

Clean sweep

Miele is the clear winner in our in-depth vacuum cleaner tests. We pick Best Buys from just £80 all the way up to £250

England international footballer Wayne Rooney says he can't fall asleep without the comforting hum of a vacuum cleaner in the background. Our latest tests reveal the quietest vacs – and which ones pick up the most dirt.

For this report we've tested 22 models ranging between £69 and £360 and found nine Best Buys. For the fifth test running, Miele is the top brand – five out of our six Best Buy cylinder cleaners are drawn from the company's range. Its rivals seem to have no answer to Miele's quiet, easy-to-use vacs and their brilliant

cleaning power on carpet, laminate and floorboards. The only other Best Buy cylinder vac is made by Bosch.

In recent years, few upright cleaners have performed well in our tests – they simply can't match the cleaning power and versatility of cylinders. That has all changed in 2006 and we've found a Sebo and two Dyson uprights that tick all the right boxes.

We'd be delighted if every vac was as good as our Best Buys, but in this test we found three models that are so poor we think all readers should give them a miss.

Miele is the top brand, with five out of six Best Buy cylinder cleaners

How we test

Our tests separate the Best Buys from the also-rans

The dirty carpet test

Our robot spreads 216 grams of dust over a carpet, grinds it in to mimic the effect of people walking on it and then each vac has to suck it up. Every model covers a distance of 288m during the test. We measure how much dust each sucks in when empty, part full and nearly full. The best, such as the Dyson DC15 The Ball can pick up 79 per cent of dust when nearly full. The worst, such as the Hoover Dust Manager TC5212, might collect only 38 per cent with an empty bag.

What you should look for



BAG OR BAGLESS?

Bagless vacs save you money as you don't have to buy bags, but emptying the dust canister can be messy



FILTERS

Vac filters need cleaning at least once a year. Those on this Miele S380, and the Miele S4210, S4510 and S5210 are particularly easy to get in and out

REACH

A long cord and hose are handy for cleaning stairs or if you're short of power sockets around the house. Of our current Best Buys, the Bosch BSG71800GB and Dyson DC14 All Floors have the longest reach



STORING

Their long hoses make cylinders harder to store than uprights, but some cylinders now have a clip to attach the nozzle to the body so the hose stays upright

ACCESSORIES

These nozzles and brushes are for cleaning upholstery and curtains or around the edges of skirting boards. With cylinders they are often stored on board but most upright models have external accessory kits



Upright or cylinder?

Both types of cleaner have strengths and weaknesses

■ UPRIGHT

Pros Better for removing pet hair; particularly good at cleaning large, clear surfaces.

Cons Harder to use on stairs; noisier than cylinders.

■ CYLINDER

Pros Better reliability than uprights; good under furniture and on stairs.

Cons Poor at removing pet hair unless motorised brush heads are provided; more difficult to store.

MEMBER BENEFIT

FREE website access

31 more vacuum cleaners

Which? members have free access to www.which.co.uk/vacuumcleaners which gives more details of these vacs and previously tested models.



1 CYLINDER

74% Miele S4510
£179

This high-scoring Best Buy is a small, mid-range cylinder model from Miele's S4 compact cleaner series. It's easy to move around the house and one of the best we've tried for cleaning stairs. This model is decent at cleaning carpets, too and is first class on wooden or laminate floors, leaving them virtually spotless. If you're a pet owner, you'll find the optional turbobrush head good for getting matted hairs off carpets. It's a cinch to empty and not too noisy either. The Miele S4510 is widely available online.

WE LIKE The specially shaped 'comfort' handle is designed to take pressure off your wrist.

Available Online **Bagless** No **Weight** 7.7kg
Reach 8.8 metres **Capacity** 2.3 litres



2 CYLINDER

74% Miele Cat & Dog TT 5000 £189

This is the specialist pet-hair cleaner in Miele's range. It's excellent at picking up discarded pet hairs with its turbobrush, is outstanding at cleaning wooden floors and pretty good on other surfaces, too. For a larger model (it's the heaviest Best Buy) it's easy to manoeuvre and it's also one of the quietest vacs. Our annual survey shows that Miele is one of the few brands with good reliability, so you're unlikely to suffer breakdowns. It's available from Argos and John Lewis.

WORTH KNOWING Picking up pet hair is much easier with the full-sized turbobrush than the standard nozzle.

