

[all change]

We review new products

No-mess drilling

We were impressed with Dust Bubble for Walls when we tested it in 2002. And we're equally impressed with Dust Bubble for Bathroom and Kitchen Tiles (£1.98 for 12 from B&Q), which collects dust when drilling wall and



Dust Bubbles collect dust made by drilling

floor tiles. The Bubbles are circular, 9cm in diameter, with an adhesive pad. You stick one to the tile, pinch and pull out the central tab to inflate the bag, and drill through the hole in the centre. Dust is collected in the bag, which you simply peel off and throw away.

We tried them on different tiles and with different drill bit sizes. They stuck well, although the drill sometimes slipped initially.

In general, they were effective. They add only seconds to the time taken to drill a hole but eliminate the clear-up time.

Of the latest washer-driers we've tested, the Hoover, right, is mediocre but the Zanussi, far right, makes it as a Best Buy



A washer-drier that works

We've never been particularly complimentary about washer-driers in the past – usually they're OK as washing machines but no good as driers (see 'Do washer-driers add up?', *Which?*, August 2004, p41).

However, we've tested two new models that weren't around in time to be included in the August test and have found a machine that, for the first

time, makes a reasonable stab at both functions. The Zanussi ZWD1480W, £439 from Sainsbury's, scores a ☆ for cleaning and a ○ for drying and, while not as good as the performance you'd get from the best separate machines, it's well worth considering if you're short of space. We've given it Best Buy status and it knocks our current Best Buy, the AEG L16810, off top spot with a total test score

Washer-driers

MODEL

	Specification		Performance		Convenience	Score
	Price (£)	Maximum capacity (wash/dry) kg	Overall cleaning	Overall drying	Overall ease of use	(%)
1 Zanussi ZWD1480W	439	6/3	☆	○	☆	58
2 AEG L16810	550	6/3	☆	●	★	54
3 Hoover HNWF3135	450	5/5	○	●	☆	41

Could an exercise machine change

At this time of year the shops are full of exercise machines, making siren calls that promise the ease and convenience of exercising in your own home. But will they make you fitter, and will they encourage you to exercise?

To answer these questions, we gave seven volunteers the Best Buy exercise bikes and cross-trainers from

our summer test, which cost from £400 to £1,300 (see 'Go for gold', *Which?*, August 2004, p30). We asked them to use the machines at home for three months.

Our testers enjoyed the convenience of being able to exercise at home when they wanted. However, most thought that having the machine hadn't made them fitter or healthier,

You need plenty of space at home to fit in a cross-trainer like this one





of 58. The other machine we looked at, the Hoover HNW3135 fared less well in our tests.

Normally washer-driers can dry half the amount that they can wash – the Zanussi, for example, washes 6kg but can dry only 3kg at a time. Unusually for a washer-drier, the Hoover claims to be able to wash and dry the same weight of washing load: 5kg. But its drying performance with this load is very poor and it gets a ●. It's a reasonable washing machine, but doesn't match up to the Zanussi.

If washing performance is key and you're less fussed about drying performance (perhaps you want only occasional backup for using the washing line or the radiator), then our previous Best Buy, the AEG L16810, £550 from Comet and John Lewis, is still worth considering. Although its drying performance is worse than the Zanussi's, its overall cleaning performance is just as good. Both are average for reliability.

KEY



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or encouraged them to exercise more.

The biggest problem is that good-quality exercise machines simply take up too much space and don't provide varied enough exercise. A couple of testers in flats or terraced houses also worried that the noise would disturb neighbours.

A couple of users missed the gym's

encouraging environment – and the air conditioning.

Our testers' experience suggests that a single exercise machine isn't going to be the magic solution to your fitness worries. So, before splashing out on one, think about whether you have the space, time and motivation to make an exercise machine work for you.

New Dyson does the job

Our reviews of upright cleaners have been making depressing reading recently. Four uprights in our recent test were so poor that we labelled them 'Don't Buys' and we'd started to despair of finding one that could show good results across the board. Happily, Dyson's latest effort, the DC14, shows what a good upright can achieve.

The DC14 picks up dirt extremely well from all floor surfaces, and has a handy automatic feature for adjusting the height of the rollers, which means you can move from cleaning carpet to floorboards without any fiddling. These results, along with a longer-than-average supply cord, make it a good choice if you have large rooms to clean.

There are some useful new features, such as a 'debris slot' – a wider channel on the cleaning head to deal with bigger bits of dirt that can often be 'snowploughed' around the room. And the DC14 has 'telescope

reach' – an expanding tube that stretches so you can clean in awkward corners. This extra length aims to make cleaning stairs easier but we found the cleaning head a bit hard to control.

Overall, this is a great – albeit noisy – cleaner with a score that would make it a definite

recommendation. Unfortunately, our annual survey shows that Dyson's cleaners are unreliable so it isn't a Best Buy.

We've tested the All Floors version – widely available for £260 – but there are other models in the series that could give different results.



Vacuum cleaners

Vacuum cleaners		Price	Cleaning						Score
		(£)	Carpet	Laminate	Wood	Pet hair	Exhaust	Ease of use	(%)
MODEL									
1	Dyson DC14 All Floors	260	☆	★	★	○	★	○	65
2	Bosch BUC11700 GB Extraxx 17	100	○	☆	★	○	☆	○	55

TABLE NOTES

Price Lowest widely available high-street price

Exhaust How much dust escapes back out through the exhaust