

VACUUM CLEANER BUYER'S GUIDE

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VACUUM CLEANERS BUYER GUIDE - HELPING YOU MAKE THE BEST DECISION

NOTE: You can read a lot of vacuum cleaner reviews and customer ratings on [Vacuum Cleaners Report](#). If you want, you can even leave your own ratings for the vacuum you buy to help other customers make a better buying decision.

Vacuum cleaners are a necessity.

Clean carpets and floors are very important priorities for many people. Whether you have a large home, spacious condominium, or small apartment, you'll need a vacuum to keep your living space clean.

In today's market, you will find an endless number of brands, designs, and features. Vacuum cleaners are such a unique market that you'll even encounter vacuum cleaner jargon. In a nutshell, this all can make buying a vacuum quite the chore...before you even use it.

Choosing the right vacuum cleaner for you can be much easier than you might imagine.

What you need is some guidance and the right information. This guide will provide you with both. You'll discover what you need to know to make a sound buying decision and without the unnecessary stress.

VACUUM CLEANER PRICES & YOUR BUDGET

It's always wise to know your budget prior to shopping for a vacuum cleaner.

The price of vacuum cleaners can range from as little as \$40 to as much as \$2,000. It all depends on the brand, type, and features.

We have compiled a list of our top [5 vacuum cleaners for under \\$100](#) if you are on a budget.

You can save an enormous amount of time and stress by simply setting your budget BEFORE shopping for vacuums. Why entertain a dozen different vacuum cleaner features that are outside your budget?

Your mission is to select a vacuum cleaner that meets your needs.

In order to achieve this, you need a vacuum cleaner with certain features and maybe a handful of extras.

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF VACUUM CLEANERS

Here are brief descriptions with pros and cons for some of the most common types of vacuums.

UPRIGHT VACUUM CLEANERS



This is probably the most popular and traditional type of vacuum cleaner.

Pros

- Great for deep-cleaning carpets
- Easy to store
- Typically a wider cleaning head than others

Cons

- Commonly a bit heavier than canisters
- Requires pushing the entire vacuum while cleaning

We have written a number of reviews on this type of vacuum cleaner. Read reviews on the most popular makes of [Upright Vacuum Cleaners](#).

CANISTER VACUUM CLEANERS



These generally cost a bit more than upright vacuums.

Pros

- Great for bare or hardwood floors, upholstery, under furniture, stairs, and curtains
- Generally a bit quieter than uprights
- You just move the hose and head, but not the entire vacuum

Cons

- The entire vacuum (unit) can be a little bulky
- Not as easy to store as upright vacuums

We have written a number of reviews on this type of vacuum cleaner. Read reviews on the most popular makes of [Canister Vacuum Cleaners](#).

HANDHELD (SMALL) VACUUM CLEANERS



This type of vacuum come in both cordless and cord model.

Pros

- Convenient and light weight
- Great for bare or hard wood floors as well as short pile carpet

Cons

- Significantly less power than the regular sized vacuums

We have written a number of reviews on this type of vacuum cleaner. Read reviews on the most popular makes of [Handheld Vacuum Cleaners](#).

STICK VACUUM CLEANERS



Like handheld models, stick vacuums are great to have in addition to a full-sized unit, but they are not meant to be a primary vacuum.

Pros

- Convenient and allows for quick clean up
- Longer body and handle
- Battery powered
- Great for surface debris
- Lightweight

Cons

- Small dirt bin
- A bit noisy

We have written a number of reviews on this type of vacuum cleaner. Read reviews on the most popular makes of [Stick Vacuum Cleaners](#).

CENTRAL VACUUM SYSTEMS



Central vacuums are more expensive and often require installation by a professional.

Pros

- Easier to use than a canister
- No vacuum body to move about
- Less frequency of emptying it
- Reasonably quiet

Cons

- The long cord (typically 30-feet) can be a bit unwieldy and requires more storage space.
- Lack of onboard storage for cleaning tools as found with upright vacuums

Read more about [Central Vacuum Systems](#).

You may also hear about different types of vacuum cleaner not listed here. These are [bagless vacuums cleaners](#) (which are essentially canister vacuums), [Ball vacuum cleaners](#) – which are a type of Dyson vacuum with an innovative ball for manoeuvring the vacuum around your furniture, [cordless vacuums](#), [carpet cleaners](#), [steam cleaners](#) and [HEPA vacuum cleaners](#) (which use the HEPA filter for cleaning the air as it passes through the vacuum). I've included links to each of those types of vacuum if you want to read more.



DIFFERENT BRANDS OF VACUUM CLEANERS

Some people purchase vacuum cleaners based solely on the brand. After all, there are some great vacuum cleaner manufacturers out there.