Cheapest store Argos **Bagless** No **Weight** 9.1kg
Reach 9.8 metres **Capacity** 2.9 litres



3 CYLINDER

72% Miele S4210
£129

The Miele S4210 is the lightest Best Buy – making it perfect for negotiating stairs – and is one of the quietest, too. It has a smaller bag capacity than most of our other Best Buys but is easy to empty so that isn't a problem. Although it's a basic model, it leaves laminate and wooden floors spotless and does a decent job on carpets. It's not bad at picking up pet hair either, though it lacks a turbobrush (see 'Picking up cat and dog hair', below). The Miele S4210 is available from Comet and John Lewis.

WORTH KNOWING This one is £50 cheaper than the S4510.

Cheapest store John Lewis **Bagless** No **Weight** 6.6kg
Reach 8.7 metres **Capacity** 2.4 litres

The Miele S4210 is the lightest Best Buy

WHICH? BEST BUY

WHICH? BEST BUY

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Picking up cat and dog hair

We reveal which cleaner copes best with our four-footed friends

The owners of the 9.2 million cats and 6.7 million dogs in the UK will know the value of having a vac that can pick up hair. Pet hair is light and contains natural oils that make it stick to carpet, so strong suction and a brush are required to work it loose.

Uprights have motorised brush heads that

are better suited to lifting fur away from carpet fibres. Cylinders don't have motorised heads but some models have a turbobrush – a rotating brush which can help to loosen hair as the vac crosses the carpet.

We comb hair into a carpet to simulate a pet moulting, and time how

long it takes for each cleaner to suck it up. Best on test was the Miele Cat & Dog TT, which got all the hair up in 23 seconds with its turbobrush. Other top performers are shown in the chart, right. Worst performers (not shown) were the Dyson DC11 Allergy, Hoover Dust Manager TC5212, LG V-C6683HTU, Numatic James and Vax V-008U Performance.



Time in seconds for pet hair pick-up

Cylinders

Miele Cat & Dog TT	23
Miele S380	61
Miele S4510	75

Uprights

Hoover Dust Manager DM4493	26
Morphy Richards Pets	32
Dyson The Ball	39
LG V-FA282FTW	46
Sebo Felix 1 Premium	47
Dyson Ball Animal	52

**4 CYLINDER****70% Miele S380** £90

Don't be put off by its bright exterior – the S380 is about to get a colour makeover from yellow to blue to fit in with its more stylish brandmates. It's great at cleaning laminate and wooden floors and also performs well on carpet. The S380 scored well when it came to picking up pet hairs and retaining

WHICH? BEST BUY

allergens. The only drawback with this model is that it isn't very easy to manoeuvre around furniture, though it works fine on stairs.

Emptying is straightforward and hygienic. It's widely available online.

WORTH KNOWING This is the cheapest Miele Best Buy and a great choice if you don't want to spend more than £100.

Available Online Bagless No Weight 7.5kg
Reach 8.6 metres Capacity 2.7 litres

**5 CYLINDER****69% Miele S5210** £139

The S5210 is outstanding at retaining cat and dog allergens (see 'Jargon buster', below), so it's a good choice if this is a concern for you. It's particularly good at cleaning wooden and laminate floors, too. It's the most basic model in Miele's S5 series, so you don't get extras such as a turbobrush, but it still does a decent job on pet hair. Emptying it is quick, simple and hygienic and it's easy to use on stairs. It's available from Argos, Comet and John Lewis.

WHICH? BEST BUY

WE LIKE Models in Miele's S5 series include increased suction settings not found on cheaper models.

Cheapest store John Lewis Bagless No Weight 7.8kg
Reach 9.7 metres Capacity 3.1 litres

The Bosch is a great choice if you have wooden or laminate floors

**6 CYLINDER****64% Bosch BSG71800GB** £80

This Bosch is a great choice if you've just invested in a swish new home that is decked out with hard floors instead of traditional carpets. It's great at cleaning laminates and floorboards, and outstanding at retaining cat and dog allergens. This model does struggle more than our other Best Buys, though, to clean carpet or loosen pet hair. On the plus side, it does a good job on stairs, is quiet and the bag is easy to change when full. The BSG71800GB is widely available online.

WHICH? BEST BUY

WATCH OUT Confusingly, this cleaner is called the Bosch Formula Hygienixx in some shops.

Available Online Bagless No Weight 6.7kg
Reach 10 metres Capacity 2.6 litres

Jargon buster

We explain four key terms used by cleaner salesmen

■ CYCLONE ACTION

Made famous by Dyson, this uses airflow and filters to collect and separate dust without a bag. Apart from the Dysons, the only other model with a true cyclone action in our test is the LG V-FA282FTW. Other models attempt to replicate this effect using filters but aren't always as good.

■ TURBOBRUSH This is a motorised rotating brush for cylinder models which

is particularly helpful for tackling pet hair. Not all models come with one as standard, so check if there's one in the accessory kit.

