



# Vacuum cleaners

## NEED TO KNOW

Two key choices await you when choosing a new vac. First, you need to decide between upright and cylinder. Your next choice is whether to opt for a bagless or bagged model.

### CYLINDERS

With cylinders, you push the nozzle around and drag the body of the machine behind you. Their main advantage is that it's easy to clean under and around furniture or on stairs. Cylinders also tend to be quieter than uprights and, according to our annual reliability survey, break down less. However, most cylinders struggle with cleaning pet hair unless motorised rotating brush heads are provided.

### UPRIGHTS

With uprights, the cleaning head is at the base of the machine and you push the entire vac along. Uprights are your best bet for pet hair but, in our tests, have been outclassed by cylinders in other cleaning tasks. Nevertheless, some people prefer pushing an upright when cleaning large expanses of floor.

### BAGLESS OR BAGGED

The obvious advantage of a bagless cleaner is that you don't have to buy dust bags. This saves pennies and earns you environmental brownie points. However, emptying the dust container can be messy and it's easy to spill dust – a big problem for allergy sufferers.

BEST ON TEST

1 Bosch CYLINDER

BEST BUYS

For this test, we've changed the way we decide total test scores. Ideally, every vac should be versatile enough to use on any floor surface. However, some homes have only wooden floors, some have carpets throughout and others have a mixture. So our Best Buys must now provide top-notch cleaning on at least one floor surface, with no significant flaws. They also need to be excellent at retaining the dust they pick up: lower-scoring models are often those with poor filtration that lets dust seep back into the room.

In addition, we award our Best Buy tag only to brands which have a good reputation in our annual reliability survey.

### CYLINDERS

The only brands which are consistently ticking all these boxes are Miele and Bosch. Their high standards mean that few competitors have joined them in recent years' Best Buy line-ups.

First up is one of two models from Bosch. The highly impressive burgundy-coloured **Bosch (1)** gives great results on wooden floors and doesn't disappoint on carpet or laminate, either. As a 'ProPets' model, it comes with a handy turbo brush accessory: a rotating brush head which is great for picking up pet hair.

The cleaner is really easy to use, too. Changing bags and filters is quick and easy and manoeuvring the appliance on stairs is a breeze. It's not as good as other cleaners at retaining

### FILTERS

Most vacuum cleaners, including this Bosch, have two filters: one to protect the motor from getting blocked, the other to prevent dust particles escaping through the exhaust. We change the filters before each test to ensure optimum performance. At home, you need to change or clean filters regularly (above) – at least annually – to ensure that the cleaner works efficiently. Spare filters are often included in replacement packs of bags – manufacturers' or specialist websites are another good source.



allergens but, that aside, there's little to fault with this machine. What's more, it's a great bargain at £129 from John Lewis.

The **Miele (2)** is top of the range in the S4 compact series, from which we recommend three Best Buys. This version has superior features such as an optional turbo brush head. This head helps the vac do a great job on all floor surfaces and, like the Bosch (1), it sucks up pet hair a treat. It's great on carpets, but first class on wooden or laminate floors, leaving them virtually spotless.

You'll enjoy using this machine, too. Miele has added a new specially shaped 'comfort' handle to this version – designed to help you steer the floorhead and take pressure off your wrist. Meanwhile, its compact size helps make it one of the best we've tried on stairs.

In elegant 'polar ice' shade, this Miele (2) costs £165 from Miller Brothers or online.

Slightly bigger than the compact range, the **Miele (3)** is another machine for the company to feel proud of. It's the entry-level model in Miele's S5 series and offers excellent all-round cleaning capabilities, being particularly proficient on wooden and laminate floors. As

**BEST ON TEST**

## ACCESSORIES

As well as for cleaning floors, you might also want to use your vacuum cleaner on upholstery or curtains. And although most vacs clean very close to the edge of a room, it's amazing how many specks of dirt lurk by skirting boards. Happily, most vacs have handy extra nozzles and brushes to use in awkward areas. The combination provided with this Miele is typical: a furniture nozzle, dusting brush and a crevice nozzle. They're all cleverly stored inside the machine but you can also clip them to the hose for easier access.



**Miele**  
S4510  
300 ... 1800 W

**2 Miele**  
CYLINDER

**BEST BUY**

**3 Miele**  
CYLINDER

**BEST BUY**

**4 Miele**  
CYLINDER

**BEST BUY**

**5 Miele**  
CYLINDER

it's the most basic model, it doesn't have fancy extras such as a turbo brush but it still did a pretty good job on pet hair. It's outstanding at retaining cat and dog allergens if this is a concern for you. This cleaner, in sophisticated black, costs £139 from Comet and John Lewis.

