

Space-saving compromise

Best Buy washer-dryers from less than £500, plus convenience features that are worth considering

If you're pushed for space, you may be tempted by a washer-dryer rather than a separate washing machine and tumble-dryer. Sometimes this may be cheaper, too: for example, our John Lewis Best Buy is £58 less than its cheapest own-brand washing machine and tumble-dryer.

You also have a greater choice of models these days, and larger drum sizes are now available.

Despite this, a dual-purpose machine will mean compromises. Some wash clothes well, but for drying they're usually slower, less efficient and take a smaller

load than a decent tumble-dryer. This may not matter to you – only just over one in four Which? members regularly uses their machine for drying.

Our Best Buys have lots of useful features. The AEG-Electrolux and John Lewis machines cost £500 less than the Miele (see opposite) and score only slightly less. The Tricity Bendix WDR1241 (6) is worth considering as a budget buy.

Bosch and Zanussi-Electrolux were updating their range as we tested, so their models don't feature in this article.

OUR RESEARCH

At the time of selection, we choose the washer-dryers we test by talking to manufacturers about their biggest-selling models and future plans, consulting industry experts and market intelligence reports, and checking the main high-street shops, kitchen specialist stores and popular websites. The models tested in this report include, where possible, the most recently launched top-sellers from brands with the largest market share and some Best Buys that are still available from previous tests. See www.which.co.uk/washerdryers for all 36 models recently 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.

What you should look for

WASHING PROGRAMS

Programs at different temperatures for cottons, man-made fibres and delicates are standard for washer-dryers. Some machines have options such as soak, stain removal, extra rinse, rapid, intensive and half load

VARIABLE SPIN SPEEDS

These help protect woollens and other delicate items. It's useful if the default spin speed for your machine is higher than 1,000 revolutions a minute. This is usually indicated by having the numbers 12, 13, 14 or 16 in the product's model name (12 representing 1,200rpm, for example)



DELAYED START

Some models let you program them to start washing between one and 24 hours later in the day.

This means you can do the washing overnight to take advantage of cheap electricity. If you use delayed start at night, fit a smoke alarm nearby

DRYING

Machines usually dry about half as much as they can wash, so you need to remove half the load for drying. Clothes are easier to iron when they contain about 12 per cent moisture. This isn't something that you can assess yourself, so automatic programs and suggested iron-dry times can be useful. All our Best Buys have iron-dry programs

HOW TO BUY

Questions to consider

■ **WHAT TYPE?** Freestanding models are easy to fit under a worktop. Built-in models hide behind a kitchen cabinet door, giving a sleeker look, but there are fewer models to choose from.

■ **FINDING THE MODEL** Retailers such as John Lewis and Currys will order a model for you. Independent electrical stores normally pride themselves on being able to track down any model, and many manufacturers keep lists of dealers. See 'Contacts', p58. Online stores can offer big savings, but check delivery charges and customer reviews before buying.

■ **DELIVERY AND DISPOSAL** Delivery usually costs £15 to £20. Check with the retailer whether it will take away an old model. If not, you could get your council to collect it (it may charge) or you could take it to the local tip free.

■ **INSTALLATION** Some retailers include this as part of delivery. Independent shops often offer this as an incentive. Place machines on an even surface to prevent noise and vibration. Use the adjustable feet to ensure the machine is level.

**1 FREESTANDING**

67% Miele WT2670 Honeycomb Care
£999

The Miele has so many programs and temperature choices that every piece of clothing should get just the right treatment. There are particular programs for delicates and silks, and jeans, for example.

But it's also easy to use. An LCD display shows the program you've chosen and guides you through it.

It cleans clothes as well as Best Buy washing machines, and dries well, too. This is also one of the quietest machines tested. The five-year warranty is longer than for most models. Cheapest store is John Lewis. **WORTH KNOWING** You can save up to £150 by buying this model online.

Available Comet, Currys, John Lewis Capacity 5/2.5kg Spin speeds 400-1,600rpm Energy label A Washing programs 40 Colours White

WHICH?
BEST BUY

**2 FREESTANDING**

65% AEG-Electrolux L16830 Lavamat Turbo £479

A delayed start function lets you plan for freshly tumble-dried clothes in the morning – one of many useful features.

This machine is good at washing and drying but not rinsing, so if you have sensitive skin use its extra-rinse feature. The drying sensor automatically chooses drying times for you.

Options such as time saver and pre-wash could come in handy and the rinse-hold and lower spin speed options can help to reduce creases. Cheapest store is John Lewis.

WORTH KNOWING AEG-Electrolux washer-dryers have above-average reliability, according to our annual survey of Which? members.

