

Take a tumble

Our latest Best Buy tumble dryers, plus the strengths and weaknesses of the major brands currently on the market

In the past four years, we've tested more than 100 tumble dryers – including all the current top ten bestsellers.

This has given us a good idea of the strengths and weaknesses of different brands and we look at these in this report (see 'Brand news', p74), as well as naming Best Buys as usual.

We have given Exceptional Value status to the Zanussi-Electrolux ZDC67550W condenser (5) and its ZDES7140W vented model (16). They are the

cheapest Best Buys in their category.

Two other models, the Electrolux EDC77570 Inspire (6) and the LG TDV10050E (13) performed up to our Best Buy standard, but we don't have enough information on those brands' reliability to make them Best Buys.

Having covered so many of the big manufacturers' models previously, this time we've included smaller and newer brands such as Beko, Electra, Electrolux, Gorenje and Maytag.

Four built-in dryers turned out to be the same basic model

This test is our first to include built-in tumble dryers and this turned up a surprise. All four built-in vented dryers we bought to test – the Baumatic, Caple, CDA and White Knight – were the same basic model. It did quite well, so if you want a built-in dryer, look for the best price regardless of brand. See 'Contacts', p74.

In 2005, we found the same basic compact dryer available under different names. It's been updated as the Hotpoint V3D01 (27) and is part of this test.

What you should look for

PROGRAM DIAL

This lets you choose drying programs for different fabrics on sensor dryers and your own drying time on timer models. Times for different levels of dryness, such as storage, extra dry, or iron dry, are sometimes possible

DRYING SENSOR

This detects how much moisture remains in your washing and stops the machine when clothes are dry

PROGRAM STAGE LEDs

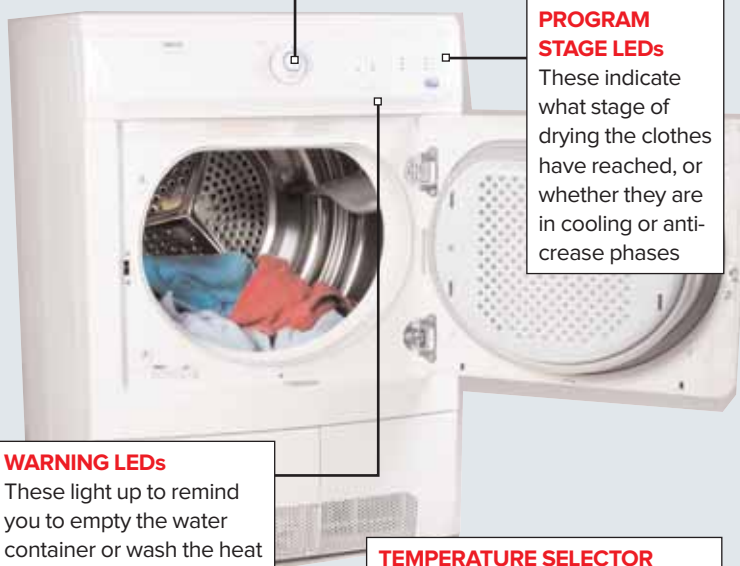
These indicate what stage of drying the clothes have reached, or whether they are in cooling or anti-crease phases

WARNING LEDs

These light up to remind you to empty the water container or wash the heat exchanger on condenser dryers or to clean the lint filter to keep your machine running at peak efficiency

TEMPERATURE SELECTOR

Select 'high' for drying cottons and 'low' for heat-sensitive fabrics. Check icons on the clothes' care label for which to use



How to buy

TUMBLE DRYER TYPES

■ Vented models expel damp air from the dryer through a flexible exhaust hose hung out of an open window or connected to a vent through a wall.

Condenser models extract water from the air in the dryer's drum and collect it in a removable water reservoir. Both types have an automatic drying sensor or the facility to choose drying time.

INSTALLATION

■ Vented dryers must be placed near a window or where you can create a permanent vent through the wall. Exhaust hoses should be as short and straight as possible to allow good airflow through the machine, which reduces the risk of overheating and minimises running costs.

■ Condenser dryers are more flexible. Some can be plumbed straight into a drain, while others rely on

you emptying the water reservoir regularly. Not all models collect as much water as we'd like, so use them in a well-ventilated area to avoid mildew.

MAINTENANCE

■ A build-up of lint (fluff) in tumble dryers is a fire risk.

■ All tumble dryers have filters to catch lint which should be cleaned every time you use the machine to maintain good airflow. Wipe the drum with a damp cloth regularly (this also helps to keep automatic drying sensors working), and check the vent outlet and hose of vented dryers for fluff.

