

BUYERS GUIDE

Floorcare

 euronics



INTRODUCTION

We're spoilt for choice with the range of vacuum cleaners these days – everything from cylinder and upright models to robotic and handhelds. Other types of floorcare even include steam mops and floor polishers.

But, how do you figure out which type is best for you? We're here to help you make the right choice with our Buyers Guide. All the answers you need to choose your perfect new piece of floorcare can be found in the following pages. What's more, we'll explain everything in a clear and simple way, to make the decision as easy as possible.

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CONTENTS

	4-15	TYPES OF FLOORCARE
	16-23	FLOORCARE FEATURES
	24-28	TOOLS AND ATTACHMENTS
	29-32	POWER, SUCTION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY
	33-35	FLOORCARE PRICES
	36-39	BUYING ONLINE VS. IN-STORE
	40-44	OTHER POINTS TO CONSIDER

TYPES OF FLOORCARE



Floorcare has evolved from the humble bagged vacuum cleaners. While these are still a popular choice, there's now a huge variety of other cleaners available. We will explain the different types, covering everything from carpet washers and steam mops, to sweepers and polishers.

VACUUM CLEANERS

The world of vacuum cleaners has transformed with modern technology. There are many different types available, suiting every floor surface imaginable. It's worth carefully considering them, as they each have their own purposes, advantages, and disadvantages.



UPRIGHT VS. CYLINDER

An upright vacuum cleaner is the traditional type which you push by the handle, while the cylinder is a smaller unit which can be pulled along.

Although uprights tend to be heavier and more difficult to manoeuvre, they're generally better at cleaning large floor spaces, especially carpets. This is because they have high suction power and revolving, belt-driven brushes to loosen ingrained dirt. They are ideal for larger homes, especially if you have pets – they're great at getting rid of unwanted hair. Plus, they have some of the largest capacities among cleaners, and their long handles can help prevent back pain.

Cylinder designs benefit from being lighter, more compact and easier to move around. This will help you clean difficult spots like the stairs and furniture, and they're also ideal for use on hard floors. However, they need larger motors, which can take up a lot of the storage space inside, making them less energy efficient. While uprights always have rotating brush bars, many cylinder vacuums do not, making these models inefficient at picking up hair without an attachment.



BAGGED VS. BAGLESS

Traditionally, vacuum cleaners have always collected dust and dirt in sealed bags. Modern bagless designs are less fiddly to empty, and save you spending money on replacement bags – this is also better for the environment. They collect the dirt in a container, which can be opened and tipped away with minimal fuss. They also avoid the problem of the suction becoming less powerful as the bag fills.

Bagged designs are better for allergy sufferers, however, as they lock dust and spores away more effectively, keeping them sealed in while you're emptying. The British Allergy Foundation awards some bagged models with a Seal of Approval. This means they significantly reduce key allergens like dust mites and pollen. Bagged cleaners usually have a larger capacity too, so you don't have to empty them as often.



“ Bagged designs are better for allergy sufferers, as they lock dust and spores away more effectively.



CORDLESS

You may notice that the cable length varies between different vacuum cleaners, but have you ever considered going cordless?

Cordless models use rechargeable batteries, giving you freedom to move between rooms without changing plug sockets. They're lightweight, easy to manoeuvre, and great for use in many different parts of the home. Some have docking stations for charging, and some can even be secured to your wall for mess-free storage. They're always bagless, and many have the same, powerful performance as their corded counterparts.

You can find models which switch between stick and handheld versions, giving you the ultimate variety of places to clean. They often come with lots of attachments too.

While they have obvious advantages, cordless vacuum cleaners do have drawbacks. They can be expensive, and most have a battery life of 30 to 40 minutes – which may not be enough to clean your whole home – while others run for an hour or more. They also tend to have lower capacities.

“Cordless models use rechargeable batteries, giving you freedom to move between rooms without changing plug sockets.”



HANDHELD

Handheld vacuums are much like cordless cleaners, because they're battery powered. They differ due to their smaller size, and their purpose – they are designed to be used as a supplement to your main vacuum.

While they're not as powerful as other types, their portable design makes them useful for picking up dust and crumbs from the stairs, cleaning the car, and regularly getting rid of pet hair. Typically, they run for anything from five to 30 minutes.

