

# Remarkable remotes

All-in-one remote controls could provide welcome relief from the jumble of controllers littering living rooms, but which ones push our buttons?

For many people, having a gaggle of remote controls scattered around the living room is a familiar story. Each works with a single device, demands its own diet of batteries, and often goes into hiding just when you need it the most.

Enter the all-in-one remote control. These do-it-all saviours are a solution to the rising number of remotes we use with set-top boxes, TVs and DVD players.

Your first priority when buying a universal controller should be to find out whether the new remote will work with the devices you own. Many universal remotes list brands and model codes for the devices they work with. By programming these codes into the remote, you can then use it with each device you own. While many universal remotes boast of being compatible with hundreds of brands, the reality is that only a few of these are relevant in the UK.

To help universal remotes keep up with new purchases of electronic audio and visual devices, some can download

updates from the internet, receiving new codes so you can use them with new devices.

Some remotes also feature 'learning' capabilities, which mimic the functions of all your remote controls. This patience-testing process requires you to aim an existing remote at your all-in-one replacement. As you press buttons on your old remote, followed by a button on the all-in-one remote, the device 'learns' the functions of your old controllers.

Certain remotes are more complicated than others, while others have greater functionality. Touchscreen remotes, for example, display only the buttons relevant to the device you have selected.

Keep in mind that universal remotes cannot match the intuitive usability of controllers designed for specific devices. We found that a small number of the remotes we tested were incompatible with set-top boxes for Freeview digital TV, so it's best to check for this when you're buying a remote.

## How we test

To test both the versatility and compatibility of each remote, we create a list of devices, such as TVs, VCRs, and DVD players, including big-name brands, less common manufacturers and own

brands available in the UK. We check that each remote is capable of advanced and basic functions. Ergonomics assessors then test each for ease of use and convenience of design.

## Contacts

**Gemini** [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

**Innotech Systems**  
[www.innotechsystems.com](http://www.innotechsystems.com)

**Logitech** 01753 870900  
[www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)

**Marmitek** [www.marmitek.co.uk](http://www.marmitek.co.uk)

**Matsui** 0844 800 3456  
[www.matsuispares.co.uk](http://www.matsuispares.co.uk)

**Meliconi** 0844 499 2380  
[www.meliconi-av.co.uk](http://www.meliconi-av.co.uk)

**Nikkai** 0870 429 6000  
[www.maplin.co.uk](http://www.maplin.co.uk)

**Philips** 0207 949 0069  
[www.philips.co.uk](http://www.philips.co.uk)

**Red Sky Global**  
[www.thereallyusefulstore.co.uk](http://www.thereallyusefulstore.co.uk)

**Sony** 0870 511 1999  
[www.sony.co.uk](http://www.sony.co.uk)

**Strand Europe** 0870 542 5425  
[www.comet.co.uk](http://www.comet.co.uk)

**Technika** 0845 722 5533  
[www.tesco.com](http://www.tesco.com)

**One For All**  
[www.oneforall-int.com](http://www.oneforall-int.com)

## 89% Philips Prestigo SRU9600 £80

The highest-scoring remote in our test, Philips' pricey Prestigo combines a satisfying and versatile touchscreen with a click-wheel for navigating menus, similar to the one used on the popular iPod. Up to eight devices can be programmed with ease, but, as it can't download updates, new devices will need to be controlled via the learning function.

**WE LIKE** An on-screen menu helps in the initial set-up process.

Available Currys Size (l x w x d) 5x6x3cm  
Weight 21g Number of devices controlled 8  
Batteries 3x AA

## 87% One for All Kameleon 5 £50

## 87% One for All Kameleon 8 £70

These two remotes, identical apart from the number of devices they can control, feature sharply contrasted touchscreens that display only the buttons needed for your selected device. They can receive updates via the internet for compatibility with new devices.

**WORTH KNOWING** They feature conventional buttons for volume, channels and navigation.

**URC8305:** Available Argos, Currys, Maplin and PC World  
Size (l x w x d) 23x7x3cm Weight 25g Number of devices controlled 5 Batteries 2x AA

**URC8308:** Available Argos, Currys, Maplin and PC World  
Size (l x w x d) 23x7x2cm Weight 33g Number of devices controlled 8 Batteries 4x AAA



WHICH?  
BEST  
BUY

## 87% One For All Stealth URC7556 £35

Sleekly named and with the looks to match, the Stealth can operate five devices, and we found it easy to program. It can support up to 15 macros for creating operation shortcuts. A learning function will futureproof it to ensure compatibility with new devices. A clearly lit indicator light shows which device has been selected to control.

