

Vacs facts

Miele and Dyson still dominate our Best Buys, but a couple of new names are limbering up

If you think there's something familiar about this article, you'd be right. We've tested 13 new vacuum cleaners since our last report in April – but none measures up to the standards of our previous Best Buys, which remain the same.

Although a couple of new models, from Samsung and Philips, clean well, our Best Buys must also have a good reliability record, or offer a market-leading warranty – like the Dyson and Nilfisk cleaners. So the Samsung and Philips cleaners can't be regarded as Best Buys. Both manufacturers have broken

back into the vacuum cleaner market within the past few years and we don't yet have enough reliability data on their vacs. Still, if you're willing to take a chance on reliability, their models in this test are certainly worth considering, especially if you prefer a bagless cylinder, as all our other Best Buy cylinders need bags.

These two, along with all of our Best Buys, excel when it comes to cleaning at least one type of floor surface. But for homes with both carpet and hard floors, many of our top performers can achieve a good result on both.



1.5 CYLINDER

74% Miele Cat & Dog TT5000 £189

69% Miele S5210 £139

These vacs are both in Miele's standard S5 range. The red Cat & Dog TT5000 (above, left) is the quicker of the two at picking up pet hair, and cleaning hairs from the brush afterwards is easy. It cleans floorboards exceptionally well. Extras include a turbo brush and a mini turbo brush, to lift pet hair from smaller spaces. It's also one of the quieter models on test.

The sleek black S5210 (above, right) also picks up pet hairs, although it may take a little longer. Its main benefit is its ability to retain cat and dog allergens. It's especially proficient on hard floors but also great on carpet. Accessories include an upholstery brush and crevice tool but not a turbo brush. The cheapest store for both models is John Lewis.

WORTH KNOWING Miele is one of only two brands of vacs in our annual survey with good reliability.

Available Argos, John Lewis/Comet, Currys, John Lewis
Weight 9.1/7.8kg **Reach** 9.8/9.7 metres **Bagless** No
Replacement bags £6.99 for five, including filters

**WHICH?
BEST
BUY**

Our Best Buys must have good reliability or offer a five-year warranty

What you should look for

VARIABLE SPEED/SUCTION

This is useful on powerful cleaners, which can be hard to move on laminate floors when set at maximum suction. Lower settings are also good for rugs and curtains

STORAGE

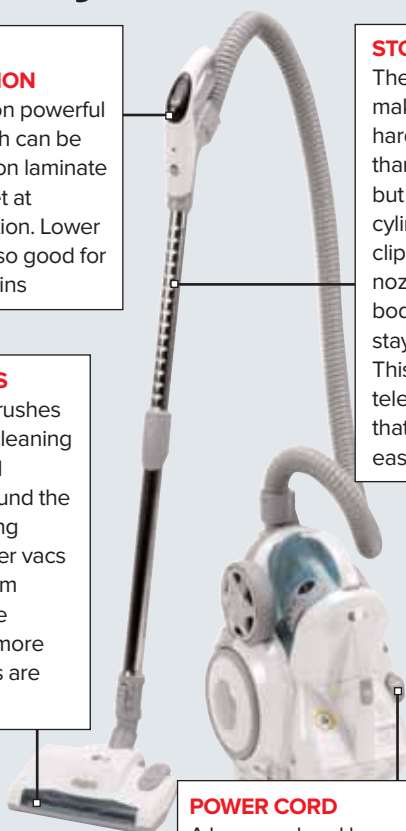
Their long hoses make cylinders harder to store than uprights, but some cylinders have a clip to attach the nozzle to the body so the hose stays upright. This LG (8) has a telescopic tube that collapses for easy storage

ACCESSORIES

Nozzles and brushes are useful for cleaning upholstery and curtains or around the edges of skirting boards. Cylinder vacs often store them inside or on the machine, and more upright models are doing this, too

POWER CORD

A long cord and hose are handy for cleaning stairs or if you're short of power sockets around the house



DISCOUNT VACS

Save with Hughes Direct

This October, Hughes Direct is offering exclusive discounts for Which? members on selected Best Buy vacuum cleaners from this report. There are savings of up to 15 per cent on selected Miele, Bosch and Dyson models – all special-offer prices include delivery.

