

How to Choose Latex Foam Firmness for Upholstery

Use this guide as a quick reference for determining what foam firmness to get when replacing the foam in sofa or other upholstery cushions, dining chair seats, or for applying new foam under 'tight' upholstery. Please note that we are referring exclusively to **100% Natural Dunlop Latex Foam** in this guide.

Firmness and Density: What's the difference?

Firmness & **Density** are two ways furniture foams are rated for feel and quality.

Firmness = Comfort = the 'Feel' (measured as pressure to compress a given thickness by a given amount, and expressed as ILD - see definition below)

Density = Weight = Quality (measured as weight of a given volume of material)

Compared to urethane foams used in upholstery, the **density** variation for latex foams is relatively small, so it's safe to make your choice based on **firmness** alone, as long as you're not comparing different types of latex (this guide is about Dunlop latex only).

What is ILD?

Firmness interprets the feel of foam and how it yields to weight and pressure. It is designated by the term 'Indentation Load Deflection', or ILD. Firmer foams have a higher ILD rating. For a more detailed explanation of firmness, density, and ILD, check out this [post](#) and this [video](#).

Choose the firmness that best suits the foam's intended use & your personal needs

Your choice of foam firmness is ultimately a SUBJECTIVE one. When choosing foam for upholstery, always consider these FOUR VARIABLES:

1. Your preference (do you like to sink into your furniture, or feel more supported?)
2. Your weight (more weight requires higher density and firmness)
3. The designated use (e.g. a seat or back cushion for a sofa, a window seat cushion, or replacement foam for a dining chair seat)
4. Thickness of the specific application or cushion (for a given ILD, the thinner the foam, the less support per unit of body weight, so the softer the feel. Likewise, a thicker foam with the same ILD rating will feel firmer.)

Firmness Ratings for Common Upholstery Uses (Dunlop 100% Natural Latex Foam)

<u>FIRMNESS</u>	<u>ILD RATING</u>	<u>DENSITY</u>	<u>DESIGNATED USE</u>
soft	17-25 ILD	4.1	'standard' back cushion
medium	26-30 ILD	4.7	'firm' back cushion
firm	31-35 ILD	5.0	'standard' seat cushion
extra-firm	36-42 ILD	5.3	'firm' seat cushion
xx-firm	43-48 ILD	5.6	'standard' for thinnest applications (<2 inch)

SEAT Cushion thickness & firmness (for a 150-180 lb person)

- For 5-6 inch thickness, the most popular firmness is 31-35 ILD (firm); 26-30 ILD (medium) feels soft; for those who prefer a firmer seat cushion with plenty of support, 36-42 ILD (extra-firm) is a good choice for this thickness.
- For 1.5-3 inch thickness, Extra-Firm (36-42 ILD) or Firm (31-35 ILD) is recommended.
- For 1-1.25 inch thickness, the XX-Firm (43-48 ILD) is highly recommended, since you need all the support you can get when your seat cushioning is this thin.

BACK Cushion thickness & firmness (for a 150-180 lb person) - remember there is much less pressure exerted by a person leaning back than by sitting on something:

- For 3-6 inch thickness, a Soft (17-25 ILD) will be cushy, with enough give to sink in comfortably, and a Medium (26-30 ILD) will feel much firmer.
- For 1.5-3 inch thickness, choose a Medium (26-30 ILD)

When you're ready to order natural upholstery foundation materials for your project, head on over to our [SHOP](#), where you'll find product videos and worksheets to help you learn how to use the materials. Got Questions? Check out our [FAQs](#) to learn more, and find videos and more detailed explanations on the [BLOG](#).

Thanks for your interest! I'd love to hear from you. Join the conversation over at [NaturalUpholstery.com](#), where you can [drop me an email](#) with your comments and questions and [subscribe to the mailing list](#) to stay connected!

Carla Pyle
NaturalUpholstery.com