommended for any absorbent foam that will be in a marine environment or that is regularly exposed to water. The Polyester Fiberfill has a slick finish that prevents it from bunching when stuffed inside fabric.

Foam FAQs

Do I need a higher density than 1.8 on my boat?

No. While it is true that higher density foams have more longevity, densities of about 1.4-1.8 are considered industry standards for boat seats. Most foams with a higher density will not have a biocide treatment which is a crucial component of boating foam. Additionally, the majority of boat seats only see occasional use throughout the year, so a 1.8 density will be more than sufficient.

What is HR foam? Do I need it on my boat?

HR foam stands for High Resilience foam. This type of foam has a more random cell structure than other foams, which allows it to quickly regain its shape and be very supportive. While this foam is excellent for mattresses and upholstery, it is better suited for indoor applications, as moisture from the outdoors may compromise the properties of the foam.

Can I use any of these foams inside my home?

Yes! Polyester Fiberfill is great for indoor or outdoor pillow stuffing, and Poly-Fil Nu-Foam is also great for a variety of light household applications. The Medium Density Polyurethane Antimicrobial Foam can be used indoors for occasional use only, but the Closed Cell Foam is not recommended for indoor use. High Density Polyurethane Foam is an excellent choice for high-traffic applications like upholstered furniture and interior cushions. It is expected to last up to 12 years, even with daily use.

How can I give my cushion rounded edges?

Wrapping batting around the foam before inserting it into your cushion fabric will create that soft, rounded look. To add batting, spray the foam with a spray adhesive. Then wrap the batting around the foam so the top and bottom are covered plus one side.

Is there a trick to getting the foam inside the fabric?

Squeezing foam inside cushion fabric can be really tough. We recommend using silk film to shrink your foam for insertion. To use the silk film, cover and tuck the film loosely around the foam. Insert the vacuum hose into an open end of the film directly onto the foam and turn on. The vacuum's suction will compress the silk film over the foam and shrink the foam. Turn off the vacuum and the foam will expand to its original size. Silk film has an added benefit acting as a waterproof layer between the cushion and the fabric. Silk film is recommended for use with polyurethane foam.

Can I make a thicker cushion by layering pieces?

Yes you can. To create a thicker cushion, stack pieces of foam on top of each other, using a spray adhesive to glue the pieces together. When layering foams with different stiffnesses, the firmer foam should be on the bottom.

How do I cut foam?

To cut traditional foam, you can use an electric kitchen knife. If you have a large amount of foam to cut you can purchase a foam cutting tool such as the Sailrite® Blade Foam Saw or the Acu-Cutter 350 Foam Cutter. To cut Poly-Fil Nu-Foam, use long blade scissors, cutting in layers. A utility knife or a large rotary cutter can also be used; however, cutting the foam can cause the blade to dull.