“ Handhelds differ due to their smaller size, and their purpose – they are designed to be used as a supplement to your main vacuum.



ROBOTIC

The most futuristic vacuum cleaner on the list, robotic models will clean your floors while you get on with other things. Expect to pay for this convenience, as they are the most expensive type.

These are best for light cleaning and smaller homes, and are one of the easiest types to store, thanks to their compact size. They generally run for up to two hours before they need to be recharged – and many recharge themselves.

Navigation sensors let them make their way around, whether that's through infrared signals, lasers or cameras. Many robots create a floor plan to follow by scanning your home, giving you a better clean.

Plus, you don't need to worry about robot vacuum cleaners getting stuck on different surfaces, as modern tank tracks let them stay on course without your help. You can even find models with voice control, making your life that much easier.

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WET AND DRY VACUUMS

Wet and dry vacuums give your floors a thorough clean and make housework a breeze, as you can get rid of liquids and solids with a single appliance. Some models even have a washing function, to give your carpets and rugs an extra deep clean.

These vacuums have two compartments, so wet and dry waste is stored separately. It's a good idea to empty the liquid compartment after each use to avoid stagnant water. It may also be worth investing in additional attachments to clean different household surfaces effectively.

These multi-functional models are more common in the workplace, where the wet function will likely get more use. Wet and dry vacuums can be used for anything from cleaning spillages to dry vacuuming, to unblocking drains.

However, they are also great for use at home. They usually have a large dust capacity and a detachable hose to help make your cleaning go further. And, you can also find handheld versions for quick clean-ups.



“Wet and dry vacuums can be used for anything from cleaning spillages to dry vacuuming, to unblocking drains.”



STEAM CLEANERS

Steam cleaners use high temperatures to rapidly heat water and clean a range of surfaces – including carpets, hard surfaces, upholstery, oven doors, and even taps – wiping away dirt and killing germs effectively.

Surfaces are often left nearly dry after use, so you don't need to avoid the room for hours as you would if you'd mopped instead. And, this hygienic method is achieved just by using water. There are no hazardous cleaning chemicals involved, making these machines a great choice for families with pets or young children.

You can also find steam cleaners which double as vacuums with water-based filters.



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MOPS, CYLINDERS AND HANDHELDS

Steam cleaners come in several different designs which are similar to upright, handheld and cylinder vacuums. Mops are ideal for hard floors, and some have variable steam control to clean laminate and wood. Handheld cleaners are best for hard-to-reach spots, but many models have small tanks. Cylinder models are the most expensive, versatile and powerful designs, and are a good all-rounder for tough stains. They usually have the largest water tanks and can also clean around both kitchens and bathrooms.

2 IN 1 MODELS

A 2 in 1 steam cleaner detaches from the stick, to convert from an upright to a handheld. This gives you the flexibility to use one unit for a multitude of tasks, from cleaning the floors to washing the windows.

“ A 2 in 1 steam cleaner detaches from the stick, to convert from an upright to a handheld.



DIFFERENT WATER CAPACITIES

The larger the capacity, the more water the cleaner will hold (and the more steam it'll produce) before it needs a top-up. At the cheaper end of the scale, there are water tanks holding less than 0.5 litres, while some can take as much as two litres. A large water tank will increase the unit's weight, meaning upright models are harder to manoeuvre, while smaller tanks may encourage quicker heating up.



STEAM TIME AND HEATING TIME

Steam time refers to how long you can use the cleaner before it runs out of water. Most offer around 10 to 20 minutes of use, but this can be as high as 40 minutes for the more expensive models.

If you see a heating time listed, that's how long you'll need to wait before the steam is produced and the cleaner is ready to use. This can be anything from a few seconds to 10 minutes or more. Steam mops provide steam on demand, but cylinder models use a pressurised steam chamber, so they can take several minutes to warm up.

“ A large water tank will increase the unit's weight, meaning upright models are harder to manoeuvre.