**WORTH KNOWING** Even with its batteries removed for 24 hours, the Stealth still retains all its programming.



WHICH?  
BEST  
BUY

Available Online Size (l x w x d) 23x5x3cm  
Weight 21g Number of devices controlled 5  
Batteries 4x AAA

MODEL	SPECIFICATION							WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE			SCORE %
	PRICE (£)	NO OF DEVICES CONTROLLED	MACROS	LEARNING DEVICE	DOWNLOADABLE UPDATES	SKY COMPATIBLE	FREEVIEW STB COMPATIBILITY	PERFORMANCE	TOTAL FEATURES	EASE OF USE	
<b>1 PHILIPS</b> Prestigio SRU9600	80	8	✓	✓		✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★ <sup>a</sup>	89
<b>2 ONE FOR ALL</b> Kameleon 5 URC8305	50	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	87
<b>3 ONE FOR ALL</b> Kameleon 8 URC8308	70	8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	87
<b>4 ONE FOR ALL</b> Stealth URC7556	35	5	✓	✓		✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	87
<b>5 MELICONI</b> GumBody Digital 6	34	6	✓	✓		✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	86
<b>6 ONE FOR ALL</b> 5 Universal Comfort Grip URC7950	20	5	✓	✓		✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	81
<b>7 SONY</b> Integrated Remote Commander RM-VL600T	35	8	✓	✓		✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	77
<b>8 LOGITECH</b> Harmony 525	70	15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	74
<b>9 LOGITECH</b> Harmony 555	90	15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	74
<b>10 PHILIPS</b> Universal SRU7040	33	4		✓		✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	72
<b>11 PHILIPS</b> Universal SRU3030	15	3						★★★★	★★★	★★★★	71
<b>12 MARMITEK</b> Easytouch35	34	8	✓	✓		✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	68
<b>13 ONE FOR ALL</b> 4 Universal URC7740	15	4				✓	✓	★★★★	★★★	★★★	63
<b>14 MATSUI</b> 4 Way Remote Control	20	4				✓		★★★	★★★	★★★★	58
<b>15 GEMINI</b> Remote Control for Dummies DUMRC1U	13	8		✓		✓	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	53
<b>16 RED SKY GLOBAL</b> Midas 32L	20	8	✓	✓			✓	★★★	★★★★★	★★	48
<b>17 INNOTECH SYSTEMS</b> Surfboard Universal Remote	23	2		✓				★★★	★★★	★★	43
<b>18 NIKKAI</b> Huge Button Universal Remote A11GT	25	6				✓		★★	★	★★★	37
<b>19 TECHNIKA</b> 6-In-1 Universal Remote Control TT-09	13	6						★★★	★★	★	37
<b>20 STRAND EUROPE</b> Easy Remote 8 in 1	10	8						★★★	★★	★★	35

<sup>a</sup> Despite narrowly missing a five-star rating for ease of use, the Philips Prestigio SRU9600's exceptionally strong performance score ensured that this model achieved the highest total test score

## 86% Meliconi GumBody Digital 6 £34

This universal remote features the ability to learn how to control new devices, so it will work if you buy a new TV. Our testers found that the Meliconi GumBody Digital 6 remote was easy to use, with effortless programming, intuitive design and soft, drop-resistant casing. The sensibly sized buttons are well spaced with clear labelling.

**WORTH KNOWING** We found that this remote can usually control devices, even if it is not aimed directly at them.



Available Online Size (l x w x d) 20x6x4cm Weight 18g  
Number of devices controlled 6 Batteries 2x AA

## 81% One For All 5 Universal Comfort Grip URC7950 £20

Simplicity is key with this unimposing, neat remote that can control five devices with its sensibly arranged buttons. Our tests found that inputting brand codes is straightforward, and the controller has a learning capacity that lets it mimic other remotes. A clear instruction manual and included DVD makes it easy to set up this remote.

**WORTH KNOWING** Unlike many other models, the Comfort Grip has no light to indicate which device you are controlling.



Available Online Size (l x w x d) 19x6x3cm Weight 11g  
Number of devices controlled 5 Batteries 2x AA

### 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. If we couldn't find them at major high-street retailers, we give the most common online price. Prices for other models are a guide to what you should expect to pay. **Macros** The ability to program a button to perform several operations in sequence when pressed. **Freeview STB Compatibility** Whether it can operate the majority of UK Freeview set-top boxes via standard code entry, a learning function, or internet updates.

#### Score

Ignores prices and is based on:

Performance	45%
Ease of use	40%
Features	15%