

Great-value washers

You don't have to blow your budget to get a top-performing washing machine – we've found eight fantastic models for under £500

Excellent cleaning usually comes with a high price tag, but we've been on the lookout for washing machines that will give great results without cleaning out your wallet.

Though it's easy to pay more than £600 for a Best Buy washer, the four Best Buys featured in our table can all be found for less than £500, including the Whirlpool AWO/D 5526, which is available for just £250.

other. Still, there are similarly impressive models hot on the heels of our Best Buys.

One model that stands out from the lower-priced range is the £300 Candy CM1146 (9). It doesn't quite score highly enough to become a Best Buy – its cotton program is long and there's no variable spin speed – but it cleans well on both the cotton and easy-care washes.

A high-scoring washing machine can only be a Best Buy if the manufacturer is rated average or above-average for reliability in our annual survey. This year LG washing machines dropped to below average for reliability, so they cannot be Best Buys even though some of the machines are very good at cleaning.

We know who makes John Lewis washing machines, and the manufacturer has average reliability in our survey, so they can be Best Buys. See p40 for the results of our latest survey.

To find an energy-saving detergent to put into your new cost-saving machine, turn to our laundry detergents report on page 54.

Go for the Best Buy Whirlpool AWO/D 5526 instead of our most expensive Best Buy, the Miele W 1614 (see online box), and you'll save around £350.

It produces excellent cleaning results on cotton, though the spin isn't quite as good at removing water as many of the other Best Buys.

We test each machine's 40°C cotton and easy-care (or synthetic) programs for cleaning, rinsing and spinning. Those featured at the top of our table produce excellent cleaning results on one program and prove extremely good on the



Clothes dogged by smells?

We tested Samsung's AirRefresh program – with help from a canine friend

This program on the WF8702RSS (3) and WF8804RPA (7) aims to freshen clothes without using detergent or water.

To test it, we sprayed two shirts with perfume and deodorant, then put one through the AirRefresh cycle. In a second test, Tomahawk the Husky spent eight hours in the presence of three woolly jumpers. One was then washed on the wool wash, one on AirRefresh, and the last kept unlaundered.



Our 11 assessors found the program had little impact on the perfume and deodorant scents, but it substantially diminished the 'parfum de husky'.

AirRefresh is also claimed to be suitable for some dry-clean only clothes. The two dry-clean only jackets we tested came out OK, if a little creased, but the movement in the machine's drum may cause bobbling.



Which? online Washing machines

Great washers for all budgets

If your budget is bigger, we've got reviews of 182 washing machines to suit all different needs and pockets at www.which.co.uk/washing_machines. For example, the Best Buy Miele W 1614 gets clothes spotless on both the 40°C cotton and easy-care programs, and rinses better than most. If you have a large family, the Whirlpool SCW1012 holds a massive 10kg – the largest drum capacity we've tested – so there's plenty of space for the family's laundry. However, both of these models will set you back around £600.

1 FREESTANDING **71%** Zanussi ZWF16581 £399

Water and energy efficiency are excellent for cottons and good on the easy-care cycle, so the ZWF16581 could be a good choice for those who have a water meter. Cleaning is excellent on the cotton program.

It features Zanussi's Jetsystem technology, which automatically adjusts water and energy to the amount of washing in each load.

There's a delayed-start setting and a useful night-wash program that holds the wash in

rinse water without spinning, so you can benefit from night-rate electricity without waking the family with the spin cycle. There's also an auto half-load feature that will save energy if you're not filling the drum.

WE FOUND Zanussi's Jetsystem used slightly less water than the 40°C cotton wash test, but increased the program time by a few minutes.

Available John Lewis **Capacity** 7kg **Spin speed** 1600RPM **Energy label** AAA **Delay start** Yes **Extra rinse** Yes



6 FREESTANDING **69%** John Lewis JLWM1604 £499

Performing well in most of our tests, this John Lewis machine is outstanding on the cotton wash, and effective on easy care. The rinse cycle is not so successful, so owners with sensitive skin may find they need to run extra rinses.

The spin cycle is reasonable at removing water from clothes, but it's noisy compared with the quiet wash, and could become irritating if constantly within earshot.

Excellent water efficiency coupled with an economic use of energy keep the running costs of this model down. It's easy to use, but general maintenance, such as emptying the lint filter, is not straightforward.

WORTH KNOWING This machine has an abundance of program options including soaking and a 14-minute quick wash.

Available Exclusive to John Lewis **Capacity** 7kg **Spin speed** 1600RPM **Energy label** AAA **Delay start** Yes **Extra rinse** Yes



Which should you choose?

If you need your laundry in a hurry or want a quiet machine, one of these could be for you



Nice and quiet

LG F1403FD £550

As well as being one of the quietest models, this LG (2) cleans brilliantly on the 40°C cotton program, and offers a great combination of low water and energy use. With a 9kg drum, it would suit families.