■ HEPA AND S-FILTERS

Some models come with Hepa (high-efficiency particulate air) or S-class filters, which prevent allergens escaping. However, simply having one isn't good enough – it's also essential that it's fitted correctly.

■ ALLERGENS Allergens are substances that cause the human immune system to trigger and fight against them, causing an allergic reaction. Cat and dog allergen particles are often widely found in homes. We check the amount of cat and dog allergens retained by each vac. The best, such as the Bosch BSG71800GB, retain more than 99.5 per cent of these allergens.

Dyson's new deal

Five-year guarantee for new cleaners

Dyson cleaners often perform well in our tests but it's been some time since we've picked one as a Best Buy because of their poor reliability. This year 31 per cent of Dyson vacs up to six years old had needed a repair according to our research.

In July Dyson responded to criticism of its reliability by announcing a free five-year guarantee on upright and cylinder models bought in the UK from 27 July. Bosch and Miele offer only a free two-year guarantee.

One of the aims of our reliability surveys is to encourage firms to make improvements to products and services. We are pleased to see that Dyson has taken this action and have made two of its models Best Buys (see p44).



12 UPRIGHT

67% Dyson DC14 All Floors £250

The DC14 left wooden and laminate floors spotless. It's great for cleaning carpets, around corners and along walls but it's hard to use on stairs. Dyson's poor reliability in our latest survey is offset by its new five-year free guarantee (see p43) –

we make this our first Dyson Best Buy in recent memory. The DC14 is available from Comet, Currys and John Lewis. **WE LIKE A long ten-metre power cable means fewer irritating socket changes.**

Cheapest store Comet **Bagless** Yes **Weight** 8.3kg **Reach** 10 metres **Capacity** 2.8 litres

WHICH?
BEST
BUY



13 UPRIGHT

64% Dyson DC15 The Ball £250

The DC15 sits on a ball that is designed to improve mobility. In our tests it made light work of picking up dust on laminate and was a real star at removing pet hairs. Cleaning of floorboards and allergen retention was below par. For a bagless model, it's relatively straightforward to empty.

The DC15 is available at Argos and Comet. **WORTH KNOWING** Dyson's reliability is consistently below average in our annual survey, but the introduction of its free five-year guarantee means that this model is still rated a Best Buy.

Cheapest store Comet **Bagless** Yes **Weight** 7.5kg **Reach** 9.4 metres **Capacity** 3.2 litres

WHICH?
BEST
BUY



14 UPRIGHT

64% Sebo Felix 1 Premium £229

There's no doubt this vac has a retro look and feel, but beneath its quirky exterior lies a cleaner that's great at picking up dust from laminate floors and dealing with pet hair. Unusually for an upright, it's easy to manoeuvre and negotiates stairs superbly. It's good at getting into nooks and

crannies, too. On the minus side, it's noisy and less effective at cleaning wooden floors. It's available from John Lewis. **WE LIKE The main cleaning head can slide under furniture and the body can be detached for carrying.**

Cheapest store John Lewis **Bagless** No **Weight** 7.9kg **Reach** 9.9 metres **Capacity** 3.3 litres

WHICH?
BEST
BUY



Facts & scores

Inside information from our vacs testing team

Tool story

Rather than have lots of different accessories for upholstery and curtains, this Hoover has just one for all situations to save on space. Unfortunately its carpet cleaning was woeful in our tests.

Reach out

James is a brother of the iconic Henry cleaner. At 12.9 metres, James' power cable is the longest of all the vacs on test, but there's no assisted recoil feature.

Height adjustable

This Panasonic has a rotating brush which alters its height automatically to cope with surface changes. We weren't impressed by this feature as we found that it was poor at cleaning carpet and floorboards.

MODEL

CYLINDER

- 1 MIELE S4510^a
- 2 MIELE Cat & Dog TT 5000
- 3 MIELE S4210^a
- 4 MIELE S380
- 5 MIELE S5210
- 6 BOSCH BSG71800GB
- 7 KÄRCHER VC6300^b
- 8 LG V-C6683HTU
- 9 DYSON DC11 Allergy
- 10 HOOVER Dust Manager TC5212
- 11 NUMATIC James

UPRIGHTS

- 12 DYSON DC14 All Floors
- 13 DYSON DC15 The Ball
- 14 SEBO Felix 1 Premium
- 15 DYSON DC15 Ball Animal
- 16 HOOVER Dust Manager DM4493
- 17 LG V-FA282FTW
- 18 PANASONIC MCE4113
- 19 BISSELL LiftOff Spinpower-3760-E
- 20 HOOVER Purepower U3485
- 21 MORPHY RICHARDS 73362 Pets Bagless
- 22 VAX V-008U Performance

^a Motors are to be upgraded from 1,800W to 2,000W this



Which should you choose?