To find out more details about this offer and other member-only discounts from Hughes Direct, go to www.hughesdirect.co.uk/which or call 0845 678 0084. This offer is valid until 31 October 2007 and is subject to availability.

Each month Which? members can take advantage of the competitive deals offered by Hughes Direct. All goods are guaranteed to be a minimum of 10 per cent below high-street prices published in Which? product reports (even taking account of delivery charges). If you find the same product cheaper elsewhere (including delivery) within seven days of purchase, Hughes Direct promises to refund 110 per cent of the difference.

Call now or go online to see how much you can save.



Contacts

Bosch 0870 240 0060
www.boschappliances.co.uk
Dyson 0800 279 5127; www.dyson.co.uk
Electrolux 0870 605 5055
www.electrolux.co.uk
Hoover 0870 950 2943; www.hoover.co.uk
LG 0870 873 5454; www.lge.com
Miele 01235 554455; www.miele.co.uk
Morphy Richards 0870 060 2604
www.morphyrichards.co.uk
Nilfisk 01284 763163
www.nilfisk-advance.co.uk
Panasonic 0870 535 7357
www.panasonic.co.uk
Philips 0845 601 0354; www.philips.co.uk
Russell Hobbs 0845 685 9700
www.russellhobbs.com
Samsung 0870 726 7864
www.samsung.com/uk
Sebo 01494 465533; www.sebo.co.uk

**2 CYLINDER****73% Miele S4511 Premium Line £180**

The S4511 is well equipped; its turbo brush is particularly handy for removing stubborn dirt, but in our tests the standard floor nozzle was most useful. The vac is light and manoeuvrable and easy to use for cleaning stairs. A handle on the hose makes it more comfortable to hold, and the tube is telescopic, so it collapses nicely for storage. It's widely available online.

WORTH KNOWING New bags include a replacement 'super air clean' filter.

Available Online Weight 7kg Reach 8.7 metres
Bagless No Replacement bags £6.99 for five, including filters

WHICH?
BEST BUY

Unusually for an upright, the Sebo Felix is easy to manoeuvre

**3 CYLINDER****73% Nilfisk Extreme X300 £280**

It may be a little heavy, but our testers still found the Nilfisk easy to use and manoeuvre. It hardly loses suction as the bag fills up, and is also top notch at retaining allergens and picking up pet hair. A long power cord gives flexibility, and the head gets into wall edges and corners pretty well, too. It's available from Nilfisk or online retailers.

WORTH KNOWING We don't have reliability data for it, but the Nilfisk comes with a five-year guarantee.

Available Online/direct from Nilfisk Weight 10.1kg
Reach 12.2 metres Bagless No Replacement bags £6.99 for four

WHICH?
BEST BUY

**7 CYLINDER****64% Bosch BSG71800GB £100**

If your house has lots of hard floors this Bosch is a great choice. It's also especially good at retaining pet allergens. The lack of a turbo brush means that it doesn't clean carpet or pick up pet hair quite as well as other Best Buy cylinders. But it's handy for cleaning stairs and is quiet, and the bag is easy to change. It's cheapest at John Lewis.

WE LIKE This vac is quieter and better at retaining allergens than many pricier competitors.

Available John Lewis Weight 6.7kg Reach 10 metres
Bagless No Replacement bags £6.99 for five, including filters

WHICH?
BEST BUY

16, 17 UPRIGHT**65% Dyson DC14 All Floors £260****65% Dyson DC14 Origin £220**

These two models from Dyson's DC14 range cleaned brilliantly on all types of floor. On carpet, the DC14 All Floors (right) sucked up 82 per cent of dust, while on hard floors it left no trace. You can turn off the brush bar for delicate surfaces.

The more basic DC14 Origin (left) edges ahead on picking up pet hairs, gobbling them up in 21 seconds, but isn't as good at retaining allergens. The All Floors is cheapest at Argos, Comet and Currys. The Origin is available online.

WORTH KNOWING Dyson doesn't recommend the Origin for hard floors, but it didn't damage laminate in our tests. If you're worried, opt for the All Floors.