Best for speedy laundry

Indesit WIB111 £197

This 5kg budget-priced machine (14) marries good cleaning and rinsing with relatively short program times. Water consumption is reasonably low, though it's rather noisy on the wash and spin cycles.

23 BUILT-IN 69% Zanussi ZWI1125 £454

This built-in Zanussi produces stunning cleaning results on the 40°C easy-care wash, and it's good on the cotton wash, too.

Rinsing performance is reasonable overall, and the cotton rinse is better than most machines on test.

Program times are average and, aside from the usual wash programs, it includes a delayed-start function, easy-iron option and variable spin speed. The spin is fairly quiet compared with other

machines, and removes plenty of water on the easy-care program.

The machine is easy to use, but the lack of LCD screen means you can't tell how long a program has left to run.

WE LIKE For the second year running, Zanussi has received above-average washing machine reliability in our annual reliability survey.

Available Online Capacity 6kg Spin speed 1200RPM Energy label AAB Delay start Yes Extra rinse Yes



5 FREESTANDING 68% Whirlpool AWO/D 5526 £250

This budget-priced machine cleans cottons exceptionally well at 40°C, and does a sterling job on synthetics.

Energy and water consumption are low on the cotton program and reasonable on easy care, but wash and spin cycles are noisy, so this machine may be better suited to a utility room than an open-plan kitchen.

It includes delayed-start and rinse-hold options as well as an intensive rinse for those with sensitive skin.

The '6th Sense' technology in the machine is designed to reduce water consumption and wash duration, but compared with other machines with low water consumption, we didn't notice any marked difference.

WORTH KNOWING Although this is a 6kg machine, in the instructions the maximum recommended load for a 40°C cotton wash is only 5kg.

Available Argos Capacity 6kg Spin speed 1200RPM Energy label AAB Delay start Yes Extra rinse Yes



Energy and water

Cut your bills by choosing an efficient machine

We measure water and energy use per kilogram of laundry, so machines with a large drum aren't unfairly penalised for using more water. For example, the Beko WM5100W uses 23.1 litres of water per kilogram on the easy-care wash, whereas the Bosch WAE24363GB uses 12.1 litres per kilogram.

If you did two easy-care washes a week, the difference in annual cost might only be around £5, but the difference in water use could be enough for 23 baths.

The Beko produced the better easy-care cleaning results, but that doesn't mean all machines using more water clean better. The LG F1403FD cleans as well as the Beko on the easy-care program, but can hold 2kg more washing and uses 7 litres less water.



DESIGN VS FUNCTION

These machines may look stylish, but ditching style for substance could save you £200

If you're after a designer look, you might be tempted by the Maytag MAF9062AES or Smeg WMFAB16. Both have additional doors covering the port-hole door, and the Smeg is available in cream (WMFAB16P) or pink (WMFAB16RO). Both clean well, but the Maytag's standard rinse isn't great.



The cheapest of these machines costs £745 – a high price to pay for design when you can find better, if less stylish, models for at least £450 less.



GREAT SAVINGS WITH HUGHES DIRECT

Hughes Direct is offering Which? members an exclusive discount on one of our Best Buy washing machines up until 28 February 2009, offering the Zanussi ZWF16581 for £314.99 (delivery will be £25). For more details about this offer and other member-only discounts from Hughes Direct, log on to www.hughesdirect.co.uk/which or call 01473 321883. This offer is subject to availability. Each

month Which? members can take advantage of the great deals offered by Hughes Direct. All goods are guaranteed to be a minimum of 10% below high street prices published in Which? product reports and if you find the same product cheaper elsewhere (including delivery) within seven days of purchase, Hughes Direct promises to refund 110% of the difference.

Worth considering

These models didn't quite make the grade as Best Buys, but they still performed well in our tests, and all cost less than £450



BOSCH WAE28467 EXXCEL £423

This model manages consistently good washes on both the cotton and easy-care cycles, which are followed up with a pretty thorough rinse. It has excellent energy and water economy on a cotton load, but is less efficient on easy-care loads.

INDESIT WIXL143 £224

This Indesit's cotton wash is excellent and the cotton rinse is also good. The easy-care wash is OK, but the rinse on this cycle is sub-par. The spin cycle is decent, but let down by the performance when drying cottons. It's also rated below average for reliability.

JOHN LEWIS JLWM1203 £329

The JLWM1203 is impressive when it comes to cleaning. The easy-care rinse is reasonable, though the cotton rinse isn't as good. There's a typical selection of programs including woollens, handwash and a 30-minute quick wash.

WHIRLPOOL AWO/R4205 £199

This Whirlpool washes well, but it's let down by poor rinsing and lacks some of the extra features found on more expensive machines. It's also noisy throughout the whole of the cycle. Water and energy efficiency are excellent on the cotton program, and not bad on easy care.

