

Mattress Face-Off: Saatva vs. Sleep Number

Can the new Saatva Solaire adjustable air mattress match—or even beat—the Sleep Number i8 in Consumer Reports' tests?

By Haniya Rae
April 29, 2020



Finding a mattress with just the right firmness can be a challenge. Adjustable air mattresses are meant to solve that problem by allowing you to change their firmness to meet your needs, and for years, Sleep Number has dominated the market. But Saatva, an online mattress company, recently introduced its own adjustable air mattress, the Solaire.

So the time is right for an air mattress matchup. We put the Saatva Solaire newcomer up against the Sleep Number 360 i8 Smart Bed.

Both cost about the same—around \$3,000 for a queen-size mattress. You can upgrade each bed by buying an adjustable bed frame with extra amenities, such as the ability to raise the head area or raise one of two sides of the bed, massagers, and lights under the bed.

For instance, a queen-size Saatva with an adjustable frame that can raise the entire head of the mattress, with underbed lighting and a three-speed massager, costs \$4,200. With Sleep Number, a queen-size mattress with an adjustable frame that includes floor lights and allows you to raise the head area, and with a foot-warming heater, costs \$5,000.

In our labs, we test the basic queen-size version of each mattress, without any bells and whistles. One thing we found regarding the adjustable aspect of these mattresses: “The firmness measured didn’t change much when we set the

mattresses to a low level vs. a high level,” says Chris Regan, CR’s project leader who oversees our mattress testing. “This is possibly because they both have several inches of foam above the air bladder.” So when you shop for one of these mattresses, don’t count on being able to change their firmness much. In our tests, both get a firmness rating of a 4 on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the firmest.

For more on mattresses, see our mattress ratings and buying guide.

Vitals

Saatva Solaire: Saatva has been making foam and innerspring mattresses for a decade. The Solaire doesn’t come with an app; it has a remote attached to the mattress for the air pump, which is tucked inside the mattress. The topper is made of cotton and a layer of latex, and the mattress itself has a layer of latex and a few layers of memory foam. Saatva offers a 120-day free trial period during which you can get a refund if you don’t like the mattress.

CR QUICK TAKE

81

Saatva Solaire

✓ CR RECOMMENDED

- ⬆ AVERAGE BACK SLEEPER
- ⬆ AVERAGE SIDE SLEEPER
- ⬆ STABILIZATION

Sleep Number i8: Sleep Number is the biggest seller of adjustable air mattresses in the U.S., and a number of its mattresses have held the top spots in our adjustable air mattress ratings. You can control the Sleep Number i8 using an app on your phone, or with a separate remote you can purchase for \$39. Unlike the Saatva, the air pump is outside the mattress. This mattress contains layers of memory foam. You can try out the Sleep Number for 100 days and get a refund if you’re unhappy with it.

CR QUICK TAKE

73

Sleep Number 360 i8 Smart Bed

GREEN CHOICE

AVERAGE BACK SLEEPER

AVERAGE SIDE SLEEPER

STABILIZATION

Test by Test

Support: The Saatva is much better when it comes to support. For every body type and sleep style—meaning petite, average, and large/tall side sleepers and back sleepers—the Saatva earns a Very Good rating for support. (In our tests, petite is defined as a woman who is 4 feet, 11½ inches to 5 feet, 1½ inches tall and weighs 110 to 128 pounds and a large/tall sleeper is defined as a man who is 6 feet, 2 inches to 6 feet, 4 inches tall and weighs 220 to 242 pounds; an average size sleeper is between the two.) The Sleep Number is only average in this test, earning a Good rating across the board. The Saatva wins here.

Stabilization: In this test, we measure how much bounce or vibration transfers when there is movement on a mattress. We also note how easy it is to change positions. The less bounce and the

easier it is to move around, the better. Both mattresses earn a Very Good rating—you'll feel little to no bounce from a partner, and you should be able to turn easily on both beds. It's a tie in this contest.

Durability: To see how well a mattress holds up over time, we use a machine that pushes and pulls a 308-pound wood roller across each mattress 30,000 times to simulate eight to 10 years of use. Both mattresses earn Excellent ratings here; they should last for years to come.

Features: Programming each mattress's firmness is pretty convenient with the Saatva's remote or the Sleep Number app. If you ever need to move either mattress around, however, it's not quite so easy—neither has grips on its sides, so you may need help lifting it. On the plus side, these mattresses don't retain warmth, so you're less likely to feel sweaty while you sleep no matter which one you choose. In terms of features, it's a tie again between these contenders.

The Winner

It's a close call in this mattress face-off, but the Saatva Solaire is the winner because of its impressive Very Good rating in our support test. After all, great support is crucial for restful sleep, and the Saatva provides that for people of all sizes, whether you sleep on your back or side. It also minimizes bounce and is built to last. Plus, you'll save several hundred dollars over the Sleep Number and get a more generous trial period, too.