

The **iron** to suit you

Steam through your ironing with one of our Best Buys, whether you want fast results or a professional finish



Want to save time on your ironing?

Our video guide is packed with speedy ironing tips, from when to use continuous steam to how best to target really stubborn creases. Log on to www.which.co.uk/ironingtips to watch the video, and visit www.which.co.uk/irons to see full test results for all 50 of our irons and steam generators, plus the most up-to-date prices.

Our unrivalled reviews mean that we now have more than 50 irons online, and nine of them are Best Buys. To help you find the right one for your lifestyle and needs, we've selected the best models to suit different priorities.

■ **Large heaps** The best models for mass ironers who save up the week's ironing (and maybe the previous week's, too), to be done in one go.

■ **Quick results** We pick speedy irons for those who iron the outfit they want to wear for the day, that morning.

■ **Perfectionists** Steam generators that give a professional finish, not only for work shirts, but also for bed linen.

■ **Budget** Great-value irons for those looking to spend as little as possible, but still get decent results. They're ideal if

you iron only the few clothes that need to be smart, rather than the whole wardrobe.

We've put all the Best Buys available in the table, p70, along with the newly tested irons and steam generators, which have a separate water tank and are more powerful at creating steam than traditional steam irons. They're good at removing tough creases, and should help you speed through your laundry pile.

Most of the cheaper irons we've tested, priced at less than £20, did poorly in our tests. It's usually better to keep an eye out for a more expensive iron that has been heavily discounted.

We've recently seen shops halve the price of some really good irons – see www.whichcompare.co.uk for the most up-to-date prices.

Best Buys for perfectionists

This iron's tip is one of the narrowest we've seen, so you can iron small pleats



88% Philips GC4610 Azur £32



This Best Buy Philips has a large 360ml tank and produces excellent ironing results across the board. It takes longer to heat up than some others, but this matters less when you're ironing a stack of clothes rather than a few items. It's a little heavier than some models on test, but that means less pressure is needed. It's quiet when continuously steaming, so you could listen to music or the radio while you iron. It's cheapest at John Lewis.

WE LIKE It has a thin soleplate for ironing under buttons, and is comfortable to use no matter what size your hands are thanks to the soft-touch buttons and handle.

Other Best Buys in this category include the Philips GC4610i Azur Ionic, £78 (2), the Rowenta DZ9115 Advancer, £70 (5) and the Philips GC7230, £122 (17).

Best Buys for quick results

86% Bosch TDA 8337 GB Sensixx Comfort Power £40



When speed is of the essence, this Bosch produces fantastic results. It takes just 35 seconds to get to the three-dot heat setting for cottons – slow irons can take more than a minute. It can steam continuously for around 10 minutes at its highest rate on one fill of the tank. It's cheapest at John Lewis.

WE LIKE The cable coils round the heel of the iron for storage, and a clip holds it in place.

Other Best Buys in this category include the Tefal FV 5260 Aquaspeed Ultracord, £47 (4) and the Breville VIN010 Extreme Steam, £52 (6).



MODEL		SPECIFIC		
		PRICE	TANK CAPACITY (litres)	CORD LENGTH (m)
STEAM IRONS				
1	PHILIPS GC4610 Azur	32	0.36	3.0
2	PHILIPS GC4640i Azur Ionic	78	0.33	3.0
3	BOSCH TDA 8337 GB Sensixx Comfort Power	40	0.26	3.0
4	TEFAL FV 5260 Aquaspeed Ultracord	47	0.30	2.9
5	ROWENTA DZ9115 Advancer	70	0.30	2.9
6	BREVILLE VIN010 Extreme Steam	52	0.34	3.0
7	RUSSELL HOBBS 13916 Slip stream ^a	16	0.30	3.0
8	MORPHY RICHARDS 40652 Ecoelectric Turbo	40	0.36	2.1
9	TESCO IRDT8 Steam Iron	17	0.18	2.1
10	MORPHY RICHARDS 40687 Turbosteam	25	0.37	1.9
11	BREVILLE VIN005 Super Steam Extra	24	0.22	2.9
12	BREVILLE VIN002 Power Steam	9	0.29	2.0
13	BREVILLE VIN003 Super Steam	18	0.30	3.0
14	STEAMWORKS (ARGOS) KB 9288	7	0.18	2.0
15	STEAMWORKS (ARGOS) KB 7288A	10	0.26	2.0
STEAM GENERATORS				
16	PHILIPS GC8220	176	1.35	2.5
17	PHILIPS GC7230	122	0.90	2.0
18	TEFAL GV8330 Pro Express	215	1.64	2.0
19	MORPHY RICHARDS 42296 Jet Stream Elite	117	1.10	1.8
20	PHILIPS GC9040 Premium	245	1.03	1.9
21	TESCO SGC2 Steam Generator	40	1.10	1.8

