

The talking iPod

The £59 Apple iPod Shuffle 3G plays music, podcasts and audio books – that's it. Other MP3 players this price may have an FM radio, a voice recorder or even a screen to view photos or video, but not the Shuffle.

Fitness fans will like the tiny size, space for around 1,000 songs and the 10-hour rechargeable battery. A slider turns it on and toggles between linear and shuffle playback. A stainless-steel grip attaches to clothes, so it shouldn't go flying during a workout.

Controls are on the headphone cord not the body, so you don't have to fish into your pocket to use them. But this means you have to

use Apple's white iPod Shuffle headphones to control the player, though the Shuffle still plays if you use other headphones. We found Apple's headphones slipped easily from the ear. Third parties are to sell adaptors, so you can plug in your favourite headphones.

The 3G has a voice that tells you the track and artist, and can read out your playlists and tell you when the battery is low. We found it handled names and phonetically challenging playlists with ease, but navigation, while better than previous Shuffles, could be better.

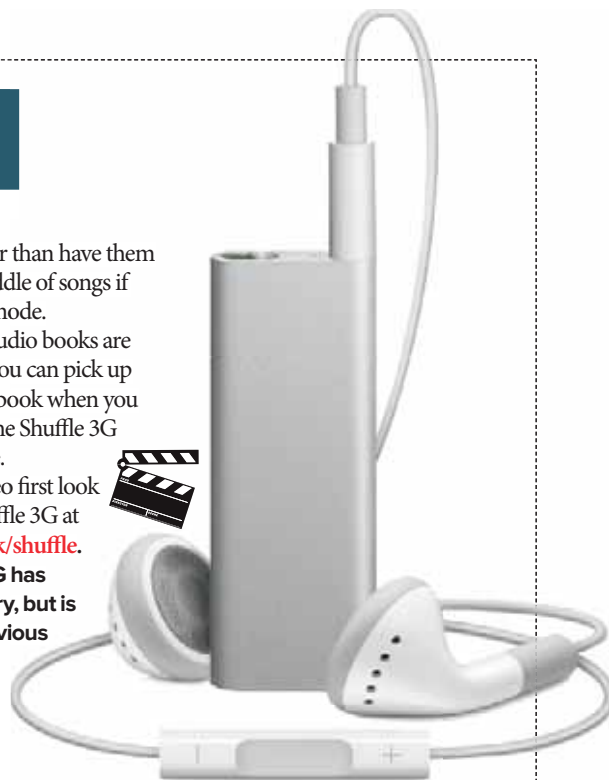
Audio books and podcasts are handled better than previous Shuffles. It plays book chapters

sequentially rather than have them pop up in the middle of songs if you're in shuffle mode.

Podcasts and audio books are bookmarked so you can pick up your place in the book when you next turn it on. The Shuffle 3G is widely available.

Watch our video first look review of the Shuffle 3G at www.which.co.uk/shuffle.

VERDICT The 3G has twice the memory, but is smaller than previous Shuffles. Headphone controls and navigation could be better.



Wet and dry spills sucked up

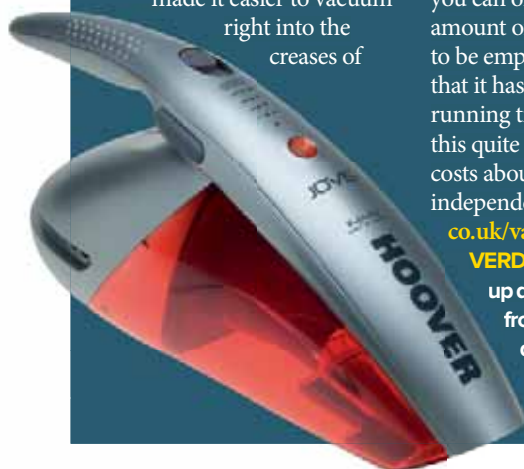
The Jovis, Hoover's most powerful handheld vac, easily sucked up crumbs, rice, dust and soil when we tried it, even from cracks in surfaces. We haven't put it through a full test, but here are our first impressions. The crevice tool

made it easier to vacuum right into the creases of

your car seat and helped reach into those tighter spaces. Like many handhelds, it struggled to do as well on carpet.

