

Clearer picture

You don't have to spend pounds to get pristine panes – our top Best Buy window-cleaning spray was the cheapest on test

It's spring-cleaning season, so to help put the sparkle back in to your windows we've put a range of window-cleaning wipes and liquids through their paces.

As you can see from the table, opposite, almost all the liquids on test achieved a higher score than even the best of the wipes. This is not only because the liquids are better value for money – you can vary the amount you use so there's less waste – but they also produced good results.

The exception was Windolene Original Cream (9). Launched in 1922 as 'the first sophisticated approach to window cleaning', the cream cleaner required extra elbow grease in our tests to polish away its creamy residue.

We also tested two reusable microfibre cloths, the Spontex Window Wonder (£2.19, available from Waitrose) and the E-cloth (£4.95, from John Lewis). Both were very easy to use – just add water and wipe. The E-cloth produced slightly better results than its cheaper rival, requiring little polishing. It's reusable up to 300 washes, so is good value.

For those of you wondering whether traditional cleaning methods can do the job just as well as modern products, we also tested vinegar, ammonia, washing-up liquid, and newspaper and water. White distilled vinegar was the quickest to clean, but the traces it left

behind needed buffing for a decent finish – and the smell may not appeal to everyone.

You can use damp newspaper to clean your windows and, provided you leave it to dry, you can recycle it afterwards – making it the greenest cleaner on test. Newspaper required less polishing than other traditional methods but took twice as long as the wipes to remove fat and cigarette tar.

Based on our tests, with time and perseverance you can get windows clean using almost anything – including plain water. But why break a sweat over hand prints on your panes? Our Best Buys produce quick results at a low cost, with less huffing and puffing for a polished finish.



Our mechanical arm wiped clean 180 panes of glass

Clean me

The liquid products are applied to a 72cm² rectangle of kitchen towel (that's slightly larger than a playing card) – we use the same surface area for any wipes on test. We fix each piece of kitchen towel or wipe to a mechanical arm, which sweeps back and forth once over a soiled window. We insert a new piece of kitchen towel or wipe, and repeat the process until the window is clean. We measure the amount of product needed to clean the glass, and assess how much polishing is required to remove any smears of product left on the pane.

Smoking room

As well as being bad for your health, cigarettes are also bad for your windows – over time, tar builds up on the glass. We burn six cigarettes underneath glass for two minutes and then conduct our cleaning test to see how much cleaner is needed to remove the yellow-brown stain.

1 LIQUID

89% Asda Window & Glass Cleaner 64p

This impressive spray was the cheapest cleaner on test and we found it left no trace of residue on the pane after only a few wipes of your cloth. It was also one of the most effective when cleaning fat and fingermarks.

WE FOUND This Asda cleaner sprays more product with one squeeze of the trigger than any other Best Buys on test. To use less, squeeze the trigger only partway.

Cheapest store Asda Bottle size 500ml



The impressive Asda spray was the cheapest cleaner on test

2 LIQUID

82% Marks & Spencer 100% Natural Window & Glass Cleanser £1.99

This Marks & Spencer cleaner may be more expensive than our other Best Buy liquids, but it has a nice smell and proved to be a strong performer in all of our cleaning tests.

WORTH KNOWING Marks & Spencer says its 100% Natural range contains no petrochemicals, artificial colours or fragrances.

Cheapest store Marks & Spencer Bottle size 500ml



More on Mr Muscle

Where's Mr Muscle Window and Glass Cleaner?

Mr Muscle Window and Glass Cleaner has been reformulated since our tests, which is why it does not appear in our table. The overall performance of the version we tested was practically identical to its Mr Muscle Multi-task Kitchen stablemate (4 in the table).



3 LIQUID

81% Tesco Window & Glass Cleaner 65p

In our tests we found that this Tesco cleaner made particularly fast work of cigarette-tar deposits. Overall cleaning performance was good and your windows will need only a light buffing to remove any slight traces of residue that have been left on the glass. This cleaner is also good value for money, as it costs only a penny more than the cheapest spray on test – the Best Buy Asda Window & Glass Cleaner (1).

WE FOUND This spray squirts the smallest doses of all our Best Buy liquids – for small marks that means less waste.

Cheapest store Tesco
Bottle size 500ml



WHICH?
BEST
BUY

Contacts

Asda
0845 300 1111
www.asda.co.uk

Flash
0800 716854
www.pg
prof.com/uk

Marks & Spencer
0845 302 1234
www.marksand
spencer.com

Mr Muscle
0800 353353
www.scjohnson.co.uk

Sainsbury's
0800 636262
www.sainsburys.co.uk

Tesco
0845 722 5533
www.tesco.com

Waitrose
0800 188884
www.waitrose.com

Windolene
0845 769 7079

10 WIPES

58% Windolene Large Wipes for Glass & Shiny Surfaces £1.47

These Windolene wipes knock spots off their rivals, as they made fast work of the dirt in our cleaning test. You'll have to wipe the surface a couple of times to remove fingermarks completely but, once clean, the pane needs hardly any polishing – saving you time and effort. Available from Tesco and Wilkinson.

WE LIKE Quality not quantity – these were the smallest wipes on test.

Cheapest stores Tesco and Wilkinson
Wipes per pack 20



WHICH?
BEST
BUY

USING THE TABLE

We tested window-cleaning liquids and wipes from leading and own brands. The more stars the better.

Specification

Price For Best Buys we give the cheapest available high-street price as we went to press. Prices for other products are a guide. **Volume or number** Amount in millilitres for liquids; number of wipes per pack for wipes.

Test performance

Performance Quantity of the product used to remove all the dirt

from the window. Includes traces.

Traces Based on the amount of cleaner residue remaining on the glass once all dirt is removed. The more stars, the less polishing.

Convenience

Ease and speed of applying the correct dosage, and how messy the product is to use. **Value for money** Based on price, number of wipes/amount of product, and the amount of product used in our cleaning tests.

Score

This is based on:
Performance **50%**
Convenience **30%**
Value for money **20%**

MODEL	SPECIFICATION		WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE				SCORE %
	PRICE (£)	VOLUME (ml) OR NUMBER OF WIPES	PERFORMANCE	TRACES	CONVENIENCE	VALUE FOR MONEY	
LIQUIDS							
1 ASDA Window & Glass Cleaner	0.64	500	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	89
2 MARKS & SPENCER 100% Natural Window & Glass Cleanser	1.99	500	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	82
3 TESCO Window & Glass Cleaner	0.65	500	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	81
4 Mr MUSCLE Multi-task Kitchen	1.98	750	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	75
5 SAINSBURY'S Window Cleaner	0.79	500	★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	69
6 WAITROSE Anti-Mist Window & Glass Cleaner	0.99	500	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	69
7 WINDOLENE Original	1.06	500	★★★★★	★★★	★★	★★★★★	66
8 FLASH Multisurface & Glass	1.49	500	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	63
9 WINDOLENE Original Cream	1.98	500	★★★	★★	★★	★★★★★	50
WIPES							
10 WINDOLENE Large Wipes for Glass & Shiny Surfaces	1.47	20	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★	58
11 MARKS & SPENCER 100% Natural Window & Glass Wipes	1.99	20	★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★	52
12 SAINSBURY'S Window Wipes	1.19	20	★★★	★★★	★★★	★	44