Best on a budget

MIELE S380 £90 online This Miele (4) scored only slightly worse in our tests than Best Buys that cost £30 to £100 more. It's a pretty basic machine but a match for most vacuuming jobs.

Best to clean stairs

MIELE S4210 £129 This model (3) is a lightweight cleaner that's easy to lift and good at picking up dust that has collected along walls or in tight spaces.

Best bagless cleaner

DYSON DC14 £250 This Dyson (12) has good all-round cleaning ability and is the best upright for cleaning wood floors. It is reasonably easy to empty, too.

Best for allergies

BOSCH BSG71800GB £80 online This inexpensive Bosch (6) trapped a particularly high proportion of allergens. Costlier alternatives include the Miele S4210 and S5210.

SPECIFICATION					WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE										SCORE %
PRICE (£)	WEIGHT (kg)	REACH (m)	CAPACITY (litre)	BAGLESS	RELIABILITY	CARPET	LAMINATE	WOODEN	PET HAIR	STAIRS	MOVING	EMPTYING/ CHANGING	ALLERGEN	NOISE	
179	7.7	8.8	2.3		good	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	74
189	9.1	9.8	2.9		good	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	74
129	6.6	8.7	2.4		good	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	72
90	7.5	8.6	2.7		good	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	70
139	7.8	9.7	3.1		good	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	69
80	6.7	10	2.6		average	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	64
200	9.3	10.2	3.2			★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	62
120	8.4	8.7	2.2			★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	57
289	9.2	9.4	2.1	✓	poor	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★	47
100	7.8	9.2	1.7			★	★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	47
69	6.6	12.9	3.3		average	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	★★	42
250	8.3	10	2.8	✓	poor	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	67
250	7.5	9.4	3.2	✓	poor	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★	★★	64
229	7.9	9.9	3.3		good	★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	64
360	9.5	8.2	2.6	✓	poor	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	57
100	7.9	6.6	1.9	✓	average	★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★	★	★★	49
200	10.6	9.5	1.8	✓	good	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★	★	★	48
123	7.6	7	3.7	✓	good	★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★	★	45
185	10.9	9.5	3.5	✓		★★	★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	★	40
70	7.1	6.6	3.4		average	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★	35
90	9.6	7.5	2.6	✓		★	★★	★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★	★	★	35
150	9.3	10.4	4.7	✓		★	★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★	★★	★★	★	★	33

autumn b Will be updated in November 2006

Don't Buy

We rarely find an upright vacuum cleaner that's good at every task we set it, but the performance of some models is so disappointing we'd recommend all *Which?* readers give them a miss. In our latest tests, the Hoover Purepower U3485 (20), Morphy Richards 73362 Pets Bagless (21) and Vax V-008U Performance (22) were all very poor at cleaning carpets and at retaining allergens. They were also noisy compared with most of the other models in our tests. The Hoover and Vax models were slightly redeemed by the decent results they produced cleaning wooden and laminate floors, but overall they have too many failings to be worth buying.

USING THE TABLE

We tested models from top brands. The more stars the better.

Specification

Price For Best Buys we give cheapest high-street prices. For others, we give a guide price. Online prices are in *italics*.
Weight Includes accessories. **Reach** From plug to nozzle.

Test performance

Carpet/Laminate/Wood How well the

vac picks up and retains dust on this surface. Models are penalised if they are particularly bad at picking up carpet dust.
Stairs How easy it is to use on stairs.

Emptying/Changing

How easy/hygienic it is to empty bags/canisters/change filters. **Allergen** How well a filter holds allergens. **Noise** The more

stars the quieter.

Score

Ignores price and is based on:
Cleaning/filter **55%**
Convenience **35%**
Noise/energy **10%**

Contacts

Bissell 0870 225 0109
www.bissell.com
Bosch 0870 240 0060
www.boschappliances.co.uk
Dyson 0870 527 5104
www.dyson.co.uk
Hoover
01685 721222
www.hoover.co.uk

Kärcher 01295 752177
www.karcher.co.uk
LG 0870 607 5544
www.lge.com
Miele
01235 554455
www.miele.co.uk
Morphy Richards
0870 060 2604
www.morphyrichards.co.uk

Numatic
01460 686000
www.numatic.com
Panasonic
0870 535 7357
www.panasonic.co.uk
Sebo 01494 465533
www.sebo.co.uk
Vax 0870 606 1248
www.vax.co.uk