

Vacuum cleaners

NEED TO KNOW

When choosing a new vacuum cleaner you need to decide between a cylinder or an upright. Both types have their strengths and weaknesses.

CYLINDERS

Cylinder models are popular because they cope well on all surfaces. They are also easier to lift and carry. A cheap cylinder can make a useful second vac to keep on the upper floors of a house. They are better for rooms with lots of furniture, where the nozzle moves easily underneath low items.

UPRIGHTS

In general, uprights are better on pet hair because of their rotating motorised brush heads. Some people find uprights easier to use on large, open areas because they prefer their pulsing action to dragging the body of the vac behind the hose as you do with a cylinder. However, we find that they're not good for stair cleaning because they are heavy and unwieldy to use in this area.

ALLERGIES

Regular vacuuming helps control dust-mite allergy. But it's important to choose a cleaner that retains its contents. Some have poor construction or exhaust filtration, which allows tiny particles to escape into the room and wreak havoc for allergy sufferers. See the 'Allergen' column in the table for models that are good at retaining dust.

BEST BUYS

A good vac is versatile enough to clean on all surfaces. However, carpet is the hardest to clean, so our Best Buys normally do well on this surface and have no major weakness in our other rigorous tests. Most of our Best Buys also retain the dust they suck up so that it doesn't escape from the exhaust.

CYLINDERS

The **Miele (1)** delivers all you need from a vacuum cleaner. It's a stylish little black

number that's good on any surface, particularly hard floors. Quiet, easy to use and reasonably priced at £119 from John Lewis, this vac is an excellent choice.

Not far behind is another **Miele (2)**, at £275 from Comet. Its powerful motor and good brushes and filtration combine to give superb cleaning. In the next few months the Miele S571 (1) and Miele Xtra Power 2300 (2) will be replaced by the S210 and Automatic TT 5000

respectively. We'll let you know in future reports how good they are.

The **Bosch (3)**, £118 online, is excellent at picking up dirt from carpet and floorboards. It's also good at retaining dust allergens. There are a couple of areas where this model is a letdown – it's far from the best at cleaning up pet hair or keeping laminate floors dust free.

Electrolux introduced the first cylinder vacuum cleaners in 1912 and now it's broken



WASHABLE BAGS

This Miele uses disposable bags, but some vacs, such as the Dirt Devil (12) and Hoover (13), come with reusable bags.

Once the bag is full it can be emptied, then washed and put back in the cleaner. Generally, bags should be washed by hand in cool water and left to dry naturally, but it's a dirty job.



FILTERS

Filters need to be changed or cleaned regularly to ensure that a vac works efficiently. Many cleaners, like this Electrolux, use filters which can be washed and reused. Some filters can be cleaned by simply shaking out, but others need to be rinsed in lukewarm water.



BAGGED OR BAGLESS

All of our Best Buys, such as this Bosch, are bagged models – despite the bagless revolution sweeping through cleaner ranges. The bagless vacs we've tested are emptied using various methods, based on removing the canister from the cleaner's body and unclipping either the lid or bottom of the canister to dispense dust. You save money because you don't buy replacement bags, but most bagless models we've looked at are messy to empty, as it's easy to spill dust – causing problems for allergy sufferers.



the stranglehold of Miele and Bosch models on our Best Buys. The **Electrolux (4)**, £299 from House of Fraser or independent retailers, is excellent on laminate floors and pet hair. This nippy vac is the only Best Buy that's excellent at stopping dust and allergens escaping from the exhaust, making it a good choice for people with allergies. Despite its

small size, its bag holds a respectable 2.3 litres of dust before it needs to be emptied.

A fairly lightweight and quiet cleaner, the **Bosch (5)**, £100 at Miller Brothers, shows its real strength on wood and laminate floors – where it removes almost all dust. However, it's not the best for allergy sufferers.

The **Miele (6)**, £119 from John Lewis, gives this brand

its third Best Buy. This lightweight cleaner is impressive in most of our tests. Its compact size makes it ideal for small homes.