Bissell, Dirt Devil, Dyson, Eureka, Hoover, and Kenmore are very popular brands. Also, you have Electrolux and Kirby vacuums that have been around for over 80 years.

Let's take a quick look at each brand.

BISSELL VACUUMS

The Bissell brand of vacuums makes a variety of models. Included are:

- Hand and stick vacuums
- Compact hand extractors
- Upright vacuums
- Upright deep cleaners
- Bare-floor cleaners
- Canister vacuums

Bissell vacuums can be purchased from \$40 to over \$250 depending upon the model. You can find the Bissell brand in stores like Target, Wal-Mart, and K-mart. This brand appears to be heavily focused on upright vacuums and not so much on canisters.



Read our reviews of the most popular [Bissell vacuum cleaners](#)

DIRT DEVIL VACUUMS

Dirt Devil makes various vacuum models such as:

- Hand and stick vacuums
- Upright vacuums
- Deep cleaners
- Bare-floor cleaners
- Central vacuums
- Canister vacuums
- Cordless handhelds

Dirt Devil vacuums range in price from \$40 to about \$250. This brand is focused on making cleaning easy and convenient. Like Bissell vacuums, you can find Dirt Devil vacuums everywhere including places like Wal-Mart. Also, Dirt Devil only offers a few canister models.



Read our reviews of the most popular [Dirt Devil vacuum cleaners](#)

DYSON VACUUMS

The three primary Dyson vacuum models are:

- Upright vacuums
- Canister vacuums
- Hand vacuums

The Dyson brand is big on innovation and technology. Dyson is also focused on design. Unlike Dirt Devil or Bissell brand vacuums, the price for a Dyson vacuum starts out at about \$300 and generally stops in the neighborhood of \$600. This brand's main model is the upright, however it has added both a canister model and hand vacuum. Dyson vacuums can be found in retail stores such as Sears and Target.



Read our reviews of the most popular [Dyson vacuum cleaners](#)

EUREKA VACUUMS

Eureka provides the following models:

- Upright vacuums
- Hand and stick vacuums
- Canister models
- Deep cleaners
- Central vacuums

Eureka has more of a general and broad focus when it comes to vacuums. This brand of vacuum typically ranges from \$50 to \$260. Wal-Mart, Lowe's, and Bed Bath & Beyond generally carry Eureka vacuums.



Read our reviews of the most popular [Eureka vacuum cleaners](#)

HOOVER VACUUMS

Hoover vacuums have a variety of models:

- Hand and stick vacuums
- Upright vacuums
- Deep cleaners
- Bare-floor cleaners
- Central vacuums
- Canister vacuums
- Outdoor sweeper

Hoover has been in the vacuum cleaner business since about 1907. It's focus is on producing vacuums that clean deep. The price range for Hoover vacuums range from as little as \$50 to about \$300.

Read our reviews of the most popular [Hoover vacuum cleaners](#)



ELECTROLUX VACUUMS

Electrolux vacuums consist of a variety of models:

- Handheld vacuums
- Stick vacuums
- Compact hand extractors
- Upright vacuums
- HEPA vacuum cleaners
- Upright deep cleaners

Electrolux vacuums have been on the market for over 80 years. Their focus is on quality and performance. They are also popular for pet hair clean up. You can find an Electrolux vacuum for between \$120 and \$500.

Read our reviews of the most popular [Electrolux vacuum cleaners](#)



KIRBY VACUUMS

Kirby essentially has only one model:

- Upright vacuum cleaners

Kirby focuses on just one model of vacuum cleaner at a time. Currently, it is offering the Sentries vacuum (Home Care system). Price can vary depending upon whether you purchase a refurbished or a new Kirby vacuum. Refurbished vacuums can start as low as \$350, while new Kirby vacuums might require an investment of between \$1,200 and \$2,000.

Kirby vacuums are considered by some to be the premier vacuum. The Kirby Company's focus is on continuously improving the vacuum until it is perfect. One of its units even boasts the redesign assistance of NASA.

Read our reviews of the most popular [Kirby vacuum cleaners](#)



MIELE VACUUMS

Miele primarily makes 3 types of vacuums:

- Canister vacuums
- Stick vacuums
- Upright vacuums

The price range for a Miele vacuum is between \$290 and \$1,000. This type of vacuum focuses on deep cleaning and pet hair cleaning. It also boasts of having varying filtration systems.

Read our reviews of the most popular [Miele vacuum cleaners](#)



KENMORE VACUUMS

Kenmore offers vacuum models such as:

- Canister vacuums
- Hard-surface cleaners
- Carpet shampooers

Kenmore is an established manufacturer when it comes to appliances as well as vacuums. Canister models are their focus. You can purchase a Kenmore vacuum for between \$50 to \$600. Sears and K-mart typically carry the Kenmore brand of vacuums.