CARPET WASHERS

Carpet washers use a water tank and detergent solution to give soft floorings a deep clean. Your carpets can be up to 10 times cleaner than if you'd simply vacuumed, with deeply ingrained grime and allergens removed. You'll usually need to pass slowly over each part of the carpet multiple times. This can leave them wet for a few hours afterwards, so carpet washers are used less regularly than other floorcare appliances.

They are great at reducing the appearance of stains and embedded dirt, and prolonging the life of your carpet. Some have special stain functions, like boost sprays, to lift stubborn marks. Carpet cleaners have two water capacities – one for clean and one for dirty water – as it is separated during use. The clean capacity is often largest, and it's worth looking at higher sizes if you want to save time on refilling, or clean several rooms.

Some models have an additional heating function to improve the breaking down of grime in your carpets, and help dry them. You can also find tools and features like detachable floor heads and motor-powered brushes, for cleaning hard-to-reach areas and difficult stains.



“Carpet washers use a water tank and detergent solution to give soft floorings a deep clean.”



SWEEPERS

Carpet sweepers – or floor sweepers – can be manual or battery powered, and they have a rotating bar which brushes dust and dirt inside.

They're more effective than sweeping, but don't offer the suction of vacuuming. This makes them useful for quick, in-between cleans involving daily dirt and dry spills, since they're lightweight and don't need to be plugged in for use. Carpet sweepers are also great for tidying under furniture and in areas where larger vacuums can't reach. Some can also convert to handheld sweepers to be even more helpful around the home.

POLISHERS

Floor polishers are designed to keep wooden and other hard surfaces buffed to perfection.

They're more commonly used in commercial premises, but some domestic models are available. They use brushes to polish surfaces for a shiny, spotless finish, and to make them more resistant to abrasions, dirt and humidity. Some models vacuum and scrub too – or, they can be used with

different attachments to add these functions. Polishers are often best suited to specific surfaces, so check that they match the flooring in your home before buying one.

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FLOORCARE FEATURES



If you're researching vacuum cleaners and other floorcare appliances, chances are that you'll stumble across jargon in the product descriptions and specifications. Features like cyclones, edge to edge technology, and anti-allergen seals can sound complicated at first, but understanding them is the key to getting what you need.



CAPACITY

A vacuum cleaner's capacity is how much dirt it will hold before it needs emptying. The larger it is, the fewer trips you'll need to the bin and the fewer bags you'll get through.

The capacity will probably be somewhere between one and six litres, although some cylinder designs can hold up to nine. It's important to remember that a large capacity will make the machine heavier and more difficult to manoeuvre. And, bagged vacuum cleaners can also lose suction as they approach full capacity.

“Cyclone technology is only available in bagless models, and many use multiple cyclones that are smaller in size, to make the process even more efficient.

SUCTION TECHNOLOGY

In the past, vacuum cleaners simply sucked the dirt into a bag. The air would pass out through the back of the bag, which would act as an additional filter, and leave the dirt inside. The main drawback of this was that the warm air exiting the vacuum could still be dusty, making the whole cleaning process less efficient.

Cyclonic – or cyclone – technology, changed all of that. The air doesn't pass in a straight line through the machine, but in a spinning motion, which encourages the dust to separate out and collect at the bottom of the bin. Cyclone technology is only available in bagless models, and many use multiple cyclones that are smaller in size, to make the process even more efficient.



TYPES OF FILTERS

Even the super-efficient cyclone vacuum cleaners still rely on filters. Motor, pre-motor, or post-motor filtration cleans the air before it enters the bin. Exhaust filtration is the main process which removes particles from the air as it leaves the bin, before it's let back into your room.

STANDARD

These filters offer the lowest levels of effectiveness and are found on cheaper vacuum cleaners. Standard filters aren't suitable for allergy sufferers and can make vacuuming less efficient, as the small particles can pass through them and back into your room. Multiple filters can make the process work better, and microfiltration uses at least four levels for cleaner air.

S-CLASS/HEPA

Designed with allergy sufferers in mind, S-Class and HEPA designs offer the best level of filtration. Independently set standards ensure they remove the smallest microscopic particles, along with up to 99.97% of allergens.

WASHABLE

Rather than needing to be replaced every six to 12 months, a washable filter can be cleaned with soap regularly, to keep it running at its best. Rinseable versions can only be cleaned with water. Both will save you money and reduce your impact on the environment, since you won't need to buy new ones.



