

Making a Cotton Mattress



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MAKING A COTTON MATTRESS

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MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

10 yards feather ticking, 32 inches wide

50 pounds cotton, either (1) felted, (2) direct from gin or
(3) in the bale

16" tufting needles (two points)

6" roll edge needles

96 tufts

Tufting twine

Ice pick

Sewing needles, thimbles, thread, beeswax (if cotton
thread is used)

File

Table—83" long, 61" wide, and 36" high, with every other
board loose

Beating pole (a hoe handle or paddle about 5 ft. long may
be used)

Boards for locating tufts

Yard sticks or small slats

Pins

Red pencils

Lead pencils

Tape measures

Shears

Scissors

CUTTING AND MAKING THE TICK

A well tailored tick is essential if one is to make a good mattress.

1. Cut four strips of ticking 83 inches long. Tear a 5-inch strip off of two of these pieces, Fig. 1, (this 5-inch strip can be used for boxing), leaving two 32-inch strips and two 27-inch strips.

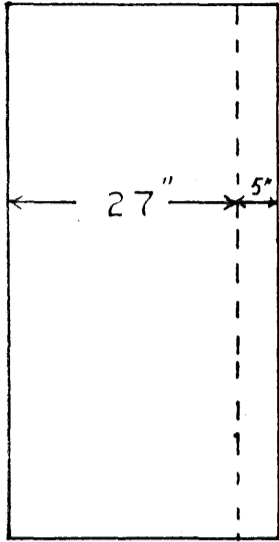


Fig. 1.—Tear a 5-inch strip from each 83-inch length.

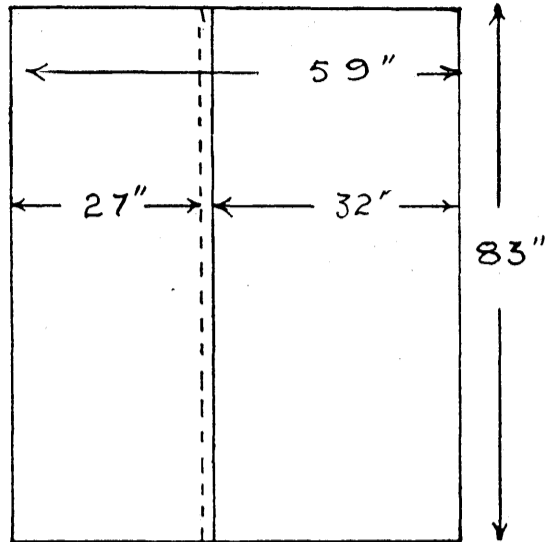


Fig. 2.—The top and bottom of the tick.

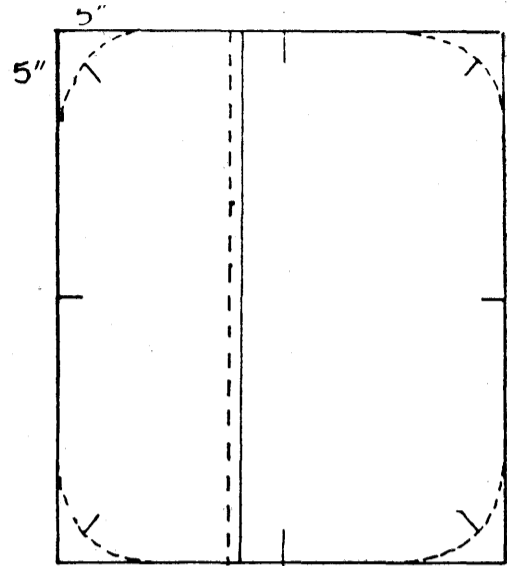


Fig. 3.—Round off the corners of the top and bottom of the tick before sewing to the boxing. Mark center points of ends, sides and curves.

