

Hot shots

We've had a blast testing manufacturers' claims for their hi-tech hairdryers

If you don't know your ionic breeze from your nutriheat technology, you're in good company. Choosing a hairdryer can leave you feeling like you need a degree in particle physics. So we've made it easier for you to pick a winner, putting 13 hairdryers through their paces in the lab and with a panel of more than 30 testers.

Each of the hairdryers we tested had its good points and bad. Many models have unique features, such as silk protein conditioning or built-in straighteners (see right, or www.which.co.uk/hairdryers for more details).

We also found that some manufacturers' claims are

either too unclear to be meaningful, or are overstated.

The top-rated hairdryers are versatile enough for a quick dry or a complex hairdo, depending on your mood. All our Best Buys have a wide range of settings so you can style your hair with the speed, heat and force that give the best results.

You could save a few pounds on our Best Buys by shopping around. We found up to £6 difference by comparing online prices at Argos and Amazon. It's worth doing separate online searches for both the name and the model number because different stockists come up depending on which you use.

HAIR-RAISING IDEAS

Do the innovative features live up to the manufacturers' hype?

BABYLISS BELISS 2X 5720U (11)

Manufacturer's claim There's a built-in straightener whose 'ceramic plates grip hair to straighten, smooth and shape as you dry'.

Verdict Our testers found the dryer cumbersome to use, and couldn't achieve the sleek and straightened styles they'd hoped for.

IMETEC NUTRIHEAT 1484 (9)

Manufacturer's claim It 'nourishes with silk proteins...as you dry', using a silk protein capsule that you insert into the hairdryer's nozzle.

Verdict Most testers agreed this dryer left their hair feeling softer and silkier, but several said they didn't get the volume they would like.

BRAUN SATINPRO SP2200 (8)

Manufacturer's claim The hairdryer uses a 'rich stream of satin ions' and a 'satin protect' function to 'reveal the brilliance of shiny smooth hair'.

Verdict An ionic hairdryer with a temperature limiter function, this produced some of the best styling results. Most testers said it left their hair feeling soft and looking healthy and shiny.



MODEL		SPECIFICATION					WHICH? TEST			
		PRICE (£)	SPEED/HEAT SETTINGS	CORD LENGTH (m)	IONIC FUNCTION	ACCESSORIES	STYLING RESULTS	DRYING SPEED	VERSATILITY	COOL SHOT
1	TONI&GUY 2000W Wave Sock Pro Tourmaline TG180D	25	2/3	2.90	✓	DS	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★
2	NICKY CLARKE Nano Detox Silver NHD011	30	2/3	2.45	✓	D	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
3	PHILIPS TreSemmé SalonControl Ion Shine HP4982/07	19	2/3	3.10	opt		★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★★
4	JOHN LEWIS Ionic Hairdryer 5199JU	18	2/3	1.85	✓		★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★
5	REMINGTON Protect & Shine Compact Ionic 2000W D4410	18	2/3	2.50	✓		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★
6	NICKY CLARKE 2000W Ionic Chrome Hairdryer NCD102	18	3/4	2.00	opt	D	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★
7	VIDAL SASSOON Hot tools 2000W Pro Salon Dryer VS536UK	20	2/3	2.65	opt		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★
8	BRAUN Satinpro SP2200	23	2/3	2.85	opt		★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★
9	IMETEC Nutriheat 1484	40	2/3	1.95			★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★
10	BABYLISS Turbo Shine 2000 5529U	15	3	2.85	✓		★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★
11	BABYLISS Beliss 2x 5720U	35	2/3	1.85	✓	S	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★
12	WAHL Power Pik Turbo ZX0S2-801	16	3	3.05		A	★★★★	★★	★★	★
13	REVLON CordMagic folding 2000W 93130	19	2	1.85	✓		★★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★



71% Toni&Guy 2000W Wave Sock Pro Tourmaline £25

Head and shoulders above the competition, this lightweight model dries speedily at high settings and slowly at low ones, giving it the versatility to encourage curls or quickly dry straight hair. The highest heat can feel too hot, though.

'The right weight' and 'lovely to hold' were just two of the positives highlighted by our testers, who also rated its long cord and 'sleek, professional' design.

It's cheapest from Boots.

WE LIKE Healthy-looking styling results pleased our testers.