Available Argos, Comet, Currys, John Lewis/Online
Weight 8.3/8.3kg Reach 10/9.7 metres Bagless Yes



WHICH?
BEST BUY

18 UPRIGHT**64% Sebo Felix 1 Premium £229**

Don't be put off by the retro look of this Sebo. It's excellent at picking up dust from laminate floors and clearing pet hair. Unusually for an upright, it's easy to manoeuvre, negotiates stairs superbly and is great at getting into nooks and crannies and cleaning right up to walls on carpeted floors.

Its only weaknesses are that it's a little noisy and it's not so good at getting dust out of the cracks between wooden floorboards. Cheapest at John Lewis.

WE LIKE The main cleaning head can slide under furniture and the body can be detached for carrying.

Available John Lewis Weight 7.9kg Reach 9.9 metres
Bagless No Replacement bags £7.95 for ten



WHICH?
BEST BUY

19 UPRIGHT**61% Dyson DC18 Slim All Floors £280**

As the name suggests, this is a slim vacuum cleaner, narrower than most of the upright models we've tested. It's light, weighing just 7.2kg, and fairly manoeuvrable. And it's fantastic at cleaning wood and laminate floors and at picking up pet hair.

At 1.6 litres, its capacity is fairly small, and the length of the power cable will allow you to sweep within only an eight-metre radius of the plug socket. Dyson cleaners fared poorly in our annual reliability survey, but they do come with a five-year warranty. Cheapest store for the Slim All Floors is John Lewis.

WORTH KNOWING You can also buy an Allergy version in this range, which includes a high-performance filter.

Available Argos, Comet, Currys, John Lewis
Weight 7.2kg Reach 8 metres Bagless Yes



WHICH?
BEST BUY

Worth considering

Samsung and Philips cleaners aren't in enough homes for us to have any reliability data for them yet, but they perform as well as our Best Buys. Both are available from Argos.



PHILIPS FC9208/01 BAGLESS MARATHON £200

As well as challenging Dyson when it comes to style, this Philips (4) cleans hard floors exceptionally well and it's also good on carpet. Its performance tails off a little as the dust container gets full, but it can hold a monstrous four litres, so you won't have to empty it too frequently. It's pretty speedy at picking up pet hairs, and with a cord of more than 12 metres you can clean a large area without having to unplug and find another socket.



SAMSUNG SC9540 £200

Its 1.4-litre dust container may be small, but the Samsung (6) picks up well on hard floors. It also cleans carpet reasonably well if you don't allow the cylinder to get full. It's exceptionally good at retaining dust and allergens, and is easy to manoeuvre, so makes fairly light work of stairs. A suction adjustment on the handle gives you power at your fingertips, but it also has an auto setting, which allows the cleaner itself to decide which suction level to use.

Don't Buy

Panasonic MCCG461
Morphy Richards 73350



We don't expect the vacuum cleaners we tested to be good on every surface, but there are two that you should give a miss. The **Panasonic MCCG461**



cylinder (15) and **Morphy Richards 73350 upright (22)** were both below average at cleaning carpet and hard floors, but most disappointing was their poor filtration, with dust escaping back into the room.



MODEL	SPECIFI		
	PRICE (£)	WEIGHT (kg)	CAPACITY (litres)
CYLINDER			
1 MIELE Cat & Dog TT5000	189	9.1	2.9
2 MIELE S4511 Premium Line	180	7.0	2.5
3 NILFISK Extreme X300	280	10.1	2.8
4 PHILIPS FC9208/01 Bagless Marathon	200	8.9	4.0
5 MIELE S5210	139	7.8	3.1
6 SAMSUNG SC9540	200	8.8	1.4
7 BOSCH BSG71800GB	100	6.7	2.6
8 LG Allergy Care Compressor	200	9.0	2.0
9 ELECTROLUX ZAM6106 Airmax	80	6.8	2.9
10 BOSCH BX32430GB	150	6.9	2.5
11 SEBO K1 Pet	185	7.7	1.8
12 HOOVER Dust Manager TC5223	100	7.8	1.6
13 HOOVER Freespace TFC6207 Pets	80	6.4	1.7
14 RUSSELL HOBBS 13759	80	5.9	2.2
15 PANASONIC MCCG461	50	6.2	2.4
UPRIGHT			
16 DYSON DC14 All Floors	260	8.3	2.8
17 DYSON DC14 Origin	220	8.3	2.8
18 SEBO Felix 1 Premium	229	7.9	3.3
19 DYSON DC18 Slim All Floors	280	7.2	1.6
20 ELECTROLUX Z2957AZ Loopie Pet Lover	80	8.5	2.4
21 HOOVER Purepower Pets & Stairs U3530	130	7.8	3.9
22 MORPHY RICHARDS 73350 Bagless Cyclonic	100	10.4	4.5

Which should you choose?