2. To make the boxing, sew the 5-inch strips end to end and add to a ten foot strip. (To cut this strip, use an extra piece of ticking ten feet long; this piece can be torn into six 5-inch strips and used for 6 ticks.) Use plain seam for joining these pieces, match strips. Do not let seam come at corner.
3. **Sewing Boxing to Bottom of Tick.**—Pin the boxing strip to bottom piece of tick. This must be carefully done as the boxing should fit smoothly around the corners. Since these corners are rounded, they are off grain and it will be necessary to pin carefully. Start pinning the boxing on the side, a pin every nine or ten inches will hold the boxing on the straight edges, but at corners put in pins about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches

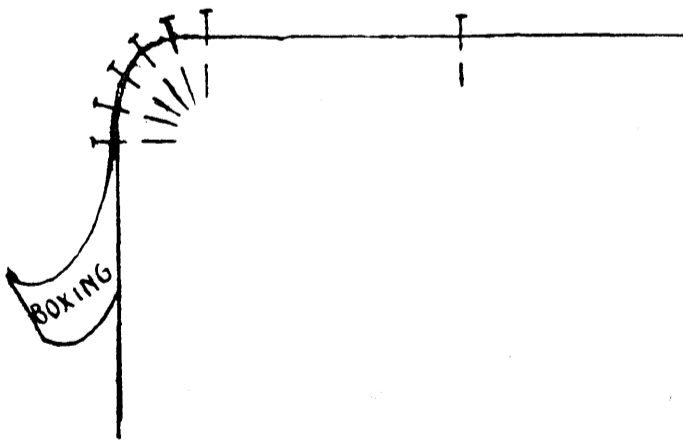


FIGURE 4

apart easing in any fulness that may appear. Hold the tick side next to you. Stitch these two together with two rows of stitching. Stitch first row $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from edge. The second row is stitched $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from edge, making $\frac{1}{2}$ inch seam.

4. **Handles.**—Handles should be put in on the sides 15 inches from corners. To make handles, cut strip of material 28 inches long and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide. Double and stitch together to form a $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch band. Stitch down each side from edge. Cut this into 4 pieces for handles. The handles should be pinned in place before the boxing is stitched to tick.

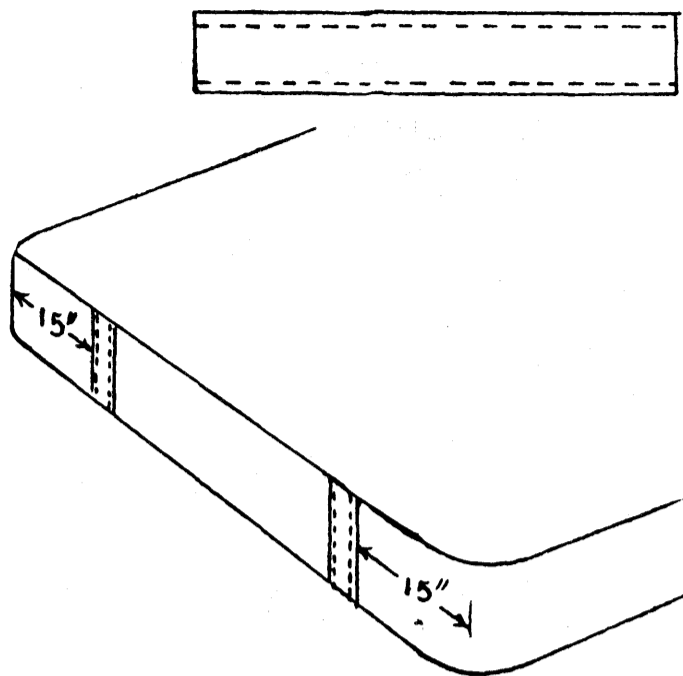


FIGURE 5

5. After the boxing has been sewed to bottom tick, mark corresponding center marks on top edge of boxing. (See Fig. 3, Page 4.) This will make for greater ease in joining top to boxing, in that it will make center marks of sides and rounded corners come directly over each other. This is a necessity in getting the boxing put in smoothly. (Use red pencil to make these center and corner matching marks.)
6. **Sewing Top to Boxing.**—Pin center side mark of top to center side mark of boxing. Then pin corners as directed above. Stitch together with $\frac{1}{2}$ inch seam, stitch twice. Let this seam extend well round the corners. Leave the other side and two ends open.