VACUUM CLEANER BUYER'S MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Here is a list of most frequently asked questions:

#1 - SHOULD I GET AN UPRIGHT OR CANISTER VACUUM?

The answer depends on how you will use it.

- Upright cleaners are excellent for vacuuming carpet. Some can be a bit heavy and maneuverability might be challenging especially when trying to clean hard to reach or small spaces.
- Canister cleaners are typically smaller and also lighter than upright cleaners. Also, they can be much easier to move around especially when cleaning stairs or under furniture. Lastly, canister vacuum have a reputation for doing an excellent job cleaning hard surfaces in addition to carpet.

#2- IS A BAG OR A BAGLESS VACUUM BETTER?

The main considerations when choosing between bag or bagless vacuums are:

- Neat Easy Disposal of Waste & Dust:
 - Bag Vacuums make disposing of the dust and debris pretty easy because all the dust is sealed in the bag. Bagless models typically require shaking out the dust-filled plastic bin in your garbage can or wastebasket.
- Allergies:
 - Many people with allergies prefer bag vacuums because they don't have to worry as much about being exposed to allergens and dust when getting rid of the waste.
- Vacuum Power
 - Some bag vacuums have been known to lose suction power as the bag becomes filled. Many people prefer bagless for this reason.

#3 - WHAT USE IS A HANDHELD VACUUM CLEANER?

Handhelds are great for cleaning tight or small spaces. They are often used for conveniently cleaning up crumbs instead of having to bring out your upright or canister vacuum.

#4 - WHAT DOES A PERSON WITH ALLERGIES OR ASTHMA NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE FILTRATION SYSTEM?

Essentially, there are two types of filtration systems:

1. Standard filtration
2. S-class or HEPA filtration

Standard filtration systems don't effectively handle particles such as dander and pollen. People with allergies are likely to benefit from a vacuum that has a S-class or HEPA filtration system.

HEPA stands for "high efficiency particulate air." HEPA standards require 99.97% particle filtration. S-class standards are very close to HEPA's standards. S-class and HEPA filtration systems are generally recommended for asthma and allergy sufferers.

#5- IS IT IMPORTANT TO GET A VACUUM WITH MORE POWER?

A vacuum's motor power is determined by its "watts."

More watts often provide a better cleaning experience. However, beware that generally the more wattage, the noisier the vacuum.

As discussed later in this guide, CFM or cubic feet per minute what determines suction power. It's not determined by watts.

#6 - DO I PURCHASE A NEW VACUUM BECAUSE MY CURRENT VACUUM IS BARELY SUCKING UP DEBRIS AND DUST?

You might be able to fix the problem by doing either of the following 2 things:

1. Change the filter (once annually)
2. Empty the dust bin or change the bag

Most vacuums tend to work better with a clean filter and a bag (or bin) that's not full.

#7 - WHAT ATTACHMENTS MIGHT I NEED?

You might not need any additional attachments.

Many vacuums come equipped with 3 attachments:

1. Upholstery (dusting) brush
2. Crevice attachment (tool)
3. Stair cleaning head

Following are additional attachments to consider:

- Extendable tubes for hard to reach places such as the ceiling
- A parquet (hardwood floor) brush for hard surfaces such as tile or wood flooring

#8 - WHAT SHOULD A PERSON WITH A LARGE HOME LOOK FOR IN A VACUUM?

Following are some things to consider when purchasing a vacuum for a large home:

- A large cleaning head covers a larger area, and will often shorten your vacuuming time
- A long cord will spare you the agony of having to plug and unplug the cord in different electrical outlets
- A larger bag (dustbin) will reduce the frequency you'll have to empty the vacuum
- A canister vacuum is very useful if your home has many stairs

FEATURES AND THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PURCHASING A VACUUM

VACUUM ADD-ONS AND TOOLS

Most vacuums come with all the necessary add-ons; however, here are some to consider:



- Upholstery tools
- Dusting brushes
- Bare-floor tools
- Wall brushes
- Wands
- Stretch hoses for extension purposes

VACUUM'S ATTACHMENT REACH

This will let you know how far your vacuum can reach using the attachments.

ROLLER BRUSH OR AGITATOR

The roller brush is underneath the vacuum and spins when the vacuum is turned on in order to help suck up grit, dirt, and dust.

It is suggested that by turning the roller brush off when on bare or hardwood floors more dirt and debris is picked up. Also, by being able to turn off the roller brush, the tangles of throw rugs or bedspreads can be avoided.



VACUUM HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT

Many vacuums offer this as a standard feature. It allows the user to adjust the vacuum depending upon the pile height of the carpet. This helps with moving the vacuum and allows for a better cleaning experience.