Available Boots, online Dimensions 10x23x24cm
Switch type Toggle Weight 420g Model number
TG180D Cool shot 35°C



65% Nicky Clarke Nano Detox Silver £30

The heat and speed settings are great for blasting straight hair quickly, particularly if you like to set your style using the cool-shot button.

The soft grip handle is pleasant to hold, but some people will find the weight of the dryer off-putting.

Testers frequently said they liked how good their hair looked after using the dryer, and that their hair felt soft and healthy.

It's cheapest at Argos.

WORTH KNOWING This has the fastest slow speed, so use the diffuser if you want to dry your hair carefully.



Available Argos, online Dimensions 10x23x24cm
Switch type Toggle Weight 580g Model number
NHD011 Cool shot 26°C

If you're looking for a smooth finish, this hairdryer from Philips is the one for you



65% Philips TreSemmé SalonControl Ion Shine £19

If you're looking for a smooth finish, this hairdryer from Philips is definitely the one for you.

Testers thought that the ionic function made a tangible difference to their hair and it delivered the best styling results overall, with one enthusing: 'Even after one go I knew this was a product I would buy.'

But if you are looking for a super-fast dryer or really low heat setting, it's not quite such a good choice.

You'll find it cheapest at Argos.

WE LIKE The long cable and being able to switch the ionic function on and off.



Available Argos, Boots, Comet, Superdrug, John Lewis
Dimensions 9x22x23cm Switch type Slider Weight
460g Model number HP4982/07 Cool shot 30°C

PERFORMANCE				SCORE %
WEIGHT	CONTROLS	NOISE	ENERGY USE	
★★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★	71
★★	★★★★	★★	★★★	65
★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	65
★★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★	64
★★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★	64
★★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	63
★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★	61
★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	59
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	58
★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	54
★★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★	52
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	52
★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★	49

USING THE TABLE

The more stars the better.

Specification

Price For Best Buys we give the cheapest widely available high-street price. If we couldn't find a model at major high-street shops, we give the most common online price. Prices for other models are a guide to what you should expect to pay. See www.whichcompare.co.uk for the latest prices.

Speed/heat settings

The number of individual settings for each, or combined heat/speed levels. **Ionic function** is always on for dryers with a ✓. The 'opt' is for optional, which means

there's a separate ionic on/off switch. **Accessories** A = an afro-comb; D = a diffuser; DS = a diffuser sock; S = straighteners. All the hairdryers on test have a concentrator nozzle.

Performance

Styling results How well the hairdryer enabled 10 testers, with different types of hair, to get their hair looking its best in our user trial. **Drying speed** How quickly the hairdryer dries your hair at the lowest and highest settings. **Versatility** How versatile the ranges of temperature and air speed settings make the

hairdryer. Cool shot

How quickly the cool-shot function operates and how cold it is.

Weight The more stars, the lighter the dryer.

Controls How easy it is to use the hairdryer's heat and speed controls.

Noise We measured the decibel level of each dryer and also subjectively rated how loud and annoying it is.

Energy use The amount of electricity the dryer consumes at low and high heat settings.

Score

This ignores price and is based on:

Performance **70%**
Ease of use **30%**

Which should you choose?

Best for straight hair

TONI&GUY 2000W WAVE SOCK PRO

TOURMALINE £25 The fast action of this model (1) dries straight hair before it has time to go frizzy and leaves it looking healthy.

Best for speed drying

JOHN LEWIS IONIC HAIRDRYER £18 Fast drying, great results and low noise levels make this dryer (4) a great choice for people on the hoof, but the sliding controls are difficult to use.

Best for curly hair

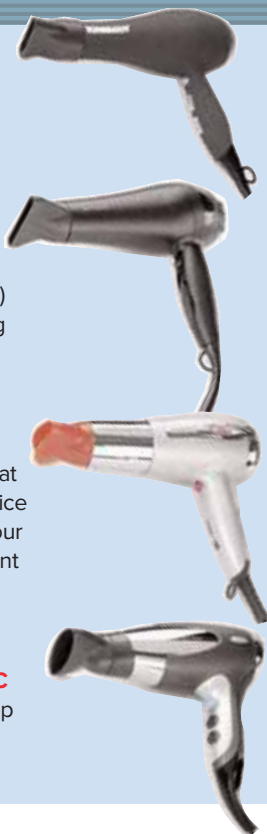
NICKY CLARKE 2000W IONIC CHROME

HAIRDRYER £18 The diffuser and very cool low-heat setting make this dryer (6) a good, though slow, choice for eking out well-defined curls. If you can stretch your budget, the Best Buy Nicky Clarke (2) is also excellent for curls.

