

Wash more for less

Washing machines with larger-capacity drums and higher spin speeds can save you time and money. We pick the Best Buys

The 21st-century family uses its washing machine 274 times a year on average – five times a week – so it's no surprise to find that manufacturers are launching bigger models to get the work done faster.

Using a larger-capacity machine (6kg or more) can save you money as well as time, since the amount of water and energy used per kilogram of washing is often lower for these models, provided you fill them up each time you use them.

Buying a machine with a higher spin speed (1400rpm rather than the more common 1200rpm) may also save you money, as it removes more water from your clothes, reducing the amount of time and energy your tumble dryer needs

to finish the job. It also saves drying time on the washing line or airer.

The good news from our tests is that the machines with the greatest capacity (8kg and 9kg) are among the best performers, which means that our Best Buys will get your clothes cleaner as well as save you money. We have also found some excellent 1400rpm models.

For smaller households, which don't generate enough laundry to justify buying a large-capacity machine, we have also included reviews here of several smaller 5kg capacity models (one of them a Best Buy) plus those Best Buys from our last test (*Which?*, January 2006, p50) that are still available in the shops.

A larger-capacity machine can save you money as well as time



We put the new washing machines through more than 200 tests to find Best Buys

Cleaning power

We test how each machine copes with shifting tough stains such as chocolate, oil, blood and red wine from a specially prepared cloth that's put into the drum with sheets and items of clothing. After the wash is finished, we measure how much light is reflected from stains on the test cloth using a spectrophotometer, so that we can work out exactly how much of the stain has been removed.

Noise annoys

We measure how noisy each machine is in our very own padded cell – technically known as an anechoic (non-echo) chamber, which has a solid floor and padded walls. These special conditions are needed to capture the power of the sound generated during a wash and spin cycle, without any background noise.

Lost coins

We test washing machine filters by adding metal objects such as coins and paper clips to the machine drum during a wash. We track the items to see whether they are captured by the filter and can be retrieved or are simply lost in the machine, where they can cause future damage. A coin stuck behind the drum, for instance, can increase noise during washing and spinning, and taint white clothes.



What you should look for

DETERGENT DRAWER

Wide compartments that clearly indicate where detergent and fabric conditioner should go for extra washing options such as 'delayed start' are ideal. You should be able to remove them with one hand for cleaning

ELECTRONIC DISPLAYS

Some displays just tell you when your wash will finish. Others replace the traditional dial and are used for programming

WIDE DOOR

Whatever the capacity of the machine, a wide door that swings open 180 degrees makes it much easier to load and unload your laundry. Among our current Best Buys, the Bosch WBB 24759 Logixx has the widest opening

VARIABLE SPIN SPEED

Reducing the spin speed on particular loads allows you to protect woollens, handwash clothes and delicate items from wear and tear

CHILD LOCKS

Some child locks prevent the door closing and a program starting if a child climbs inside. Others stop kids changing programs once they have started





70% Miele W3240 £760

The Miele W3240 is a real all-rounder, giving excellent wash results on both short programs and longer cotton washes, and good results on easy care loads. At just under two hours, the cotton wash time is shorter than on most Best Buys. The Miele is available from Comet.

WE FOUND This easy-to-use washer is cheap to run.

Cheapest store Comet **Capacity** 6kg **Spin speed** 1400rpm **Energy label** AAB **Cotton** 1hr 55min **Quick** 1hr 32min **Colours** White

WHICH?
BEST BUY



70% Bosch WBB 24759 Logixx £900

This beast of a machine can handle a whopping 9kg of dirty laundry, making it ideal for large families. Wash results are good and there are plenty of extra programs such as a hand-wash option. The Bosch is available from Comet and John Lewis.

WE LIKE The huge drum and wide door opening make unloading easy.

Cheapest store Comet, John Lewis **Capacity** 9kg **Spin speed** 1200rpm **Energy label** AAB **Cotton** 1hr 53min **Quick** 1hr 7min **Colours** White

WHICH?
BEST BUY

The Bosch can handle a whopping 9kg of dirty laundry, making it ideal for large families



67% Bosch WFR2869 £450

A washer that's cheap to run, keeps the noise down and offers good all-round cleaning performance is hard to fault. This one ticks all of those boxes – and has an uncluttered dial for easy programming. The Bosch is available from independent stockists.