MARKING THE TUFTS

Place tick on table and mark the places for tufts, using the marking board. Mark directly beside each nail and follow the same stripe for the entire length of tick. **Be sure** the end marking boards are in **correct position**.

Mark with red pencil. There should be 48 tufts. This gives 6 cross wise and eight lengthwise. Start marking at a point 7 inches from end and side of each corner.

FLUFFING THE COTTON

The cotton, whether carded or direct from the bale **must be fluffed**. This can be done by sunning and airing the cotton for 2 days, or fluffing with hand.

FILLING THE TICK

Lay the tick on the table, fold the top so that it will not touch the floor.

Put in a layer of cotton and fluff lightly with yard stick—continue this process until all the cotton is used. The center of the mattress should be the thickest, therefore, the cotton should be so proportioned that an extra strip of several pounds can be placed crosswise the center of the mattress. Let this extend to within $\frac{1}{2}$ yard of top and bottom end of the mattress.

CAUTIONS

1. Let cotton extend over the seam on the bottom of the tick for an inch or more.

2. Do not let batts join directly above the place where batts joined in the layer underneath.

3. Pack corners firmly, but do not wad cotton into them.

It will be easier to sew the top ticking to the boxing if the raw edge of the three sides left open are turned under $\frac{1}{3}$ inch and stitched.

Spread top tick, which has already had the raw edge turned under and stitched, over the cotton. Pin center marks of top to center marks of the boxing. Put in pins at regular intervals in order to avoid puckering and to hold both pieces firm until hand stitching is done. Whip edges together, using short whipping stitches.

KIND OF COTTON THAT MAY BE USED

1. Cotton carded into batts by a mill or gin may be put into the mattress in layers.

2. Cotton may be taken directly from the bale in layers and fluffed in these layers. Care must be taken to distribute it **evenly** over the tick.

BEATING THE MATTRESS

Beat the mattress with a pole or paddle until all wads of cotton disappear. This helps to fluff the cotton and to distribute it more evenly.

MAKING THE ROLL EDGE

As guides in putting in rolled edge mark with pencil $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches above seam in top and bottom.

Thread the needle with tufting twine. Begin to sew directly below the seam in the boxing. Work cotton for roll edge separate from that in mattress with needle. Run needle diagonally and bring it out in the top of the tick about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches above the seam.

