

The Vacuum Cleaner Buyers Guide

Ok, we admit it. Vacuum cleaners are not the most glamorous topic in the world to be researching. But while these lumps of inanimate plastic and wire are kept stored away out of sight most of the time, they are incredibly useful - and they are not all created equally.

Some vacuums will be as noisy as a jet engine but as powerful as a pea shooter. Others will not need to be emptied more than once a year, but it will take you an hour to do it when they do. Basically, there is a whole range of potential issues that you will find yourself facing - unless you start arming yourself with the facts.

Buying a vacuum cleaner in 2016 is not like it used to be 30 years ago. Today there are several kinds of vacuum, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. While this makes choosing your perfect vacuum cleaner a daunting task, it does mean you are likely to find something that ticks all your boxes.

Canister, Robot, Upright, Convertible, Stick, and Handheld are just a few buzzwords you will come across (and the list goes on and on). So what does it all mean? Let's take a look.

Uprights

You can probably already guess from the name that an upright vacuum cleaner stands upright. If you have back problems or mobility issues these are usually good choices, as they do not require you to bend over while using them. There are countless features found in uprights that depend on the specific model. But the main thing you will need to decide is if you want your vacuum to use a bag or not.

Summary: Large and usually heavy vacuums that simply do the job. Some of the more expensive bagless uprights can cost up to \$900. Bag using uprights are cheaper and can be found for as little as \$200.

Canisters

A canister vacuum is much smaller and lighter than an upright but still weighs around 10 pounds. It does not have a handle attached to the body of the vacuum and is instead operated using a wand connected via a hose. This means that you will either need to bend over to move the vacuum or you will need to pull it by the hose. Canisters are just as powerful as uprights and are capable of cleaning even the heaviest particulate.

Summary: A great choice if you have a large number of stairs due to their smaller and more portable nature. Storage can be a little bit messy due to all of the cords and hoses inherent in canister vacuum design. Prices range from around \$100 all the way up to \$700.

Robots

Robot vacuums are automated devices that will automatically clean your floor without needing your intervention. They are not good enough to totally replace manual vacuuming. Their small size means they struggle to provide enough suction for heavy particulate. They are usually totally automated and self-charging and can be scheduled to clean when you are at not at home.

Summary: Robot vacuums are not just a gimmick, they really do help you keep your floors cleaner. While you will not be free from the chore of vacuuming completely, they do significantly help to keep your floors cleaner for longer. This reduces the frequency you need do a full scale deep clean manually. They cost between \$90 and \$500.

Sticks

A stick vacuum is very similar in appearance to an upright vacuum cleaner but much lighter. They have long poles (sticks) instead of handles and are usually battery powered. While this battery power does make them more portable it does reduce the amount of suction that can be generated.

Summary: Stick vacuums are mainly good for people that have reduced mobility. Their lack of suction makes them underpowered for heavy particulate and only suitable for very light work. They are one of the cheapest kinds of vacuum cleaner and range in price from \$50 to \$400.

Convertibles

Just to make things even more confusing the final type of vacuum cleaner we are going to cover in this buyers guide is the convertible. As you might have guessed these vacuums can change from one kind into another. The most common convertible vacuum will convert from an upright into a canister. At face value, this seems like an ideal solution. When executed correctly the convenience of a convertible is brilliant. However, poorly designed models can be difficult to convert between modes, which often results in frustration.

Summary: Great if you have stairs but don't want to spend your time bending over to move the vacuum on flat surfaces. Research the conversion procedure before buying, because sometimes they can be frustrating to operate. They don't cost much more than an upright and can be anywhere between \$200 to \$900 in price.

Other Considerations

Aside from deciding what kind of vacuum cleaner you want to purchase, there are a couple of other features you will need to decide upon.

To Bag Or Not To Bag

Bag using vacuum cleaners are the traditional old school method of dust collection. They can usually hold much more dust than a bagless vacuum cleaner and are often cheaper. The downside to this is that you will need to buy

replacement bags regularly and it can be very difficult to judge exactly how full a bag is.

Bagless vacuum cleaners used to be exclusive to the Dyson brand, but as the years have gone other brands have developed their own bagless technology. Their clear bins make it very obvious when they need to be emptied. The main benefit is that you don't need to buy replacement bags. You will however need to buy replacement filters. But these need to be changed much less frequently than bags.

What Is HEPA Filtration?

High Energy Particulate Air (HEPA) filtration is a high-performance air filtration system that is guaranteed to remove 99.97% of particulate from the air. This includes things like mold, smoke, and dust.

Most vacuum cleaners already include air filtration technology, and most of them are pretty good at it even without the HEPA stamp of approval. So for the majority of people, there will be no noticeable difference between a HEPA filtration system and a traditional filtration system. You only need HEPA filtration on your vacuum if you have allergies, or are very concerned with air quality.

Conclusion

As you can see, buying a vacuum is no simple task. Think about your home and your specific needs. You will be able to find all of the kinds of vacuum cleaner listed on this page in all price ranges.

Do you have a lot of stairs? Then consider a canister.

Do you hate vacuuming your home? Maybe a robot vacuum will help.

Do you struggle with mobility? Then perhaps a stick is what you need.

Do want to forget about all this vacuum cleaner stuff and never vacuum again?

Then hire a maid.