USEFUL FEATURE The large door handle is ideal if you have poor grip.

Cheapest store Independents **Capacity** 6kg **Spin speed** 1400rpm **Energy label** AAB **Cotton** 2hr 8min **Quick** 53min **Colours** White

WHICH?
BEST BUY



65% AEG-Electrolux L62810 £349

This is one of only three machines to score top marks on both cotton and quick cycles – and its quick cycle is about 20 minutes shorter than its rivals. The AEG is available from John Lewis.

WE LIKE The control panel is particularly easy to use.

Cheapest store John Lewis **Capacity** 6kg **Spin speed** 1200rpm **Energy label** AAB **Cotton** 2hr 13min **Quick** 1hr 9min **Colours** White

WHICH?
BEST BUY



65% Miele Premier 520 £500

The cheaper Miele also produces excellent results on its cotton and quick cycles. There is no delayed start but it does have a wool program. It is available from Comet and Currys.

WE FOUND This is the quietest machine for rinsing and spinning.

Cheapest store Comet, Currys **Capacity** 5kg **Spin speed** 1200rpm **Energy label** AAB **Cotton** 1hr 56min **Quick** 1hr 26min **Colours** White

WHICH?
BEST BUY



65% Siemens WXL 147A £500

This 1400rpm Siemens outperformed its more expensive 1200rpm sister in our tests, washing well and excelling at spin drying. It is available from Comet.

WORTH KNOWING The WXL 147A had the lowest running costs on test.

Cheapest store Comet **Capacity** 6kg **Spin speed** 1400rpm **Energy label** AAB **Cotton** 2hr 9min **Quick** 54min **Colours** White

WHICH?
BEST BUY



65% Zanussi-Electrolux ZWF1451W £550

This Zanussi-Electrolux is packed full of useful features, such as a clever memory function which can be set to remember your favourite programs. It provides good cleaning across the board. The Zanussi-Electrolux is available from Currys.

WE LIKE A monitor shows the actual end time of a wash rather than the number of minutes left in a cycle.

Cheapest store Currys **Capacity** 7kg
Spin speed 1400rpm **Energy label** AAB
Cotton 2hr 16min **Quick** 1hr **Colours** White

Facts & scores

The inside story from our testing team

New ideas

This LG is cheap to run but the company says its next launch, a steam washer, is even better, using 35 per cent less water and 21 per cent less energy than other machines. We'll be testing it shortly.

Mechanical faults

The Indesit misbehaved in our tests, constantly filling and draining in the rinse cycle. Indesit told us the problem was due to a defective electro-valve and claimed it was a one-off but we will be investigating further.

Good looks

This Smeg was the only machine on test with a stainless steel finish.

WASHING MACHINES		SPECIFICATION				
		PRICE (£)	CAPACITY (kg)	SIZE (cm) WXHXD	SPIN (rpm)	CHILD LOCK
1	MIELE W3240	760	6	60x85x60	1400	
2	ELECTROLUX EWF12108W	399	8	60x85x64	1200	✓
3	BOSCH WBB 24759 Logixx	900	9	69x95x78	1200	✓
4	BOSCH WFR2869	450	6	60x86x59	1400	✓
5	SAMSUNG J1453S	300	7	60x85x66	1400	✓
6	AEG-ELECTROLUX L62810	349	6	60x85x61	1200	✓
7	MIELE PREMIER 520	500	5	60x85x60	1200	
8	SIEMENS WXL 147A	500	6	60x86x59	1400	
9	ZANUSSI-ELECTROLUX ZWF1451W	550	7	60x85x66	1400	✓
10	LG WM-14311FD	500	8	60x85x68	1400	✓
11	BOSCH WFX 2868	450	6	60x86x59	1400	
12	SERVIS M6715	250	7	60x85x60	1500	
13	SIEMENS WXL 127AGB	580	6	60x85x59	1200	
14	AEG-ELECTROLUX L74810	500	6	60x85x61	1400	✓
15	BEKO WMA745	320	7	60x85x63	1400	✓
16	WHIRLPOOL AWO10761	350	7	60x84x61	1400	✓
17	INDESIT WIL144SP	230	5	60x84x55	1400	
18	WHIRLPOOL AWO3571	300	7	60x84x61	1200	✓
19	SMEG WMF16AX	450	5	60x85x53	1600	
20	TRICITY BENDIX AW1401W	275	5	60x85x60	1400	✓
21	GORENJE WA61121	250	6	60x85x63	1200	



64% LG WM-14311FD £500

The 8kg capacity drum on this LG is the second largest of our Best Buys. Useful features include well-spaced buttons and an easy-to-read LCD panel. The LG is available from Currys.