CHARCOAL

Charcoal has odour removing properties, so a layer inside a filter banishes pet smells from your home.

LIFETIME

For completely fuss-free maintenance, look for a lifetime filter. Only the more expensive models will offer this feature, which is designed to outlive your vacuum cleaner, without reducing effectiveness. They typically last for seven to 10 years.

FILTERLESS

Dyson is even moving towards completely filterless cleaning. This works by using vibration to separate dust from the air, although only top-of-the-range models offer this currently.



“ For completely fuss-free maintenance, look for a lifetime filter, or even better, filterless cleaning.



HYPOALLERGENIC SEALED SYSTEMS

A sealed system means air can't escape through any tiny cracks or gaps in the machine's design. As a result, all the air which leaves the vacuum cleaner passes through the filter first – another great feature for allergy sufferers.

BEATER BRUSH BAR

A rotating brush bar is found on virtually all uprights, and on some cylinder vacuums. The spinning mechanism helps pick up pet hair, even when it's deeply entwined in the carpet fibres.



LIGHTWEIGHT DESIGN

The lighter your vacuum cleaner, the less strenuous it will be to use it. Most upright and cylinder models weigh around 5 to 8 kg, but lightweight models can be as low as 2 kg.

As cordless designs emphasise ease of use, they tend to be at the lower end of the scale. Some upright vacuum cleaners can also be switched into a handheld design, for when you need to reach more difficult spots.

BALL TECHNOLOGY

Technology has moved on from swivel steering, which lets you tilt your machine sideways to move around obstacles.

Ball-based manoeuvrability – made famous by Dyson – makes steering even easier and cleaning even smoother.

“The lighter your vacuum cleaner, the less strenuous it will be to use it.”



HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT

A height adjustment feature will tweak the vacuum's position so you can get as close to your carpet or hard floor as possible, for more thorough cleaning results. This option can be manual – either with a foot pedal or button – or automatic, where it'll adapt to your floor type as you move between rooms.

EASY GRIP HANDLE

Many manufacturers will design the handle for comfort. It might have curved edges, or be moulded to fit the hand.

LOW PROFILE HANDLE

Some models now have ultra-low profile handles, so they can slide under furniture easily without you needing a tool or attachment.

AUTO CORD REWIND

The majority of cylinder vacuum cleaners have a cord rewind feature. This will retract the cord inside the machine, for neat and speedy storage. Designs which don't have this feature tend to have clips, which you wrap the cord around.



“ The majority of cylinder vacuum cleaners have a cord rewind feature.



CABLE LENGTH

If you're looking at corded vacuum cleaners, it's worth considering the length of the mains power cable. The average length is seven to eight metres, but some are as long as 10 or 12 metres. A longer cable means a larger reach, and less time spent changing plug sockets. Although a cylinder vacuum may have a shorter cord, the hose and attachments could make it go further than you think.

RUN TIME

There can be a huge difference between run times in battery-powered vacuum cleaners. The majority of models last for around 15 to 30 minutes, but some can run for an hour before needing to be recharged.



FULL INDICATOR

This will let you know when a vacuum cleaner needs its bag replacing, taking out any guesswork.

LED DISPLAY AND LIGHTS

Want to monitor how much charge is left in your vacuum battery? You can find models with LED displays which will keep you up to date. Plus, LED lights help you clean better under everything from your sofa to your bed, illuminating spaces you usually can't see.

EDGE-TO-EDGE CLEANING

Get right into the corners of your rooms with edge-to-edge cleaning. The design of the floorhead on these vacuums extends its suction to your skirting boards, so you don't need to depend on attachments.

“ A longer cable means a larger reach, and less time spent changing plug sockets.



BUMPERS

All-round, synthetic bumpers can protect your vacuum and your furniture from damage, following bumps and scrapes.

SENSOR TECHNOLOGY

A few upright and cylinder vacuum cleaners have sensors which can detect dusty spots, and will let you know using an alert light. Robotic vacuums usually depend on sensors to clean, avoid walls, and detect drops such as stairs.