■ The heat exchanger in condensers needs washing out about five times a year – more if you use the machine a lot. Some models have a light to show when this needs doing. You also need to empty the water reservoir every time you use a condenser dryer.

**1 CONDENSER**

70% Miele
T7644C £579

WHICH?
BEST BUY

Miele has got high-specification tumble dryers down to a fine art – its models dry swiftly, evenly and quietly. This sensor model takes 98 minutes to dry a full 6kg load of cottons, and offers plenty of other programs, including ones for woollens/handwash items, smoothing, shirts and denim. It's a good choice for people who have dexterity problems or use a wheelchair. Cheapest store is John Lewis.

WORTH KNOWING The water reservoir is simple to empty.

Available Comet, Currys and John Lewis Max load 6kg Sensor drying Yes Delayed start 24hr Remaining time display Yes Brand reliability Good

**2 CONDENSER**

69% Miele
T8422C £700

This has a honeycomb-stamped drum, which is supposed to be gentler on fabrics, and extra programs for silks and outerwear. The condenser works well, and the automatic sensor chooses the drying time effectively. The water reservoir is harder to empty on this than the T7644C (left), due to its sliding cover. It's available at Currys.

WHICH?
BEST BUY

WE FOUND Some controls on this and other Miele aren't well designed for visually-impaired people.

Available Currys Max load 6kg Sensor drying Yes Delayed start 24hr Remaining time display Yes Brand reliability Good

**3 CONDENSER**

65% Miele
T4809Ci £770

WHICH?
BEST BUY

You get quick, even and economical drying with this model, which is our only built-in Best Buy. Unfortunately, it's noisier than freestanding Miele dryers.

The condenser and sensor functions work well. It is very similar to the T8422C (2), with the same drawbacks to the control panel button and water reservoir. The T4809Ci is widely available online.

WE LIKE The lint filters on Miele dryers are always easy to clean, and this one is no exception.

Available Online Max load 6kg Sensor drying Yes Delayed start 24hr Remaining time display Yes Brand reliability Good

The Miele
T8422C
has extra
programs
for silks
and
outerwear

**4 CONDENSER**

61% AEG-Electrolux
T56830 £369

WHICH?
BEST BUY

You can choose full drying times or 20 or 40 minutes' timed drying with this. You can also delay drying by up to nine hours to use cheaper electricity. There are gentler programs for frequently worn items, woollens and special-care fabrics. Available at John Lewis.

WE LIKE Indicators show when the lint filter, heat exchanger or water container needs attention.

Available John Lewis Max load 7kg Sensor drying Yes Delayed start 3, 6, 9hr Remaining time display No Brand reliability Good

**5 CONDENSER**

61% Zanussi-Electrolux
ZDC67550W £299

EXCEPTIONAL
VALUE

WHICH?
BEST BUY

Our best-value condenser is economical, quick and quiet. The heat exchanger is hard to remove to clean but this needs doing only every couple of months. Cheapest at John Lewis.

WE LIKE Good for those with reduced mobility or dexterity problems.

Available Currys, John Lewis Max load 7kg Sensor drying Yes Delayed start 3, 6, 9hr Remaining time display No Brand reliability Average

**7 CONDENSER**

60% John Lewis
JLTDC07 £359

WHICH?
BEST BUY

This will work out drying times for a wide range of fabrics. Alternatively, you can choose a 30-minute timed drying program. It's noisier than other freestanding condensers. Programs can be locked to ensure children can't change them. It's available at John Lewis only.

WORTH KNOWING It comes with a free three-year guarantee.

Available John Lewis Max load 7kg Sensor drying Yes Delayed start 20hr Remaining time display Yes Brand reliability n/a



14 VENTED

68% Miele
T8322 £550

This Miele dries quickly and quietly and is energy efficient. Which? members have found that Miele machines have good reliability, so this is a worthy Best Buy overall. The sensor chooses drying time effectively, and the wide range of programs includes smoothing, shirts, denim and silks. It's available at Comet.

WORTH KNOWING This is a good choice for people in a wheelchair or with dexterity problems.

Available Comet Max load 6kg Sensor drying Yes
Delayed start 24hr Remaining time display Yes
Brand reliability Good



Facts & scores

Program lock

All the Miele dryers (1, 2, 3 and 14) we tested have an electronic lock activated by twisting the program dial the correct number of clicks clockwise and anti-clockwise.

Similar models

There are four similar models in the Maytag (9) condenser range. The MDE9651 is the most basic, available in a white (AEW) or more expensive steel (AES) finish. Pricier versions have a longer timed drying option and come in white (MDE9701AEW) or steel (MDE9801AES) finish.