Best compact dryer

REMINGTON PROTECT & SHINE COMPACT IONIC

£18 Small and lightweight, this dryer (5) won't take up much room in a suitcase or overnight bag – but its high-pitched whine is a bit annoying.



ISN'T IT IONIC

How to dry your hair without doing it so much damage

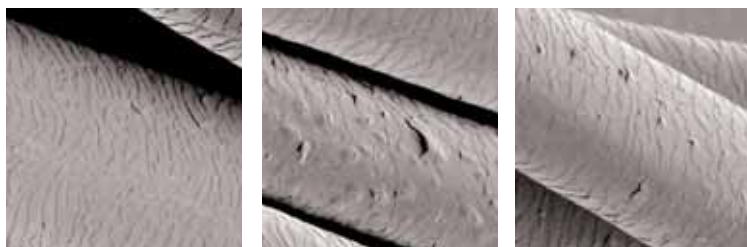
If you like to blast your hair dry in a flash, we recommend you choose a hairdryer with an ionic function.

This technology uses negatively charged ions and is meant to protect hair, reduce frizz, improve shine and ban static. A solution to the ravages of drying your hair on a high heat is appealing, so we put it to the test.

We compared hair dried 100 times on maximum heat and speed, both with and without negatively charged

ions, under an electron microscope. We found that the ionic function visibly reduced such microscopic signs of damage as hair-shaft blistering and lifting of the cuticles. In fact, it damaged hair only as much as if you had dried it on low heat and speed settings.

Our testers weren't always convinced that the negatively charged ions saved them from frizz, but many said their hair felt softer.



From left: normal hair; hair after 100 dryings on maximum heat and speed; hair after 100 dryings on maximum heat and speed with ionic function

Features explained

The hairdryer basics you need to know



■ **COOL SHOT** This button (above) rapidly lowers the air temperature to set your hairstyle – cool hair is less likely to lose its shape.

■ POWER CORD

Cords vary in length from about 2 to 3 metres. Look for a hairdryer with a long cord, if you

want to style your hair by a mirror.

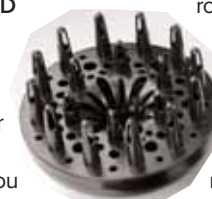
■ CONCENTRATOR

NOZZLE Direct this narrow attachment towards hair roots to add volume. It concentrates heat as well as airflow, so move it frequently to avoid damaging your hair.

■ **DIFFUSER** (below) This holds sections of your hair up and gives volume to the

roots. It also diffuses

the airflow, helping define curls. 'Sock' diffusers are soft and usually made of foam.



How we test

Full of hot air

To judge a hairdryer's range of settings, we measure air temperature on its lowest and highest heat, and measure airflow speed on each setting. We also soak a piece of cloth with water and calculate how quickly it is dried.

Hair we go

Three hairdressers compared how easy the hairdryers were to use; we

also ran a 10-week trial, during which each dryer was tested by 10 users.

Thirty three people volunteered their services, despite the potential for bad hair days. They used the hairdryers as they normally would, but also tried all the attachments and features. They told us about ease of use, how their hair looked and felt, and whether the dryer got their hair looking its best.

Contacts

Babyliss 0870 513 3191
www.babyliss.co.uk

Braun 0800 783 7010
www.braun.com

Imetec 0870 855 3350
www.imetec.it

John Lewis 0845 604 9049
www.johnlewis.com

Nicky Clarke 0161 621 6900
www.nickyclarke.com

Philips 0845 601 0354

www.consumer.philips.com

Remington 0800 212438

www.uk.remington-europe.com

Revlon 0207 391 7400

www.revlon.com

Toni&Guy 0114 290 1455

www.hot-uk.co.uk

Vidal Sassoon 0114 290 1455

www.hot-uk.co.uk

Wahl 01222 774 0066

www.wahl.co.uk