MODES GALORE

Vacuums often have several power settings, which may include Max modes for deep cleans, and Quiet modes for cleaning that's lighter on your home and your ears.

“ All-round, synthetic bumpers can protect your vacuum and your furniture.

OVERHEAT PROTECTION

Protect the lifespan of your vacuum by choosing a model which will never overheat. If the airway gets blocked, the motor will automatically switch off, protecting it from permanent damage.

DEVICE LINKING

Modern robot vacuum cleaners can be connected to your smartphone, letting you schedule and track your cleaning.



TOOLS AND ATTACHMENTS



The varying surfaces in your home make it impossible to buy a floorcare appliance which will pick up dirt from everywhere, straight out of the box. Tools and attachments are the solutions to this, helping you get into all the nooks and crannies with ease.



EXTENSION TUBES

To increase a vacuum cleaner's reach, try using extension tubes. These are a necessity for both cylinder and upright cleaners, and usually, you'll receive one as standard. They allow you to connect the hose to an attachment, giving you a larger reach. Plastic tubes do the job perfectly well, but metal – usually stainless steel – versions are longer lasting.

TELESCOPIC TUBES

Telescopic tubes can extend and retract, saving you from switching between tube lengths. Some have a push button to release the telescope function, keeping it firmly in place while you're using it.

“ A hard floor attachment like a horsehair or parquet brush is specifically designed for wooden, laminate, and tiled surfaces.

SELF-ADJUSTING HEADS

These automatically shift the vacuum cleaner's floorhead and performance power when you move between floor types. There's no way you can forget to lower them for hard surfaces, and it provides you with convenience and better cleaning.

HARD SURFACE FLOORHEADS

While most vacuum cleaners are well equipped to deal with carpets, thanks to their rotating brush bars, they're often not as effective at dusting hard floors. A hard floor attachment like a horsehair or parquet brush is specifically designed for wooden, laminate, and tiled surfaces.



FULL-SIZE TURBO BRUSHES

If your vacuum cleaner is a cylinder model without a brush bar, a full-size turbo brush is the tool for you – this will add the missing spinning motion, powered by the flow of air. They're a must-have if your home is carpeted, as they remove hair and dirt from deep in the carpet fibres.

SMALL TURBO BRUSHES

Clean the sofa and other soft areas with a small turbo brush. Their compact size makes them perfect for removing pet hair from your upholstery. They sometimes come with vacuum cleaners advertised as suitable for pet owners.

CREVICE TOOLS

Clean right up to the edges of the stairs, skirting boards and radiators with a crevice tool. These plastic heads with angled tips can be used with tubes to provide precision cleaning of difficult spots.

DUSTING BRUSHES

These small diameter attachments have soft bristles. They can be used for cleaning hard surfaces like shelves and window sills, without the risk of scratching them. Dusting brushes are sometimes advertised as furniture brushes, but these may also have shorter bristles for getting closer to your sofa and chairs.



“ Clean right up to the edges of the stairs, skirting boards and radiators with a crevice tool.



UPHOLSTERY NOZZLES

When added to your hose or extension tube, an upholstery nozzle makes it possible to clean expanses of soft furnishings. It's similar to a hard surface floorhead, just smaller in size.

PET HAIR TOOL

Picking up cat and dog hair can be tricky for a standard vacuum cleaner head. A special pet tool is either a type of small turbo brush (with a rotating brush), or an upholstery tool (without one). They're specifically designed to remove hair, along with the allergens it contains.

WASHABLE MOP PADS

Steam mops usually come with washable mop pads, which you can clean in the washing machine and then reuse.

MATTRESS CLEANING

Some models come with cleaning attachments specifically designed for mattresses. These may have dry or deep cleaning functions, and may work powder into the mattress.



“ A pet hair tool is designed to remove hair, along with the allergens it contains.



COMBINATION TOOLS

Save storage space by combining a nozzle with a dusting brush. They can be separated if you want to use them independently, but make the most of the limited room on board.

STANDARD OR EXTRA?

Most vacuums will come with a small selection of attachments to get you started. You may receive an extension tube, a crevice tool, an upholstery brush, a dusting brush, or more. It will be possible to buy additional tools from your manufacturer, to transform how you use your vacuum cleaner.