WORTH KNOWING The LG is £400 cheaper than the Bosch with the 9kg capacity.

Cheapest store Currys **Capacity** 8kg
Spin speed 1400rpm **Energy label** AAA
Cotton 2hr 22min **Quick** 1hr 37min **Colours** White

Energy-saving options

Picking an energy-efficient machine saves you money and helps the environment

Modern washing machines use less energy than their predecessors but an estimated 4.77TWh (terrawatts per hour) of electricity is still consumed each year doing laundry work in the UK (that's the amount of energy produced by Sizewell B nuclear power station, Suffolk, in approximately six months). Choosing a more energy efficient model will help the environment and cut your bills.

■ **EU energy labels** These are designed to guide consumers towards the more energy-efficient models on the market:

machines rated A+ are most efficient. This scheme is good but could be better, so we calculate energy and water consumption (running costs) differently. Our method reflects the way people actually use their machines by logging running costs on the most commonly used wash program, 40°C cotton.

■ **In our tests** Five machines stood out for their low energy and water consumption:

(4) Bosch WFR2869
(21) Gorenje WA61121
(5) Samsung J1453S

(12) Servis M6715
(8) Siemens WXL 147A
■ **Skin allergies** One consequence of improved energy efficiency is that the amount of water used in a wash is cut to reduce the amount of heating needed. People with sensitive skin have become concerned that there may now be insufficient water in rinse cycles to remove all the detergent. We found that the Siemens WXL 147A (8) offered a good compromise between water conservation and good rinsing performance.

ENERGY LABEL	COLOURS	WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE												SCORE %
		RELIABILITY	RUNNING COST	COTTON	EASY CARE	QUICK	COTTON (hr:m)	EASY CARE (hr:m)	QUICK (hr:m)	RINSE	SPIN DRY	USE	NOISE	
AAB	W	good	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	1:55	1:20	1:32	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	70
AAB	W		★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	2:16	1:28	1:07	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	70
AAB	W	good	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	1:53	1:19	1:07	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	70
AAB	W, S	good	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	2:08	1:17	0:53	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	67
AAB	W, S		★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	2:17	1:35	0:41	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★	66
AAB	W	average	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	2:13	1:22	1:09	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	65
AAB	W	good	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	1:56	1:16	1:26	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	65
AAB	W	average	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	2:09	1:20	0:54	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	65
AAB	W	average	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	2:16	1:17	1:00	★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	65
AAA	W	average	★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	2:22	1:39	1:37	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	64
AAB	W	good	★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★	2:10	1:19	0:52	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	63
AAB	W	poor	★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	1:45	1:01	0:35	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	63
AAB	G	average	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	2:09	1:19	0:51	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	63
AAB	W	average	★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	1:53	1:22	1:06	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	62
AAA	W, S		★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	2:31	1:39	1:31	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	61
AAB	W	average	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	2:17	1:25	1:06	★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	60
AAB	W, S	poor	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	1:46	1:08	0:57	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	60
AAB	W	average	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	2:18	1:24	1:05	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	60
AAA	SS, W		★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	2:14	1:25	1:07	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	53
AAB	W		★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	1:54	1:22	0:30	★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	52
AAB	W		★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	2:00	1:34	1:05	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★	49

Decoding the sales jargon

Zanussi-Electrolux and LG machines feature some clever-sounding technology. Our tests probe beneath the spin

■ ZANUSSI-ELECTROLUX JETSYSTEM

It says Zanussi-Electrolux claims its Jetsystem Advanced Technology washes clothes more like a power shower, saving water and energy as it uses only the right amount needed for the load.

We say The Zanussi-Electrolux ZWF1451W, which features the Jetsystem, washed brilliantly in our laboratory tests, with particularly good results on the cotton cycle, but the running costs of this machine were

actually higher than for all of the other ten Best Buys we picked.