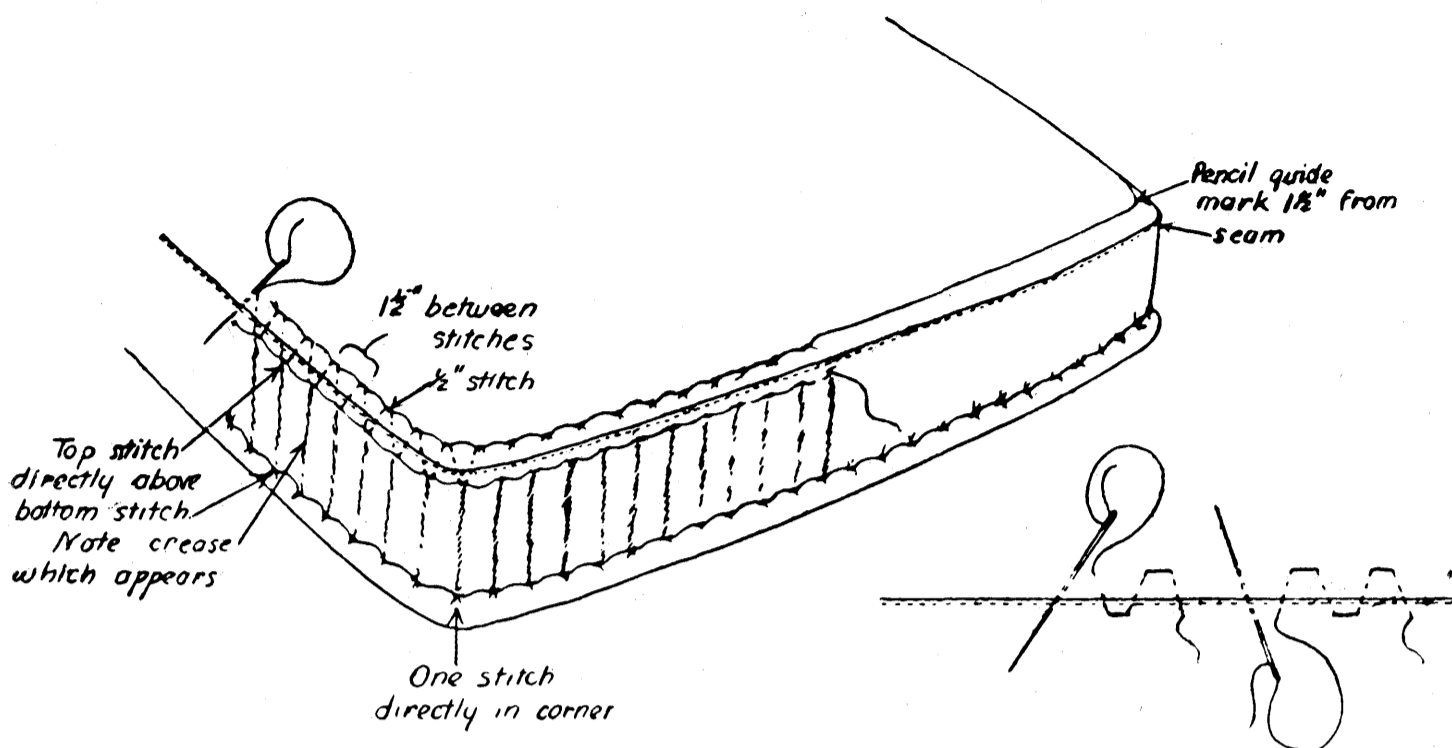


FIGURE 6

Make a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch stitch on top and sew down diagonally. See Fig. 6. Repeat all around the mattress. Distance between stitches should be not over $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. Fig. 6. Space the stitches so that one will be directly in the corner of the tick. If handles are used, one stitch should be put in the handle.

Keep thread pulled tight while making roll, never taking over 3 stitches before tightening thread. Tighten thread only when needle comes out under boxing seam. Keep the roll even. When the roll is completed on one side turn the mattress over and put roll edge on other side. The process is the same except each stitch must be **directly above the stitch** on the first roll. See Fig. 6. When the stitches are directly above one another a small crease will show between the stitches. When roll edge is completed on one side, beat with a few strokes from center to each end. This helps to distribute cotton evenly. Turn mattress and repeat process.

TUFTING

Use a slatted table.

Thread the needle with tufting twine and push it through the mattress at the place marked for the tuft, then moving the needle over about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, bring it through the mattress again.

Place a tuft in the loop and draw the thread tight.

Tie a slip knot and place a tuft in the loop on top. Draw the thread tight and then tie another knot in the twine for safety. Cut the thread, leaving ends about an inch long. Repeat until all tufting is completed.

TUFTS

Make tufts by rolling a small bunch of cotton between the fingers to make a firm roll one inch long and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide, or by cutting small rectangles of ticking one inch wide and two inches long and folding them in the center.

IMPERIAL STITCH

Imperial stitching will make the sides stand up firmer.

1. Make two rows of side stitching equally spaced between the roll edges. Use 12 inch needle and imperialing twine.

2. To make stitches, insert needle diagonally from boxing to the top of tick, then back through the same hole to a point in boxing in line with the beginning of the stitch.

STANDARD SIZE MATTRESSES—COTTON REQUIREMENTS

Ticks are cut for double bed—59 x 83-----50 lbs.

Ticks are cut for single bed—45 x 83-----37 lbs.

Ticks are cut for a twin bed—42 x 83-----35 lbs.

Finished mattresses:

Double bed -----54 x 76

Single bed -----39 x 76

Twin bed -----42 x 76

MATTRESS TO FIT ODD SIZE BED

The tufting and roll edge take up about one inch per foot. Therefore, in cutting odd size mattress ticks, allow one inch for each foot in length and width. Example: If mattress is to be finished 6 feet by 3 feet, cut tick 6 feet, 6 inches by 3 feet, 3 inches.