Available Comet, Currys, John Lewis Capacity 7/3.5kg Spin speeds 700-1,600rpm Energy label B Washing programs 16 Colours White

WHICH?
BEST BUY

The Miele WT2670 is one of the quietest models we've tested

**3 FREESTANDING**

62% John Lewis JLWD1408 £499

This can wash and dry more than the John Lewis washer-dryer we tested last year, which narrowly missed being a Best Buy.

The washing options include quick, pre-wash and extra rinse and there are four spin speeds, for dealing with different fabrics sensitively, and a rinse-hold option. You can also choose between timed or automatic drying.

At 1,400 rpm, the maximum spin speed is slightly lower than on our other Best Buys, so it leaves clothes slightly damper. The cheapest store is John Lewis.

WORTH KNOWING John Lewis laundry products have guarantees that are longer than average (this model has a three-year guarantee).

Available John Lewis Capacity 7/3.5kg Spin speeds 500-1,400rpm Energy label C Washing programs 16 Colours White

WHICH?
BEST BUY

How we assess convenience



Easy to load

We look for a machine that is easy to load from a standing or sitting position. It should have a large door that opens

to 180 degrees and a wide porthole for pushing clothes into the drum.

Buttons and dials

We look for protruding buttons and dials that are well spaced and clearly marked, with descriptions that are easy to read. They



should be easy to grip and use. Different sizes, textures and shapes, as well as noises that indicate a button has been selected, are helpful to guide people with visual impairments.

Indicator lights

We prefer large and bright lights that are accompanied by a

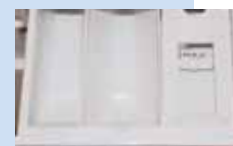


clearly marked and self-explanatory label visible from standing and sitting positions.

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Easy dispenser

The detergent dispenser should be easy to open and close, with no sharp edges. It should require little force and dexterity to remove it for cleaning, and it should be easy to replace afterwards. We look for lidless compartments that are easy to access and shaped or textured to help distinguish them easily.





Facts & scores

Taking a spin around facts we've discovered

On a meter?

You might want to avoid the **Ariston A1600WD (10)** if you're on a water meter – it used 14 to 34 litres of water for each kg of washing it dried. Normal use is six to 16 litres.

Speedy but soggy

A rapid program usually results in damper laundry after spinning. Clothes were particularly soggy at the end of the 44-minute daily program on the **Hoover HDB244 (17)**. Avoid rapid-wash programs if you're also going to dry your clothes in the machine: the damper they are to start with, the longer they'll take to dry.

MODEL	SPECIFICATION							
	PRICE (£)	CAPACITY (kg)	SIZE (cm) (wxhxd)	MAX SPIN SPEED (rpm)	CHILD LOCKS	COTTON	COTTON (min)	EASY CARE
FREESTANDING								
1 MIELE WT2670 Honeycomb Care	999	5/2.5	60x85x60	1,600	✓	★★★★★	118	★★★★★
2 AEG-ELECTROLUX L16830 Lavamat Turbo	479	7/3.5	60x85x63	1,600	✓	★★★★★	115	★★★★★
3 JOHN LEWIS JLWD1408	499	7/3.5	60x85x67	1,400		★★★★★	125	★★★★★
4 AEG-ELECTROLUX L12830 Lavamat Turbo	425	6/3	60x85x67	1,200		★★★★★	114	★★★★★
5 SERVIS M9813	330	7/5	60x85x60	1,300		★★★★	151	★★★
6 TRICITY BENDIX WDR1241	299	5/2.5	60x85x63	1,200		★★★★★	116	★★★★★
7 BAUMATIC BWD1100W	473	6/3	59x85x60	1,100	✓	★★★★	82	★★★★
8 FAGOR FUS-6116	400	6/3	59x85x57	1,100	✓	★★★★	82	★★★★
9 HOOVER HNWF7148 Nextra 8	450	8/5	60x85x62	1,400		★★★★	125	★★★★★
10 ARISTON A1600WD	430	6/5	60x85x62	1,600		★★★★	91	★★★★
11 HOTPOINT WD440 Aquarius	355	6/5	60x85x60	1,400		★★★★★	106	★★★★★
12 HOTPOINT WD640 Aquarius +	430	6/5	60x85x60	1,400		★★★★★	108	★★★★★
BUILT IN								
13 BAUMATIC BWD12.1	400	6/3	59x82x57	1,100	✓	★★★★	86	★★★★
14 DE DIETRICH DLZ692J	735	6/3	59x82x56	1,100	✓	★★★★	85	★★★★
15 AEG-ELECTROLUX L14710VIT Lavamat Turbo	924	5/2.5	60x82x57	1,400	✓	★★★★★	120	★★★★★
16 BELLING WD12V	555	5/2.5	60x83x58	1,200		★★★★	104	★★★★★
17 HOOVER HDB244	530	6/4	60x83x59	1,200		★★★	93	★★★★
18 WHIRLPOOL AWG345/4	570	5/2.5	60x82x56	1,200		★★★★	134	★★★★

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. Other prices are a guide.