ON-BOARD TOOLS

Sometimes the most commonly used tools will fit onto the body of your vacuum, so you'll always have your most important attachments to hand. On-board tools are most often found on uprights.

“On-board tools are most often found on uprights.”



POWER, SUCTION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY



Did you know that the most powerful vacuums don't necessarily have the best suction? If you take a closer look at EU energy labels, you'll discover a wealth of information. They include the machine's energy efficiency, which floors it's suitable for, and how much dust can escape into the air. All of these details are worth considering before you invest in a new vacuum cleaner.



POWER

You can compare the power of different corded vacuums by looking at the motor's wattage. Most are between 700 W and 900 W. A higher power level is more important in a cylinder vacuum than an upright one; the dirt has further to travel up the hose, often relying on suction alone rather than a beater brush rotating.

It's a common assumption that a motor with higher wattage will result in better cleaning of your home. However, some people argue that machines can be designed for high performance on a low wattage – for example, not all of the power is used for suction, with some being lost as noise and heat.

Steam cleaners, wet and dry vacuums and carpet washers also use power in watts, but this is generally higher than in corded vacuums.

Any model with a rechargeable battery – including cordless vacuum cleaners and floor sweepers – has its power measured in voltage.

Steam cleaners have an additional pressure rating, which usually comes between 1.5 and 4.5 bars.



“ A higher power level is more important in a cylinder vacuum than an upright one.



EU REGULATIONS

The European Union imposed new rules in September 2017, limiting new vacuum cleaners to 900 W of power and 80 dB of noise. It's worth noting that these regulations only apply to corded cleaners, and not to rechargeable, robot, handheld, steam or carpet washer models.

SUCTION

The stronger the suction, the more dust and dirt a vacuum cleaner will pick up in a single pass. This can be difficult to assess without trying out different models for yourself.

“The stronger the suction, the more dust and dirt a vacuum cleaner will pick up in a single pass.”

AIR WATTS

To help buyers compare suction, some manufacturers measure the air watts of their cleaners. These units take into account how much air is moving through the vacuum, to assess its efficiency at converting power into suction. This means that air watts give a better indication of an appliance's performance than motor watts.

NO LOSS OF SUCTION

We explain the benefits of cyclonic technology in our [Features](#) section. By moving the air in a spiral motion, suction is kept at its maximum for consistently great cleaning results, even as your machine ages.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

While we all want powerful cleaning, it's important to balance this with energy efficiency. You can save on running costs and do your bit for the planet by choosing an efficient model.



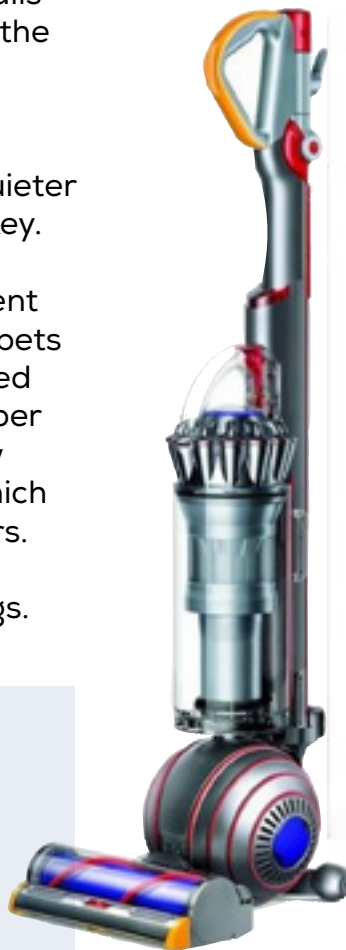
EU RATINGS

Like most household appliances, vacuum cleaners must now be given an EU energy rating. The label will indicate where it falls on the A+++ to D scale, with A+++ being the most efficient and D the least.

You can also find the noise level on the energy efficiency label. If you want a quieter cleaner, a lower number of decibels is key.

The energy label also shows how efficient the appliance is on hard floors and carpets separately, whether or not it can be used on both, and how much energy it uses per year. There will also be a rating for how much dust is re-emitted into the air, which is worth considering for allergy sufferers. Rechargeable vacuum cleaners do not need to be given any of these EU ratings.

