

Things to Consider When Deciding Between
**Reupholstering and
Purchasing New Furniture**





SENTIMENTAL VALUE

Is this chair an heirloom passed down through generations? Does it have history as a 1780's wingback that graced the parlor of some famous dame or is it merely your favorite chair? Whatever the case may be, if the piece of furniture has special value to you, you can rejoice in having another option besides trashing it in favor of something new.

HISTORY

It's important to know where the piece of furniture came from, if you didn't purchase it yourself. This information can help you determine quality from such facts as the age of the piece, the original cost and what conditions it has been stored in or lived through.

CONDITION

This is one of the most important factors to consider in your decision to reupholster or not. If the furniture was owned by a smoker, that residual smoke could be not only in the fabric but embedded in the lining and even the wooden frame, so it may never come out. If the piece was stored in a garage or basement, the possible high humidity levels could have caused the piece to mold, giving it a musty smell. Mold can be a nightmare because it thrives in temperatures above 50 degrees, the lack of light in garages helps hasten its growth and the only way to remedy it is to completely strip the furniture and treat its wooden frame for the mold in a process that can rack up some dollar bills. You also want to make sure it wasn't stored in a place where it could've been infested by insects or rodents, such as bedbugs or mice.

QUALITY

Both history and condition lend to the quality of the furniture. Older furniture is typically sturdier furniture and it may be better to update what you have in favor of buying a cheap replacement that won't last as long because it is made with flimsier materials to accommodate that lower price. "Older" furniture includes furniture that is 15-20 years old, so if your piece is younger than this it would not benefit you to reupholster it. You want to be certain that the frame of the piece is strong and intact because you need to have a sure foundation to build upon. An unhealthy frame twists, creaks or wobbles; all things you can easily decipher just by looking at or sitting on the piece.

CLEANING

That old couch may look pretty dingy, but it may just be because it hasn't been cleaned in a few centuries. Before taking on the hassle of a reupholstering project, analyze your furnishings and determine whether they are getting to be past their prime or if they just look that way because they need a good scrubbing, and possibly save yourself some time and money.

COST

Reupholstering can be just as or more expensive than buying new furniture, it just depends on if you're updating a single chair or an entire set of chairs and a couch. You also need to take into consideration the work that needs to be done on the item; is it just a change of fabric or does it need to be re-stuffed? Does the framework need attention, do springs or a backboard need to be replaced? And even if it's just a matter of fabric, upholstery fabric can be costly at \$20-\$70 per yard. The more fabric you get the more labor is needed to be done and special work such as that needing to be done on furniture with zippers, making sure patterns and shapes align, and tufting can also increase costs.

SLIP COVERS

These are fitted protective covers, usually made of cloth, which can be slipped on and off of a piece of furniture. They may be a more inexpensive alternative that can also add variety to your rooms because they can be changed at any time according to season or mood.

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Reupholstering means taking a product that you have and re-imagining it, this does not include creating a duplicate of factory-made furniture from the scrap material of your old furnishings. Remember that there are limits to what can be done, and determine what you want out of your furniture and if your current sets can continue to deliver that. 🌿

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