15 VENTED

66% John Lewis
JLDV08 £259

This has a good range of programs and a mechanical door lock. It's one of the best models for visually-impaired people or those with dexterity problems. John Lewis dryers are too new to feature in our annual reliability survey. It's a Best Buy as it has a free three-year guarantee – one or two is more usual. It's available at John Lewis.

WORTH KNOWING You can stack the dryer on top of your washing machine using a John Lewis kit CN14RIM (£35).

Available John Lewis Max load 7kg Sensor drying Yes
Delayed start 20hr Remaining time display Yes
Brand reliability n/a



16 VENTED

66% Zanussi-
Electrolux
ZDE57140W £189

Our cheapest Best Buy is widely available online but harder to find on the high street. It takes just two hours to dry a full load of cottons, and the synthetics program is quick, too. Indicator lights give you some idea of how long drying has to go but there's no display to show time remaining.

WORTH KNOWING There's a program to dry cottons more quickly.

Available Online Max load 7kg Sensor drying Yes
Delayed start No Remaining time display No
Brand reliability Average

EXCEPTIONAL
VALUE



MODEL		SPECIFICATION		
		PRICE (£)	SIZE (cm) (hxxwx d)	BUILT IN
CONDENSER				
1	MIELE T7644C	579	85x60x64	
2	MIELE T8422C	700	85x60x59	
3	MIELE T4809Ci	770	81x60x59	✓
4	AEG-ELECTROLUX T56830	369	85x60x63	
5	ZANUSSI-ELECTROLUX ZDC67550W	299	85x60x63	
6	ELECTROLUX EDC77570 Inspire	332	84x60x65	
7	JOHN LEWIS JLTDC07	359	85x60x63	
8	ZANUSSI-ELECTROLUX ZDC46130	270	85x60x63	
9	MAYTAG MDE9651AES 60 series	449	85x60x62	
10	ELECTRA E2701W Autosense	238	85x60x60	
11	BEKO DRCS68W	200	84x60x56	
12	GORENJE D50210	275	84x60x64	
VENTED				
13	LG TDV10050E	754	99x69x76	
14	MIELE T8322	550	85x60x59	
15	JOHN LEWIS JLDV08	259	85x60x60	
16	ZANUSSI-ELECTROLUX ZDE57140W	189	85x60x60	
17	MAYTAG MDE9601AEW 60 series	358	85x60x62	
18	ELECTROLUX EDE57160W Inspire	199	85x60x60	
19	BAUMATIC LTD1	235	81x60x55	✓
20	BEKO DRVS62W	160	84x60x56	
21	CAPLE TD100	229	81x60x55	✓
22	CDA C1920	225	81x60x55	✓
23	WHITE KNIGHT 43 AW	179	81x60x55	✓
24	GORENJE D50110	180	84x60x57	
25	ZANUSSI-ELECTROLUX ZDE26100W	170	85x60x60	
26	KENWOOD KVT1W	150	85x60x60	
27	HOTPOINT V3D01	140	67x49x48	

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. Prices for other models are a guide to what you should expect to pay. Prices of models available only online are in

italics. **Sensor** This automatically chooses the drying time.

Test performance

Synthetics Time taken to dry a full load of synthetic fabrics. **Evenness** Whether all items are evenly dry or some are still soggy while others are bone dry. **Creases** ★★★ means that

		WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE										SCORE %
FULL LOAD (KG)	SENSOR	FULLY DRY	IRON DRY	SYNTHETICS	EVENNESS	CREASES	CONDENSER	EASE OF USE	NOISE	ENERGY USE	BRAND RELIABILITY	
6	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	good	70
6	✓	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	good	69
6	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	good	65
7	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	good	61
7	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	average	61
7	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★		61
7	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★		60
6	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	average	55
6	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★	★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★		50
7	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★		49
6	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★	★	★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★		46
6		★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★		42
10	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★	n/a	★★★★	★★	★★★★★		74
6	✓	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★	n/a	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	good	68
7	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	n/a	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★		66
7	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	n/a	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	average	66
6	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	n/a	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★		65
7	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	n/a	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★		63
6		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	n/a	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★		60
6	✓	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	n/a	★★★★	★★	★★★★		60
6		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	n/a	★★	★★★★	★★★★		60
6		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	n/a	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★		60
6		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	n/a	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	average	60
5		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	n/a	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★		60
6		★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★	n/a	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	average	59
6		★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★	n/a	★★★★	★★	★★★★		56
3		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	n/a	★★	★★	★★★★	average	51

the washing item will have some creases and still need to be ironed. **Condenser** How little water from the washing escapes from the dryer. **Ease of use** Ease of loading, programming, and cleaning the water bottle, lint filters and heat exchangers. **Brand reliability** Based on our annual survey of Which? members. Brands with no

result shown in the table are too new or owned by too few Which? members to obtain results that are statistically valid.

