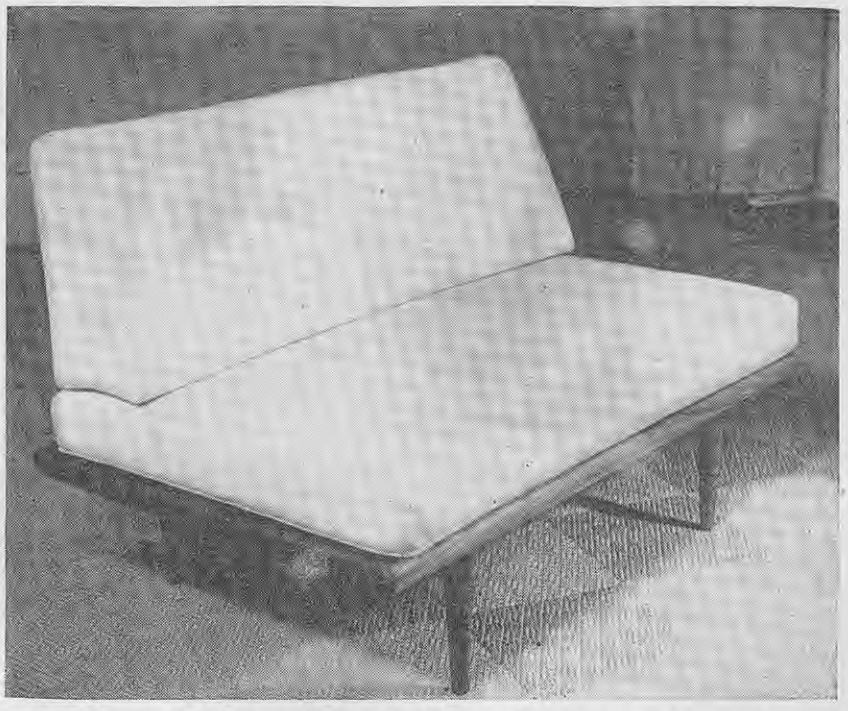
Sponge rubber is made differently; substances are added to the latex which make it "rise". (This is similar to the action of baking powder in a cake mixture.) The whole is more or less filled with bubbles of gas. These bubbles are totally enclosed and do not communicate with each other or with the outside air. The more gas that is produced the greater will be the proportion of gas to rubber and the softer will be the resulting sponge. The required firmness of the product can be adjusted by the amount of raising agent used.

In foam rubber the length of time of beating regulates the firmness of the product; the longer it is beaten the greater is the proportion of air to rubber and the softer it will be.

Latex Chips

Whipped-up rubber latex is poured into a mould and baked. The process is somewhat analagous to the making and baking of a sponge cake, and so is the result. It happens sometimes that a sponge cake is not a success, the middle part not being cooked properly. So it is with foam rubber.

When this happens the unsuccessful centre part is chopped into small pieces known as latex chips. These are used in cushions and cot pillows and for other fillings. They are resilient and soft, but, unlike cushions of foam rubber, have no stability of shape beyond that given by the enclosing cover.



The sharply defined corners and straight lines of these foam rubber cushions make them ideal subjects for loose covers.

Latex rubber chips make a soft, clean, and springy filling for pillows and cushions. They are less expensive than a comparable quantity of sheet foam rubber.

Comfort and Durability

If foam rubber is given proper care, it should last indefinitely. It is pure rubber which is extremely long lasting. It offers no feeling of resistance to weight. Pressure is equalised at every point of contact and there is no "pull" to where the weight is greatest; in other words it conforms to the body contours.

It is not inflated, there are no springs to break down and give trouble, it it cannot sag, become matted or lumpy, and never requires remaking, it does not form dust or fluff, and it is proof against vermin, moths, carpet beetles, damp, and mould. Being porous it "breathes" through its innumerable air cells and use automatically keeps it always aired.

Foam rubber pillows are especially recommended for sufferers from hay fever, asthma, and all dust and feather allergies, because they do not create dust. There are those who find foam pillows not sufficiently compressible, but some pillows are softer and less springy than others and a little time spent searching for the right pillow is well worth the effort.

Another advantage is its use in the sick room. It is the most sanitary cushioning material available as well as being comfortable, durable, hygienic, dust free, and moth resistant.

Beside its use for mattresses, pillows, cushions, and upholstery, it also forms an ideal underlay for carpets and stair treads, and insoles for shoes, shoulder pads, kneeling pads, and toys and other modern applications.

Because of its inherent durability it is the most economical cushioning for upholstered furniture, especially since it retains its shape and resiliency throughout its life. Furniture fitted with foam rubber always looks shapely and inviting, and when covering fabrics have to be renewed the clearly defined contours of the foam rubber make re-covering comparatively simple.

In sheet form and bonded on to some fabric such as hessian, foam rubber provides a highly resilient underlay for carpets and rugs. It lifts the carpet from the floor, protecting it from wear and giving it longer life. The initial expense is high, but it should be regarded as a lifetime investment. It can be put down without tacking even in small pieces; pieces can be joined easily with adhesive tape. It can be removed and reinstalled without difficulty and is easy to clean.