Maintenance

Fight the mould with our straightforward tips

Moisture encourages the appearance of mould, so it's not uncommon to see little black blobs in the detergent tray or around the door seal of your washing machine. This has been associated with frequently running cool washes, but regularly washing at 40°C may still not be hot enough to keep mould away.

Running a maintenance wash of 60°C or higher once a month will help to clean out the machine, and using a detergent that contains bleach might help to kill bacteria.

Remove and clean the detergent tray and wipe round the rubber ring with a light bleach cleaner to help remove black mould that's already appeared.



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www.boschappliances.co.uk
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www.maytag.co.uk

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www.smeguk.com
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www.hotpoint.co.uk
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www.hoover.co.uk
0870 950 2943

www.aeg-electrolux.co.uk
0870 535 0350

www.candy-domestic.co.uk
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www.neff.co.uk
0870 240 0080

Laundry labels

Confused about washing symbols on your clothes? We explain what they mean



HANDWASHING

Wash the item by hand at 40°C or lower. The machine handwash program is gentler than a normal wash, but washing by hand is still kinder to fabrics. With very delicate items, soaking is the best option.



WASHING

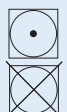
The bars underneath the tub

refer to rinsing and spinning. If there are no bars, the garment can be spun and rinsed as normal. One bar indicates that the spin speed should be reduced. Two bars means the clothes need a mild wash action and you should use a slightly smaller load than usual, but they can be spun and rinsed normally.



BLEACHING

A triangle means you can safely use a cold, dilute solution of bleach. If the triangle has a cross over it, the item can't be bleached.



TUMBLE DRYING

A circle inside a square means you can tumble dry the garment. The dots

indicate temperature – one for lower heat, two for higher heat. A cross over the symbol means you shouldn't tumble dry the garment.



IRONING

The dots on ironing symbols correspond to the dots on irons' temperature settings. Three dots are for linen and cotton, two for

synthetics and one for delicates.



DRY CLEANING

A circle means the garment is suitable for dry cleaning. If there's a letter inside the circle, it's to tell the drycleaner which chemical wash and method to use. If the circle has a cross over it, the item shouldn't be dry-cleaned.

Bestsellers

We've found that the biggest sellers aren't necessarily the best models. Here's a quick rundown of popular washers and how they fared in our tests



65% BOSCH WAE24363GB CLASSIXX £369

The highest scoring of the bunch, this Bosch is great for washing cottons and doesn't use a lot of water. Its spin leaves clothes less damp than most of the other bestsellers here, but the easy-care wash could be better.



63% INDESIT WIB111 £197

Cleaning is good on both the easy care and cotton washes. The cotton wash is quick at one hour and 40 minutes, but this machine lacks extras like a variable spin speed, delayed start and handwash program.



62% BEKO WM5120W £200

This machine washes well on both programs in our test. The easy-care program is a little long at one hour and 41 minutes, and although the easy-care rinse is good, the cotton rinse could be better.



61% BEKO WM5100W £180

This Beko impresses on cottons, but at two hours and 22 minutes it's a long program. The easy-care wash is very good too, but a bit of an energy and water sapper. The rinse is good on both programs.



58% HOTPOINT WML540 AQUARIUS £280

Compared with the rest, this Hotpoint is an inferior cleaner, though results are still passable. Program times are fairly short, and the spin is variable with a maximum of 1400RPM – the quickest of the bunch.



55% HOTPOINT WML520 AQUARIUS £269

With disappointing cleaning on the easy-care wash, your £269 could be better spent elsewhere. It's a little better at washing cottons, but the spin doesn't remove as much water as many others.