VACUUM EDGE TOOL OR CLEANER

This feature allows the user to do wall to wall carpet cleaning - all the way to the edge of the carpet. Most upright and canister vacuums offer this feature.

FULL BAG OR CONTAINER INDICATOR

This is a feature (electronic or mechanical) on some vacuums alerting the user that the bag or bin is full. Quite a few of the bagless vacuums have a clear dust bin so you can see when it is full.



VACUUM HEADLIGHT

This is a standard feature on most upright vacuums. Its purpose is to increase visibility while in rooms without direct sun light or when vacuuming under furniture.

VACUUM MOTOR PROTECTION

Some vacuums come with a system to protect the vacuum's motor from electrical overloads or potential damage caused by jams.

RETRACTABLE VACUUM CORD

Canister vacuums are outfitted with retractable cords more often than upright and other vacuums. By pushing a button or tugging on the cord, retractable cords rewind for you.

SELF-PROPULSION

A self-propelled vacuum is one that has a drive system to assist users with pushing as well as pulling the vacuum. The downside to this is that the added weight of a drive system makes the vacuum heavier than the typical vacuum.

SUCTION POWER CONTROL

This is an optional feature offered on some vacuums that enables you to reduce or increase the airflow. This comes in handy when dealing with curtains or upholstery.

TURBO OR POWER VACUUM HEAD

Turbo heads are driven by air, whereas power heads have a motor to turn the heads. Power heads are often recommended for high pile or thick carpets. Some heads can function both as a turbo and as a power head.



VACUUM PERFORMANCE

The performance and ergonomics of a particular vacuum is best evaluated by hands-on testing.

EASE OF USE

When evaluating "ease of use," consider:

- Whether the tools, add-ons, and buttons are easy to reach, operate, and understand
- If the on and off switch is conveniently located on the vacuum's handle or on its base where you can easily operate it with your foot
- The ease with which you can change the bag or empty the bin

- How the handle(s) feel
- If it is easy to maneuver
- Will a canister or an upright be better suited for you and your purposes

VACUUM AIR FLOW

A vacuum's air flow is better described as the air's force when picking up and moving dirt to the vacuum's dirt bin or bag. **CFM or cubic feet per minute is how air flow is measured and determines the suction power.**



VACUUM POWER

As discussed in the Vacuum Air Flow section above, CFM is the major determinant of suction power. Power or amperages simply measures how much electricity the vacuum uses during operation

DEMYSTIFYING VACUUM CLEANER JARGON

Unbelievably, vacuum cleaners have their own jargon.

It helps to understand this when evaluating, comparing, and buying a vacuum. Here is some of the jargon and a short definition for each:

- **Cleaning radius:** The distance from the vacuum's cleaning head to the electrical socket or plug. The less distance, the more likely you'll be plugging and unplugging the vacuum do to distance constraints.
- **Decibels:** Indication of the vacuum's noise level. Quieter vacuums are typically below 73 decibels.
- **Bagged:** A vacuum that uses a bag to collect dust and debris.
- **Bagless:** A vacuum that collects dirt and dust in a container.
- **On Board Tools:** A variety of tools found attached to the vacuum itself for convenience.
- **Filtration:** The process of a vacuum retains certain unhealthy particles instead of emitting them back into the environment and air.
- **Lifetime filtration:** A filtration system that enables the user from ever having to change the vacuum's filter.
- **Telescopic Tubes:** Vacuum attachments with the ability to adjust their length as necessary.

WARRANTIES

Better quality vacuums typically require a greater investment, but they offer you better warranties.

Warranties cover one or all of the following:

- Motor
- Parts
- Labor

A general recommendation is to invest in a vacuum that provides you with a minimum warranty of

- Five years on the motor,
- Three years on the parts, and
- One year on labor

VACUUM CLEANER CUSTOMER REVIEWS

It's always good to look at customer reviews and consider the brand or manufacturer's reputation.

Customer reviews are great for giving you information about

- Suction power
- Noise level or whether it's quiet
- Ease of attachment use
- Overall ease of use
- Length of cord and if its retractable feature works properly
- How heavy the vacuum is
- If it's good for cleaning up pet hair
- Ergonomics
- Malfunctions and quality level
- Whether the manufacturer honors its warranty

Look at both the ugly and good reviews. There is often a variety of good and bad reviews. Always be wary of any vacuum with 1/3 or more are unpleasant, mediocre, or ugly reviews.

BEST WISHES

Now, you know more about vacuums than most people do. Better yet, you're now better able to make an informed buying decision. If you need help, we are there at [Vacuum Cleaners Report](#).

Best wishes with your new vacuum. Happy cleaning!