UPRIGHTS

Most of the uprights we've tested can't match the cleaning ability of the best cylinders, so we have no Best Buys. The only upright that cleans as well is the Dyson (18),

£259 from Miller Brothers. Sitting on a yellow ball, this Dyson is a whizz when it comes to sucking up dust from carpet and laminate. It's also better than cylinders on pet hair. The only surface it struggles on is floorboards. However, our annual survey shows that Dyson cleaners are unreliable, so we can't make it a Best Buy.

VACUUM CLEANERS



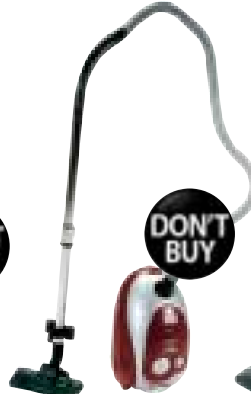
10 Hoover
CYLINDER



11 Morphy
Richards
CYLINDER



12 Dirt Devil
CYLINDER



13 Hoover
CYLINDER



14 Vax
CYLINDER



15 Panasonic
CYLINDER



17 Proline
CYLINDER



22 Panasonic
UPRIGHT



23 Proaction
UPRIGHT



24 Vax
UPRIGHT



25 Morphy
Richards
UPRIGHT

DON'T BUY

Almost half the models we tested are Don't Buys – these are the vacuum cleaners we'd recommend you steer clear of. They have major failings in one or more of the key areas we look at.

Some vacuum cleaners are atrocious at picking up dust from carpet. For example, the Goblin (16) picks up only 45 per cent of dust even when the bag is empty – the Best Buy Electrolux (4), by

comparison, collects over 75 per cent of dust from carpet. Other vacuum cleaners allow too much dust to pass through them without retaining it in the bag or canister.

Disappointingly, three vacuum cleaners – the cylinder Hoover (13) and cylinder Proline (17) and the upright Morphy Richards (25) – were poor at both picking up dust and retaining it.

USING THE TABLE

We tested new and biggest-selling models from popular brands. In this report we've focused mainly on bagged models, plus a few vacs that you can pick up for around £50 or less.

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 should expect to pay. Online prices are in *italics*. **Weight** Includes accessories. **Reach** Distance from plug to cleaning head.

Cleaning

Carpet/Wooden floor/Laminate floor How well the vac picks up and retains dust from these surfaces. **Pet hair** How efficient the vac is at picking up pet hair from carpet.

Filter

Allergen How effectively the filter retains cat, dog and dust allergens.

Convenience

Stairs How easy it is to use the vac on stairs. **Moving** How easy it is to manoeuvre the vac. **Noise** How noisy the vac is – the higher the rating, the quieter it is.

SCORE

This ignores price. Poor cleaning or filter ratings cap the total score. For example, the upright Morphy Richards (25) scores low overall because of its poor filter rating.

Cleaning/filter	55%
Convenience	35%
Noise and energy use	10%

KEY

★	☆	○	◐	●
Best				Worst
Best Buy				Don't Buy

Vacuum cleaners

CYLINDER

- 1 Miele S571
- 2 Miele Xtra Power 2300
- 3 Bosch BSG 82000GB Ergomaxx
- 4 Electrolux Z0 6352 Oxy 3 System
- 5 Bosch BSG 71810GB Formula
- 6 Miele S4210
- 7 Miele Parquet & Co
- 8 Sebo Airbelt K3 Vulcano
- 9 Bosch BSG-61822GB Pro Parquet Plus
- 10 Hoover Octopus TC 205
- 11 Morphy Richards Allergy 70047
- 12 Dirt Devil DD 2820 X3
- 13 Hoover Sprint TW 1750
- 14 Vax V-064 Astrata
- 15 Panasonic MCE8021
- 16 Goblin Aztek 70246
- 17 Proline VC 300