The Jovis has a squeegee tool that's decent at sucking up wet spills on hard surfaces, but wasn't that good on carpet. Plus you can only pick up a small amount of liquid before it needs to be emptied. Hoover claims that it has up to 20 minutes' running time and we found this quite accurate. The Jovis costs about £54 from Argos and independents. See www.which.co.uk/vacuumcleaners.

VERDICT Good for picking up debris and small spills from hard surfaces, but don't expect too much when the Jovis is used on carpets.



Play music without the desktop clutter



The Logic 3 Pro-Dock plays audio from an Apple iPod or iPhone. It lets you synchronise the music and video on it with what's on your PC. It'll also charge your iPod or iPhone, via your PC, or with the mains adaptor.

It reduces desktop clutter and lets you play your music through your stereo, or watch video from your iPod on TV. There's a remote control so you can change tracks or rewind video from your armchair.

The dock maintains the quality of the

original sound or video, but if you're watching the iPod's low-resolution video on a big screen you will notice the limitations. And while it comes with a stereo audio cable, we'd have liked to see a video cable too – you'll have to buy it separately.

The instructions for the dock could be better, too. It will cost £49.99 online. You can see our first impressions of four Logic3 iPod docking stations at www.which.co.uk/logic3.

VERDICT This is a useful way to control your music and video, though the remote is clunky. ►►



Great for point and shoot

The £170 Flip MinoHD is the smallest HD camcorder there is, claim manufacturers. It's great for point and shoot – just record, zoom, play and delete – but not if you want advanced controls. You can film for up to an hour in 720p HD resolution, the quality typically found on compact cameras that record in HD. The zoom, as with previous Flip camcorders, is smooth but sluggish. It's has just x2 digital enlargement, and autofocus doesn't adjust as you zoom, so images blur.



Colours are sharp in bright light, but video shot in dim light looks murky. It records at 30 frames a second, not enough to make fast action smooth. The LCD screen is just bigger than a postage stamp. Most mobile phones have larger screens. The easy-to-use software works with Macs or PCs. You can do basic editing and upload video to sites such as YouTube. It's widely available.

VERDICT Portable, easy to use, but the screen is small and the zoom, slow.

Yes, you can have fun with an SLR

The compact, light 12.3Mp Olympus E-620 digital SLR is likely to sell for about £650 when launched, but we got our hands on one early to take a first look. It has an image stabiliser and a 2.7-inch LCD screen with 'Live View' which shows exactly what your picture will look like. The ISO can be set between 100 and 3,200, and Olympus claims it can shoot up to four frames a second at full resolution. It also has a fun feature – six 'art filters' for creative pictures. These include pin hole and pop art and we found them quite effective. You can create these effects with photo-editing software,



but seeing it on screen helps you frame an image more effectively. There are five shapes for photos, from square to widescreen. It will come in a body with a 14-42mm kit lens, 14-42mm lens and 40-150mm zoom lens, and a body with 25mm fixed pancake lens.

VERDICT Compact, light, good LCD, but no HDMI connection.

JUST OUT

A peek at what's new and coming soon in the shops

Halo pushchair £275

John Lewis, Mothercare Toysrus

Silver Cross, well-known for its large prams, has stepped down in size with the Halo, which fills a gap between its pram systems and buggies. The Halo has a simplified look compared with other pushchairs and Silver Cross says it will fold down to fit in a supermini. It's suitable from birth and can be used with the Ventura plus car seat. There is just one Best Buy from Silver Cross models we've tested previously. We'll be testing the Halo later this year.



Ultra Silencer Green ZUSG3000 £159.99

UK launch date to be confirmed

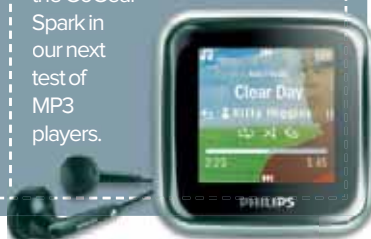
Electrolux claims that this is one of the quietest vacs around. It also claims that 55% of the body's plastic is made from recycled materials. It says the machine uses 33% less energy than a 2000W cleaner. We're waiting to hear when it's launched in the UK.