Best for pet owners and allergy sufferers

PHILIPS FC9208/01 BAGLESS MARATHON £200 This Philips model (4) offers the great combination of picking up pet hair quickly and retaining allergens exceptionally well.



Best on a budget

BOSCH BSG71800GB £100 Still the cheapest of our Best Buys at £100, the Bosch (7) outperforms many more expensive cleaners, putting in a solid performance on carpet and exceptional cleaning on hard floors.



Best for peace and quiet

SAMSUNG SC9540 £200 This is also called the Silencio (6) – and justifiably so, as it's the quietest model we tested.

OUR RESEARCH

At the time of selection, we choose the products we test by talking to manufacturers about their biggest-selling models and future plans, consulting industry experts and market intelligence reports, and checking models available in the main high-street shops and on popular websites. The vacs in this report include, where possible, the most recently launched top-sellers from brands with the largest market share and some Best Buys from previous tests that are still available. We also may include models with innovative features from less well-known brands. Go online at www.which.co.uk/vacuumcleaners for 55 vacs previously tested, which may include some market leaders. This information is regularly updated with new models, availability and prices. See www.which.co.uk/loginhelp if you would like help logging in.

CATION		WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE										SCORE %
REACH (m)	BAGLESS	CARPET	LAMINATE	WOODEN	PET HAIR	STAIRS	MOVING	EMPTYING/CHANGING	ALLERGENS	NOISE	BRAND RELIABILITY	
9.8		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	good	74
8.7		★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	good	73
12.2		★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★		73
12.3	✓	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★		71
9.7		★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	good	69
9.9	✓	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★		67
10.0		★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	average	64
11.8	✓	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★	★★		61
9.7		★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★	poor	57
10.0	✓	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★	★	average	55
9.2		★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★	★★★		53
9.2	✓	★★	★★★★	★★★	★	★★★	★★★★	★★	★★	★★	poor	51
8.0	✓	★	★★★★	★★	★	★★★	★★★★	★★	★★	★	poor	44
7.5	✓	★	★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★	★★★★	★★	★★	★		44
7.8		★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	★	average	35
10	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★	★★★	★★	★★★	★	poor	65
9.7	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★	★★	★	★	poor	65
9.9		★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★	good	64
8.0	✓	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★	★★	★★	★★	poor	61
9.5	✓	★★★★	★★	★	★★★★★	★★	★★★	★★	★★	★	good	41
6.5		★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★	★	average	41
9.7	✓	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★	★★	★★	★		32

Watts that noise?

More power doesn't always mean better cleaning

Upping the wattage on a vac has become a common sales tactic, the idea being that more power, by implication, leads to better cleaning. But this isn't necessarily so – and high wattage can also mean more noise.

The power house in this test, the Bosch BX32430GB (10), has the highest wattage and was one of the louder models we tested, at 86 decibels. The quietest, the Samsung SC9540 (6), registered less than 74 decibels. It has a far

lower wattage but it cleans as well as, and in some cases better than, the Bosch.

A difference of ten decibels or so may not sound like much, but sound isn't measured on a linear scale – a reduction of just three decibels for a cleaner would halve its intensity. Uprights tend to be noisier than cylinders.

Our expert panel also gives each cleaner a noise rating, as some tones are more irritating than others.

USING THE TABLE

The more stars the better.

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. Prices for models available only online are in *italics*. **Weight** Includes accessories. **Reach** Distance from plug to cleaning head.

Test performance

Carpets/Laminate/Wooden

How well the vac picks up and retains dust from these

surfaces. **Pet hair** How quickly the vac can collect pet hair from carpets. **Stairs** How easy it is to use on stairs. **Moving** How easy the vac is to move around. **Emptying/changing** How easy/hygienic it is to empty bag/canisters and change filters. **Allergens** How well the filter retains pet allergens. **Noise** The more stars, the quieter the vac.

Score

This ignores price and is based on:

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