UPRIGHT

- 18 Dyson DC15 The Ball All Floors
- 19 Sebo Felix 1 Premium
- 20 Electrolux Z2911A HiLight Pet Lover
- 21 Dyson DC 03
- 22 Panasonic MCE4101
- 23 Proaction Cyclonic Upright 405/2827
- 24 Vax VS-19 Swift
- 25 Morphy Richards Pets Bagless



16 Goblin
CYLINDER

Nozzle holders

Most vacs come packed with extra nozzles, so clever storage solutions are needed. The smaller models, such as the Miele (7) (below left) and Hoover (10) (below right), have their extra nozzles clipped on to the tube. This isn't always convenient, though. The nozzle holders can be bulky and may need to be removed before you can vacuum in tight spaces or under and around furniture. It's also annoying to have to go and fetch

the nozzle holder if you've detached it and stored it somewhere for safekeeping.



30 more vacuum cleaners

The main table shows all newly tested Best Buys as well as ones we've found in previous tests – but there are 30 other vacuum cleaners from those previous tests that can still be found in the shops. You can see the results for them on

www.which.co.uk/vacuumcleaners

More vacs We exclude models from our Best Buys if the brand has below-average reliability. So we have results for three Dysons that clean well but aren't Best Buys because they fare poorly in our annual reliability survey. Here are the best models with poor reliability data.

Model	Price (£)	Type	Score (%)
Dyson DC07 Animal	248	Upright	69
Dyson DC14 All Floors	240	Upright	65
Dyson DC11 All Floors Telescope	199	Cylinder	64

Last report April 2005. Online prices are in *italics*

Specification					Cleaning				Filter	Convenience			Score
Price (£)	Weight (kg)	Reach (m)	Capacity (litres)	Bagless	Carpet	Wooden floor	Laminate floor	Pet hair	Allergen	Stairs	Moving	Noise	(%)
119	7.8	9.8	2.4		☆	★	★	○	○	☆	☆	☆	70
275	9	9.9	2.7		☆	★	★	○	☆	●	★	○	69
118	8.7	8.2	2.7		☆	★	○	●	☆	○	○	○	67
299	9.2	11.9	2.3		☆	★	★	○	★	☆	★	☆	67
100	6.9	10.2	2.6		○	★	★	○	●	○	○	☆	64
119	6.6	8.8	2.3		☆	★	★	○	○	☆	☆	☆	61
150	7.1	8.8	2.4		☆	★	★	○	●	☆	☆	○	60
220	8	8.7	2.1		○	★	★	○	●	○	☆	○	48
180	6.2	8.9	2.3		○	★	★	○	○	☆	○	○	40
200	10.5	15.7	1	✓	●	☆	★	●	☆	●	☆	○	33
90	6.6	8.8	2.2		●	●	★	●	●	○	○	●	27
100	7.8	11.3	3.7		●	☆	★	●	●	☆	○	●	26
50	6	7	1.9		●	●	☆	●	●	☆	○	●	24
80	8.6	8.3	2.7	✓	●	●	★	●	●	○	☆	●	24
90	7.3	9.2	3.9	✓	●	●	★	●	●	☆	☆	●	21
40	5.7	7.8	2.7		●	●	○	●	●	☆	○	●	20
20	4.8	7.3	1.6		●	●	☆	●	●	☆	○	●	18
259	7.5	9.4	3.2		☆	●	★	★	●	●	☆	●	67
299	7.9	9.9	3.3		○	●	★	★	○	☆	★	●	52
70	7.3	7.6	3		○	●	☆	☆	●	●	★	●	38
217	6.8	8	2.2	✓	○	●	★	○	●	●	★	●	35
100	7.2	7	3.9	✓	●	●	☆	○	●	●	★	●	31
50	9.2	7.6	3.9	✓	●	●	☆	○	●	●	★	●	29
60	6.3	7.6	4	✓	●	●	☆	○	●	●	★	●	20
90	8.2	7.4	2.7	✓	●	●	○	★	●	●	★	●	15