MODEL	SPECIFICATION					
	PRICE (£)	CAPACITY (kg)	SIZE (cm) (wxhxd)	SPIN (RPM)	ENERGY LABEL	COTTON
FREESTANDING						
1 ZANUSSI ZWF16581	399	7	60x85x64	1600	AAA	★★★★★
2 LG F1403FD	550	9	60x85x68	1400	AAA	★★★★★
3 SAMSUNG WF8702RSS	400	7	60x85x67	1200	AAB	★★★★★
4 JOHN LEWIS JLWM1604	499	7	60x85x65	1600	AAA	★★★★★
5 WHIRLPOOL AWO/D 5526	250	6	60x85x88	1200	AAB	★★★★★
6 JOHN LEWIS JLWM1203	329	6	60x84x66	1200	AAB	★★★★★
7 SAMSUNG WF8804RPA	500	8	60x85x69	1400	AAA	★★★★★
8 BOSCH WAE28467UK Exxcel	423	7	60x85x59	1400	AAB	★★★★★
9 CANDY CM1146	300	6	59x84x58	1400	AAA	★★★★★
10 BOSCH WAE24363GB Classixx	369	6	60x85x60	1200	AAB	★★★★★
11 MAYTAG MAF9602AES	745	6	60x85x62	1600	AAA	★★★★★
12 ZANUSSI ZWF12070W1	238	6	60x85x62	1200	AAB	★★★★★
13 INDESIT WIXL143	224	6	59x84x54	1400	AAB	★★★★★
14 INDESIT WIB111	197	5	60x84x54	1100	AAB	★★★★★
15 WHIRLPOOL AWO/R34205	199	5	60x84x54	1200	AAB	★★★★★
16 BEKO WM5120W	200	5	60x84x48	1200	AAB	★★★★★
17 BEKO WM5100W	180	5	60x84x59	1000	AAC	★★★★★
18 INDESIT WIXE167	280	6	60x84x58	1600	AAA	★★★★★
19 SMEG WMFAB16P	830	5	60x89x70	1600	AAA	★★★★★
20 HOTPOINT WML540 Aquarius	280	6	60x84x60	1400	AAB	★★★★★
21 HOTPOINT WML520 Aquarius	269	6	60x84x60	1200	AAB	★★★★★
22 HOOVER OPH 714 D	280	7	60x84x57	1400	AAA	★★★★★
BUILT IN						
23 ZANUSSI ZWI1125	454	6	60x82x57	1200	AAB	★★★★★
24 CANDY CWB 120	454	6	60x82x56	1200	AAB	★★★★★
25 NEFF W5420	604	7	60x81x53	1200	AAB	★★★★★

USING THE TABLE

The more stars the better.

Specification

Price For Best Buys we give the cheapest widely available high street or online price as we went to press. Prices for other models are a guide. For the latest prices, go to

www.whichcompare.co.uk.

Size Includes hoses and other attachments.

Test performance

Cotton Cleaning rating for standard 40°C wash.

Easy care Cleaning rating for standard 40°C wash for synthetic clothes. **Cotton/easy-care time** Program time

measured by our testers rather than claimed in the manual.

Rinse How well a washing machine rinses on cotton and easy-care loads.

Spin dry How dry the load was after the final spin. **Ease of use** How easy a machine is to load, unload, clean and use. **Noise** A subjective

WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE											SCORE %
EASY CARE	COTTON TIME	EASY CARE	RINSE	SPIN DRY	EASE OF USE	NOISE	ENERGY USE	WATER USE	BRAND RELIABILITY		
★★★★	1hr 59min	1hr 24min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	Above average		71
★★★★	2hr 45min	1hr 38min	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	Below average		70
★★★★★	1hr 59min	1hr 23min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★			70
★★★★	2hr 12min	1hr 23min	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★			69
★★★★	1hr 56min	1hr 22min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	Average		68
★★★★★	1hr 59min	1hr 24min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★			67
★★★★	2hr 7min	1hr 22min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★			67
★★★★	2hr 44min	1hr 26min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	Above average		66
★★★★★	2hr 28min	1hr 24min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	Average		66
★★★	2hr 12min	54min	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	Above average		65
★★★★	1hr 53min	1hr 14min	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★			65
★★★★★	1hr 28min	1hr 18min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	Above average		65
★★★★	2hr 29min	1hr 7min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	Below average		64
★★★★	1hr 39min	1hr 17min	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	Below average		63
★★★★	2hr 3min	1hr 13min	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	Average		63
★★★★	2hr 9min	1hr 41min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	Average		62
★★★★	2hr 22min	1hr 41min	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	Average		61
★★★★	2hr 26min	1hr 16min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	Below average		61
★★★★	2hr 13min	1hr 24min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★			61
★★★★	1hr 51min	1hr 14min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	Below average		58
★★	1hr 45min	1hr 13min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	Below average		55
★★	1hr 34min	53min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	Below average		50
★★★★★	2hr 8min	1hr 29min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	Above average		69
★★★★	1hr 47min	1hr 15min	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	Average		62
★★	2hr 17min	48min	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★			61

judgement of the noise during washing and spinning. **Energy and water use** The amount of energy and water used per kilogram of washing on the 40°C cotton and easy-care programs. **Brand reliability** Best Buys have at least average reliability in our survey.

A blank means there was not enough data to judge reliability.

Score

Ignores price and is based on:

Washing	55%
Water and energy use	20%
Convenience	10%
Spin dry	10%
Noise	5%

THE CHANGING FACE OF LAUNDRY

The future of washing machines lies in developing what happens in the brains and drums of the next-generation models.

In the June 2008 issue (p8) we reported on the Haier Wash2O. Launched in France, it can wash with or without detergent,

though it's not available in the UK yet.

This is an extreme example, but manufacturers are generally working to develop machines that reduce water and energy use, or can wash larger loads without taking up any extra kitchen space.