With its 'corn yellow' colouring, the **Miele (4)** is certainly less subtly shaded and lacks the stylish revamped look of its brandmates. This is Miele's self-declared most basic model but, with fantastic cleaning results across the board, it has all the brand's classic hallmarks. And it's a stupendously good bargain at just £89 online.

Next up is the lemon-yellow **Miele (5)**, at £119 from Comet and John Lewis. This is the entry-level model in the S4 range – it lacks the dusting brush accessory and has a standard, not a turbo, brush head. It's no slouch, though, leaving laminate and wooden floors speck free and doing a good job on carpets as well. Pet hair is more of a challenge as this machine has no turbo brush, but it copes better than many cylinders. What's more, it's the quietest of the Miele family.

The second **Bosch (6)** doesn't have a turbo brush, so can't quite

**BEST BUY**

**6 Bosch**  
CYLINDER

**BEST BUY**

**7 Miele**  
CYLINDER



match the success on carpets and with pet hair as the ProPets (1) version. It is, however, better at retaining allergens and gets fantastic results on laminate and wooden floors. Otherwise, both Bosch Best Buys are similar, with unusually quiet motors and a helpful carry handle. This version comes in dark blue and is attractively cheap at just £90 from Argos.

Finally, for £156 from Miller Brothers, you can buy the **Miele (7)** – the parquet version of the popular S4 range. This machine includes a separate brush for cleaning parquet. The parquet brush has soft rollers and brushes designed not to damage delicate floors. It's great on carpet, too, and copes fine with pet hair, so is far more versatile than its name implies.

## UPRIGHTS

It's been some time since we've had a Best Buy upright to recommend. The **Sebo (22)** is certainly a quirky option, with carpet-sweeper looks firmly stuck in the 1950s. If you don't fancy the navy colour shown, perhaps the alternative burgundy and cream check or orange and purple 'fun' version are more your bag. But ignore this vac's odd exterior, as its internal workings are pretty impressive. Its main strength is on laminate but it's also a real star at cleaning pet hair from carpet. And unusually for an upright, it negotiates stairs admirably. You can also slide it under furniture and detach the main cleaning head to carry round the suction unit. All this, plus Sebo's top-notch reputation for reliability. It's £229 from John Lewis.

Our table also includes two excellent uprights from Dyson – models 20 and 21. Both are great cleaners but our annual survey shows that Dyson cleaners are unreliable, so we can't make either model a Best Buy.

## DON'T BUY

Few cylinder cleaners are universally good at all tasks but some are a poor bet for any job. The Dirt Devil (17) is very poor on all surfaces while the Panasonic (18) and Proline (19) performed well only on laminate floors. While none is too pricey, we don't think you should buy them.

## 30 more vacuum cleaners on test

The main table shows all newly tested vacuum cleaners as well as Best Buys and

models from our previous reports that are still available on the high street.

There are a further 30 models plus answers to frequently asked questions, and more information, in our online guide: see [www.which.co.uk/vacuumcleaners](http://www.which.co.uk/vacuumcleaners)

Model	Price (£)	Pet hair removal	Score (%)
Bissell Lift-Off TM/3750E	148	☆	49
Sebo Automatic X4 Extra	190	★	47
Electrolux HiLight Z2915	180	☆	38

**More vacs** Several cleaners in our latest test are good at cleaning pet hair but many struggle with it. The table above shows three other uprights that are worth considering if your carpets are regularly furred-up. Online prices are in *italics*.

*Last report October 2005*

BEST BUY

## UPRIGHTS AND RELIABILITY

In our recent tests, we've struggled to find Best Buy uprights. In technical tests only models from Dyson have done well – a brand that fares badly in our annual reliability survey. This upright, however, is from Sebo – a brand that's been in our above-average category for brand reliability for several years. And it's the second most popular brand of upright, with nearly 70 per cent of owners happy to recommend it.

## Vacuum cleaners

### CYLINDER

- 1 Bosch BSG72025GB ProPets
- 2 Miele S4510
- 3 Miele S5210
- 4 Miele S380
- 5 Miele S4210
- 6 Bosch BSG 71810 Formula
- 7 Miele Parquet & Co
- 8 Numatic Henry Xtra HVX200-22
- 9 Bosch BSG 61822GB Pro Parquet Plus
- 10 Electrolux Twin Clean Cyclonic Z8240
- 11 Dyson DC08 TW Carpetpro + Allergy
- 12 Dyson DC08 Origin
- 13 Air Rider
- 14 Dirt Devil DD2820 X3
- 15 Morphy Richards IQ Allergy Vac 71051
- 16 Morphy Richards 73172
- 17 Dirt Devil DD2404
- 18 Panasonic MC-E6003K
- 19 Proline VC 300