■ LG DIRECT DRIVE

It says LG claims that its Direct Drive washing machines, which feature a motor directly attached to the drum, produce less noise.

We say In our tests for this report, the LG WM-14311FD, which employs the Direct Drive system, produced solid wash results and proved cheap to run, but it was actually noisier than all of our other Best Buys.

USING THE TABLE

We tested new machines from all the top-selling brands. Hotpoint updated its range too late for this test.

Specification

Price Cheapest price widely found on the high street. For models not widely available, we give online prices (in *italics*). **Size** Includes hoses and other protrusions. **Colours** G graphite; S silver; SS stainless steel; W white

Test performance

Running cost Water and energy costs, assuming a full load. Machines rated ★★★★★ cost around half

as much to run as those rated ★★. **Cotton** Standard 40°C wash. **Easy care** Standard wash for synthetic and polyester clothes. **Quick** Short-wash option for cottons.

Score

Ignores price and based on:
50% Cleaning
20% Running cost
20% Convenience
10% Spin dry

WHICH? EXTRA

For details of 41 washing machines still available from previous tests visit www.which.co.uk/washingmachines



63% Bosch WFX 2868 £450

This 1400rpm machine cleans well and has quiet wash cycles. Programs and spin options are selected using a button and LCD display instead of a spin speed dial. This looks

WHICH? BEST BUY

impressive but is a bit fiddly to use. The Bosch is available at Argos, Currys and Comet.

WE LIKE The Bosch automatically runs an extra rinse cycle if you put in too much detergent.

Cheapest store Currys **Capacity** 6kg
Spin speed 1400rpm **Energy label** AAB
Cotton 2hr 10min **Quick** 52min **Colours** White



63% Siemens WXL127AGB £580

The Siemens boasts the shortest quick wash of any of our Best Buys, at just 51 minutes. It produced good rinsing results in our tests but also offers the option to add an additional rinse cycle if you have particularly sensitive skin.

The Siemens is available from Comet and Currys.

WORTH KNOWING This Siemens is available only in a graphite finish.

Cheapest store Comet **Capacity** 6kg
Spin speed 1200rpm **Energy label** AAB
Cotton 2hr 9min **Quick** 51min **Colours** Graphite

The Siemens boasts the shortest quick wash of any of our Best Buys



62% AEG-Electrolux L74810 £500

This is a sister model to the Best Buy L62810 (6) but has a higher spin speed – and a higher price tag. It gets through its programs more quickly than its sister and its quick wash produced

WHICH? BEST BUY

great results in our tests, but it doesn't wash cottons as well. The AEG-Electrolux is available from Comet.

WE LIKE The controls on the L74810 are particularly easy to use.

Cheapest store Comet **Capacity** 6kg
Spin speed 1400rpm **Energy label** AAB **Cotton** 1hr 53min
Quick 1hr 6min **Colours** White

Worth considering

These models did well in our tests, but are not Best Buys as we don't have enough data on them yet to judge their reliability.

ELECTROLUX EWF12108W £399 This one (2) washes cottons well and unlike some large-

capacity models doesn't need lots of kitchen space. Widely available online. **SCORE 70%**

SAMSUNG J1453S £300 This Samsung (5) is cheap to buy, cheap to run and washes well. Available at Comet. **SCORE 66%**

Which should you choose?



Best for impaired vision

SAMSUNG J1453 (WHITE FINISH) £300 There is only a handful of large, well-spaced buttons on the control panel of the Samsung (5) and they beep loudly when pressed.



Best on a budget

WHIRLPOOL AWO3571 £300 At £300, this Whirlpool (18) is good value. It falls just short of being a Best Buy and is from a brand with average reliability, so it shouldn't let you down.

For *Which?* members, Hughes Direct is offering additional savings on all Best Buy washing machines in this month's report. You can save at least 10% on the high-street price published by *Which?* (and up to 20% on some models). Selected Best Buy machines have FREE five-year parts and labour

Members' offer
Save on washing machines

cover, too. To take advantage of this great offer log on to the website www.hughesdirect.co.uk/which or call 0870 240 1687. This is a great deal for *Which?* members, but act now – the offer is valid only until 31 July 2006.



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