Philips GoGear Spark MP3 player £40+

Argos and online

This compact, easy-to-use MP3 player also stores pictures and comes with the choice of having an FM radio or not. There's a voice recorder that you can use to record from the radio. The earphones are reasonable, and you can use most other headphones to improve sound. Philips claims it runs for 27 hours on a single charge. It comes with 2GB, 4GB or 8GB storage. Prices begin at about £40 for 2GB without a radio. We'll fully test the GoGear Spark in our next test of MP3 players.



Which.co.uk An ideal home



Which? brings you the best of the latest ideas from this year's Ideal Home Show in London. We filmed the LG Duo Chef microwave, with our first impressions, plus we had a look at toasters from Morphy Richards and a rice cooker from celebrity chef Ainsley Harriott. See our videos from the show at www.which.co.uk/idealhome.



Hot off the press

The retro-looking Oliso steam iron has an interesting pop-up feature to reduce scorching of clothes. It's due in shops soon, but we got hold of one early to give you our first impressions.

The Oliso lifts the hot soleplate about an inch above the ironing board when you let go of the handle. Two feet push down out of the soleplate, so when you stop to arrange your clothing as you iron, you don't have to lift the iron back up on its heel. The feet go back into the soleplate when you

place your hand on the handle.

At first glance, its performance seems quite standard. There isn't a huge amount of continuous steam, even on the highest setting, but we'll wait for full test results. Features are typical for irons this price: auto shut-off, self cleaning, variable and vertical

steam. A 350ml capacity is claimed, so it shouldn't need filling more than rivals. It will cost about £80 at Harrods, House of Fraser, Lakeland, Selfridges and independents. See also www.which.co.uk/irons.

VERDICT The new feature is interesting but comes at a price.



A cordless phone that looks cool

The cool, curvy Columbo is apparently inspired by a 1960s Italian designer, rather than the similarly named raincoat-wearing detective. It's certainly better looking than many cordless phones.

There's an on-board answering machine, a phonebook for up to 100 contacts and can work hands-free. The polyphonic ringtones it has don't really fit with the stylish image.

Everything is controlled from the handset and there's no real base station.

This makes the Columbo unobtrusive, but has its drawbacks as the lack of a ringer in the base station means you may not hear calls if you've left the handset in another room. An answer machine in the base station as well as the handset would have been good.

The Columbo's easy to use, with a simple menu system you cycle through using the handset. In eco-mode, it uses less power but range is reduced, say manufacturers. It costs £40 for a single handset and is available online.

VERDICT Cool, curvy design that is different to most cordless phones, but can look a little toy-like in styling.

Toasting success

Lakeland, known for labour-saving kitchen gadgets, has started making toasters and its first two are Best Buys.

Standard bread fits easily, but tall slices poke out. There are six settings of browning, depending on your preference. Both models toast bread direct from the freezer and have a reheat option – helpful if your toast pops up before the kettle boils.

The four-slice model has dual controls for the different sides. Indicators show if the toasters are toasting, defrosting or reheating. The two-slice is £20 and takes a minute less than the four-slice, which is £30. It's available in Lakeland shops and at www.lakeland.co.uk. See www.which.co.uk/toasters to find out all our latest Best Buys.

VERDICT Great looks, great price, great toast.



The Little Red Chordette

The Chordette Gem lets you play music stored on your laptop, PC, iPod or most modern mobile phones through a hi-fi.

The idea is that this will give better sound than listening to those music files through headphones or on the device itself. However, the Gem costs £400, which is a lot to pay for improved sound quality. Music files are streamed from the player through the Gem to your hi-fi. Any Bluetooth device that stores and plays music



should work with it. The Gem is easy to use (the instructions are on a single piece of A6). It's available from www.chordelectronics.co.uk.

VERDICT The Gem is good looking, small and works well, but it is expensive.