Capacity Number of kg of laundry the machines can wash and dry. The figure for washing is given first.

Test performance

Cotton The cleanliness and speed of a 40°C cotton wash. **Easy**

care The cleanliness and speed of a synthetic and polyester wash. **Quick** The cleanliness and speed of a short cotton wash. **Rinse** How well a machine rinses on the cotton, easy-care and quick loads. **Spin drying**

Rating for the time taken to spin dry a cotton and synthetics washing load.

Drying programs How long it took to complete preselected programs. These include full dry, iron dry and man-made fabrics. Models that score ★ take around 50 per cent longer to dry than those that score ★★★★★.

Evenness Whether all clothes are dried evenly or some items are left damp. **Ease of use** Ease of loading and programming the machine and cleaning the lint filters. **Running costs** We test how much electricity that the machines use doing a

load of laundry on a wash and dry cycle. Machines rated ★★★★★ cost around £17 a year less to run than those that are rated ★★★★★, based on five loads of washing and four loads of drying a week. **Brand reliability** The rating for this brand of washer-dryer taken from our annual reliability survey conducted among Which? members, where data is available.

Score

This ignores price and is based on:

Washing	40%
Drying	40%
Ease of use	20%

Contacts

AEG-Electrolux
0870 595 0950
www.aeg-electrolux.co.uk

Ariston
0870 906 6066
www.indesitcompany.com

Baumatic
0118 933 6900
www.baumatic.com

Belling 0871 222 2503
www.belling.co.uk

De Dietrich
0870 060 3230
www.dedietrich.co.uk

Fagor 0870 750 3503
www.fagor.com/uk

Hoover 0870 950 2943
www.hoover.co.uk

Hotpoint 0870 442 7665
www.hotpoint.co.uk

John Lewis 0845 604 9049
www.johnlewis.com

Miele 0123 555 4455
www.miele.co.uk

Servis
0870 516 8299
www.servisuk.co.uk

Tricity Bendix
0870 595 0950
www.tricity-bendix.co.uk

Whirlpool
0870 600 8989
www.whirlpool.co.uk

WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE											SCORE %
EASY CARE (min)	QUICK	QUICK (min)	RINSE	SPIN DRYING	DRYING PROGRAMS	EVENNESS (DRYING)	EASE OF USE	NOISE	RUNNING COSTS	BRAND RELIABILITY	
77	★★★★★	96	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★		67
78	★★★★★	57	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	good	65
85	★★★★★	67	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★		62
78	★★★★★	57	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	good	56
60	★★	54	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★		54
80	★★★★★	64	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★		54
57	n/a	n/a	★★	★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★		53
56	n/a	n/a	★★★★	★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★		53
74	★★★★★	88	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	poor	53
65	★★★★★	77	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★		52
65	★★★	34	★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	poor	52
68	★★★	41	★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	poor	50
61	n/a	n/a	★★★★	★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★		54
60	n/a	n/a	★★★★	★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★		54
78	★★★★★	64	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	good	52
85	★★★★★	54	★★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★		52
69	★★★★★	43	★★	★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	poor	50
85	★★★★★	67	★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★		49

Which should you choose?

Best on a budget

TRICITY BENDIX WDR1241

£299 This Bendix (6) is a good choice if you want a washer but won't often use the machine for drying. Washing times and performance compare well with those of Best Buys.

However, it has a smaller capacity and uses more electricity than most washer-dryers.

The Tricity Bendix WDR1241 is available from John Lewis.



Best for water use

AEG-ELECTROLUX L12830

£425 If you have a water meter, the L12830 (4) could be the model for you, as it uses less water for washing than any other on test – an average 10.6 litres/kg of clothes. Washer-dryers also use water for drying and this machine also does well there, at 8 litres/kg (some models use twice as much water for washing and three times



as much water for drying). However, its drying is uneven.

People with visual impairments might also like this machine, as program controls, buttons and selector are clearly marked. Indicator lights are large and bright, though they're not always close to their label. The detergent dispenser is easy to slot back into place after cleaning.

Best built-in

HOTPOINT BWD129 £348

None of the built-in models we tested this year impressed us.

But this model from our 2006 test is worth considering. It's reasonable at washing and among the best at drying. It's also the cheapest to run and one of the quietest. You could save more by running it during the night on Economy 7. The only reason it's not a Best Buy is because the brand has poor reliability for washer-dryers. Go to www.which.co.uk/washerdryers for the full details. **SCORE 62%**