^a This was being discontinued as we went to press, but you may find it at Amazon and local independents

Best Buys for large heaps

79% Tefal GV8330 Pro Express £215



This Tefal steam generator produces far more steam than a conventional iron – 50 minutes' worth on the maximum setting from one fill of the tank. The ergonomically placed cord – called the 'ultracord' – automatically falls away from your clothes as you iron. It's cheapest at Tesco.

WE LIKE It's much better at vertical steaming than a conventional iron.

Other Best Buys in this category include the Philips GC8220, £176 (16).



ACTION		WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE						SCORE (%)
WEIGHT (kg)	AUTO SHUT-OFF	SKIRT	SHIRT	TROUSERS	HEAT-UP TIME	NOISE	CONVENIENCE	
2.1		★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	88
2.2	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	87
1.7		★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	86
1.9		★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	85
2.2		★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★★	80
1.8	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	77
1.8		★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	72
1.6	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	63
1.5		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	62
1.6		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	57
1.6	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	54
1.4		★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	48
1.5		★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	45
1.4		★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	34
1.7		★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	29
1.0		★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★	★★★★★	85
1.3		★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	83
1.4	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★	★★★★	79
1.1		★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	70
1.2	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★	★★★★★	67
1.2	✓	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★	★★★★★	61

USING THE TABLE

We tested steam irons and steam generators from leading brands. The more stars the better.

Specification

Price For Best Buys we give the cheapest widely available high-street price. Prices for other models are a guide. See www.whichcompare.co.uk for the latest prices.

Tank capacity Measured size of water tank. **Cord length** From plug to iron. For generators, this is the length from the plug to the tank. **Weight** For steam irons, this is with a full tank. For steam generators, this is just for the handheld iron, not the water tank. **Auto shut-off** A safety feature that switches an iron off automatically if left unattended. See 'Features explained' at www.which.co.uk/irons for more.

Test performance

Skirt/Shirt/Trousers Our professional ironer assessed the effort that was needed, the quality of finish and the time taken to get a good result. **Heat-up time** How quickly the iron heats up from cold to be ready to iron on the three-dot heat setting for cotton. **Noise** Irons with three stars or more are the quietest.

Convenience We asked a panel of three ironers to rate how easy each of the irons was to set up, use and store.

Score

This ignores price and is based on:

Performance	50%
Setup and storage	20%
Usability	20%
Heating and steam	10%

Best value on a budget

72% Tesco IRDT8 Steam Iron £17

This budget model isn't a Best Buy, but it produces satisfactory results. It's very quiet, heats up quickly and is easy to use, but the cord is short. This restricts where you can iron. It can steam for six minutes at the maximum setting before it needs refilling.

WORTH KNOWING It needs frequent descaling, as performance worsened after just 50 hours of steaming in our test. The self-clean function is easy to operate but not very effective, so you'll have to repeat it frequently.

Worth tracking down: As we went to press, the Russell Hobbs 13916 Slip stream (7) was being discontinued. It retails at £30, but was £16 in Tesco's clearance sales. Independent retailers may still have stock.



Cheap, but not cheerful

29% ARGOS STEAMWORKS

KB 7288A (PICTURED), £10

34% ARGOS STEAMWORKS

KB 9288, £7

Ironing may be a chore, but trying to do it with a low-scoring iron will make the job really miserable.

These Argos Steamworks irons performed badly in our tests. The steam output for both models was poor and, as they're lightweight, our experts had to apply lots of pressure – but still couldn't achieve decent results. Pressing down on an iron takes effort and will slow your progress. With these budget irons, you tend to get what you pay for.