### UPRIGHT

- 20 Dyson DC15 The Ball
- 21 Dyson DC14 All Floors
- 22 Sebo Felix 1 Premium
- 23 Dyson DC03
- 24 LG VFA272FTR
- 25 Dirt Devil DD9605X3
- 26 Panasonic MC-E4101
- 27 Panasonic MC-E3001
- 28 Electrolux Z2911A HiLight Pet Lover
- 29 Proaction 405/2827
- 30 Vax VS-19 Swift
- 31 Hoover The One Touch
- 32 Morphy Richards 73322 Pets

22 Sebo UPRIGHT

## KEY



## SCORE

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

## USING THE TABLE

We've tested new and best-selling models from popular brands, plus unusual new releases such as the AirRider hovercraft vac (13).

## Specification

Price For Best Buys we give the cheapest widely available high-street price as we went to press. Prices for other models are a guide to what you can expect to

pay. Online prices are in *italics*.

**Weight** Includes accessories.

**Reach** Distance from plug to cleaning head.

## Cleaning

**Carpet/Laminate/Wooden** How well the vac picks up and retains dust from these surfaces.

**Pet hair** Compares how quickly the vac can collect pet hair from carpets.

## Convenience

**Stairs** How easy vac is to use on stairs. **Moving** How easy vac is to move around. **Emptying/changing** A ★ is given where it's easy, quick and hygienic to empty bags or containers and to change filters.

## Environment

**Allergen** How well the filter retains pet allergens. **Noise** The higher the rating, the quieter the vac.

Specification					Cleaning				Convenience			Environment		Score
Price (£)	Weight (kg)	Reach (m)	Capacity (litres)	Bagless	Carpet	Laminate	Wooden	Pet hair	Stairs	Moving	Emptying/changing	Allergen	Noise	(%)
129	7.4	10	2.7		☆	☆	★	★	☆	☆	★	●	☆	71
165	7.7	8.8	2.3		☆	★	★	☆	★	☆	★	★	○	71
139	7.8	9.7	3.1		☆	★	★	○	☆	●	★	★	○	69
89	7.5	8.6	2.7		☆	★	★	☆	☆	●	★	☆	○	67
119	6.6	8.7	2.4		☆	★	★	○	★	○	★	★	☆	67
90	6.8	10.3	2.5		○	★	★	○	☆	○	★	○	☆	66
156	7.1	8.8	2.4		☆	★	★	○	☆	☆	☆	●	○	66
94	9.2	13	4.7		○	☆	○	○	☆	★	☆	●	☆	60
100	6.2	8.9	2.3		○	★	★	○	☆	○	★	○	○	58
180	10	12.8	2	✓	○	★	★	●	☆	★	☆	●	○	57
280	8.9	9.8	2.1	✓	○	★	★	○	☆	☆	☆	★	●	54
200	8.2	9.5	2.2	✓	○	☆	★	●	☆	☆	☆	☆	●	49
192	7.9	9.8	4.5	✓	●	★	●	●	○	☆	○	●	○	44
90	7.8	11.3	3.7		●	★	☆	●	☆	○	○	●	●	43
117	9.5	8.3	3.2	✓	●	○	○	●	○	☆	☆	●	●	42
70	7.3	7.8	2.3	✓	●	○	●	●	☆	★	☆	○	●	41
33	4.6	7.1	2.2	✓	●	●	●	●	★	☆	○	●	●	39
60	5	7.7	3.4	✓	●	★	○	●	☆	★	○	●	●	39
20	4.8	7.3	1.6		●	☆	●	●	☆	○	○	●	●	31
319	7.5	9.4	3.2	✓	☆	★	★	★	●	☆	○	●	●	71
258	8.3	10	2.8	✓	★	★	★	○	●	○	○	○	●	65
229	7.9	9.9	3.3		○	★	●	★	☆	★	○	○	●	64
217	6.8	8	2.3	✓	○	★	●	○	●	★	○	●	●	56
134	10.6	9.6	1.9	✓	●	○	★	○	☆	☆	☆	●	●	55
100	9.1	9.5	4	✓	○	☆	●	○	○	☆	☆	●	●	53
100	7.2	7	3.9	✓	●	☆	●	○	●	★	○	●	●	49
70	6.9	7	4.7		●	○	●	☆	●	☆	○	●	●	49
70	7.3	7.6	3		○	☆	●	☆	●	★	○	●	●	48
50	9.2	7.6	3.9	✓	●	☆	●	○	●	★	○	●	●	47
70	6.3	7.6	4	✓	●	☆	●	○	●	★	●	●	●	46
200	9.2	9.2	4.8	✓	●	☆	☆	●	○	●	○	●	●	41
80	8.2	7.4	2.7	✓	●	○	●	★	●	★	○	●	●	40