Score

Ignores price and is based on:

Condenser dryers

Drying time and energy consumption **45%**

Ease of use **17.5%**
 Trapping water **15%**
 Evenness of drying **10%**
 Creases **7.5%**
 Noise **5%**
Vented dryers
 Drying time and energy consumption **53%**
 Ease of use **21%**
 Evenness of drying **11%**
 Creases **9%**
 Noise **6%**

OUR RESEARCH

When selecting tumble dryers to test, we consult manufacturers, market intelligence reports and industry experts, then check availability on the high street and online.

The models that we tested include top-sellers from the most popular brands, products that have innovative features together with models from some lesser-known brands.

Brand news

We've looked at the good and bad points of the main brands we've tested since 2003

AEG-ELECTROLUX Its models are consistently Best Buys

Pros Great performance; lots of features; sensor and condenser models work effectively; good reliability; brand recommended by Which? members
Cons More expensive than most

BEKO It started making dryers recently, so reliability unproven

Pros Low prices; reasonable vented dryer
Cons Condenser doesn't collect enough water; limited range

BOSCH Consistently good, with three levels of features

Pros Good range, several Best Buys; average brand reliability, recommended by you
Cons Cost more than average

CREDA Budget brand with a good range

Pros Reasonable vented dryers;

average reliability; low prices

Cons Condensers let too much water escape; sensors not as accurate as we'd like

HOOVER A mid-priced brand with a wide range. We'll be testing recent models soon

Pros Reasonable vented dryers
Cons Poor brand reliability; condenser and sensors have been disappointing

HOTPOINT Entry-level models are best sellers, including the 2005 Best Buy vented VTD00.

Pros A wide range to choose from; different colours; average reliability
Cons Condensers don't collect enough water; sensors don't always choose correct drying times

INDESIT A budget brand with a wide range of models. None of its models is in this test

Pros Some good vented dryers; average reliability

Cons We've tested both its condensers. Both have poor condensation efficiency

JOHN LEWIS John Lewis dryers are too new for us to have reliability information. However, they have longer guarantees than is usual

MIELE A huge range. Each one we've tested is a Best Buy

Pros Condensers and sensors work well; great performance, good reliability, recommended by our members
Cons Expensive

WHIRLPOOL A mid-priced brand with average reliability, several Best Buys

Pros Great vented models
Cons Some of its condenser models were too slow to be Best Buys



WHITE KNIGHT Budget brand with wide choice of models

Pros Average reliability; low price
Cons Performance is unremarkable; poor condensers

ZANUSSI-ELECTROLUX

Good range, some Best Buys
Pros Average reliability; condensers collect water efficiently compared with many other value brands
Cons Some are slow

Which should you choose?



Best for big family

LG TDV10050E £754 ONLINE The 10kg capacity of this LG (13) makes it a great choice if you have tons of washing to dry. It's a bit noisy, though. It's not a Best Buy because we don't have information about the reliability of LG dryers from our annual survey of Which? members and it has only a two-year guarantee. It's not widely available but you can find it online.



Best on a budget

BEKO DRVS62W £160 The Beko, (20), one of the top ten bestselling models, is available from Comet and Currys. Given its price, it's worth considering, but it's not as quick or quiet as a Best Buy. Unusually for such a cheap dryer, it offers sensor drying. The brand is too new for us to have reliability information on its tumble dryers.

Contacts

AEG-Electrolux
 0870 595 0950
www.aeg-electrolux.co.uk
Baumatic 0118 933 6900
www.baumatic.co.uk
Beko 01923 818121
www.beko.co.uk
Caple
 0870 606 9606
www.caple.co.uk
CDA
 01949 862010
www.cda-europe.com
Electra 0870 516 8299
www.electra.uk.com
Electrolux
 0870 595 0950
www.electrolux.co.uk

Gorenje 020 8247 3980
www.gorenje.co.uk
Hotpoint 0870 150 6070
www.hotpoint.co.uk
John Lewis 0845 604 9049
www.johnlewis.co.uk
Kenwood 0844 561 6263
www.currys.co.uk
LG 0870 873 5454; uk.lge.com
Maytag 01737 231000
www.maytag.co.uk
Miele 01235 554455
www.miele.co.uk
White Knight 01422 203585
www.crosslee.co.uk
Zanussi-Electrolux
 0870 595 0950
www.zanussi-electrolux.co.uk

MORE DRYERS ONLINE

Go online at www.which.co.uk/tumbledryers for more than 110 machines, including previously tested models. This information is regularly updated with new machines, availability and prices. See www.which.co.uk/loginhelp if you would like help logging in.