“ There will also be a rating for how much dust is re-emitted into the air, which is worth considering for allergy sufferers.



FLOORCARE PRICES



When you first start shopping for floorcare, you'll notice that prices can vary by hundreds of pounds. With the right research, you can find a model that fits both your budget and your needs.

DOES PRICE AFFECT PERFORMANCE?

Independent tests have shown that performance generally correlates with price – the more money you’re willing to spend, the better your machine will be.

But, that’s not to say that you can’t find a great model on a limited budget. Comparing prices, reading reviews, and deciding on essential features will help you get the best deal for your money.



LOW-RANGE

The cheapest floorcare appliances cost in the region of £50 to £100. At this price, you’ll find upright and cylinder vacuums – in both bagged and bagless designs – and possibly a few cordless options and carpet cleaners. But, you may have to sacrifice on factors like capacity and suction.

The performance of budget models varies hugely, meaning that you’ll have to be careful and do your research. At around the £120 mark, you’ll start to find machines with great reviews, which may even come with features like pet-friendly attachments.

Handheld vacuum cleaners and carpet sweepers are understandably the cheapest types of floorcare. Expect to pay £20 or £30 for a basic handheld cleaner, or £60 plus for a more powerful model from a household name.

Carpet sweepers generally range from £15 to around £70, while you can find lower end wet and dry vacuums and floor polishers for as little as £50. And, steam cleaners can cost as little as £40, while the best models can reach into a higher price range.



MID-RANGE

A mid-range budget is around £100 to £250. Most retailers offer a wider choice of brands in this price range. It's where cordless designs usually enter the market, and where you can find most wet and dry vacuums and floor polishers.

You'll also come across cheaper carpet cleaners, high-end steam cleaners and handheld vacuums – and even a few robotic cleaners. You'll be able to take your pick from the full selection of features on offer, including some corded vacuums with cyclonic technology.

“Many retailers offer sales and deals throughout the year, so it pays to wait it out if you can.”

TOP-OF-THE-RANGE

The most expensive upright and cylinder vacuums can cost anywhere from £250 to £450. There aren't as many to choose from in this price bracket, but it includes top models from premium brands. Nearly all are bagless and come with cyclonic technology, along with a generous array of helpful features.

The highest end cordless vacuum cleaners can cost as much as £500, and most robot vacuum cleaners enter the market in this price bracket, costing up to £900. Meanwhile, you can pay anything from £300 to £600 for the majority of carpet cleaners.

OFFERS

If your current vacuum cleaner is still in working order and you're looking to upgrade it, why not hold off until you're sure you've found the best price? Many retailers offer sales and deals throughout the year, so it pays to wait it out if you can.



BUYING ONLINE VS IN-STORE



If you've decided which vacuum cleaner you want, or shortlisted some options, you're a step closer to purchasing. Now, you just need to price up different retailers, and decide whether you're buying online or in-store.

WHERE TO BUY

Both high street and online stores offer a wide selection of models, so you'll probably find yourself with multiple options. It may feel easier to decide between machines when shopping in person, but you can more easily find out other people's opinions when researching online.



ONLINE

PROS

- More convenient – you can order from the comfort of your own home and not worry about transporting your item
- A larger choice of models
- Easier to compare prices
- You can filter your search by specific factors such as battery life
- Product reviews are available
- You can read all about the features in product descriptions

CONS

- You can't get a feel for the physical product
- You may have to pay for delivery
- You won't be able to get advice from a salesperson
- Delivery may take several days or more – a drawback if your previous vacuum cleaner has broken
- Arranging a return or solving issues can be a hassle



IN-STORE

PROS

- You may be allowed to feel the vacuum's weight, manoeuvre it around, or even switch it on to hear how loud it is and test the floorhead
- Shop staff can answer your questions
- Easier to return or seek advice if you have an issue
- No additional delivery charges or waiting for it to arrive
- You can see if the design and size are right for you before buying

“ You may be allowed to feel the vacuum's weight, manoeuvre it around, or even switch it on to hear how loud it is and test the floorhead.

CONS

- You'll have to make the journey to a store, and transport the item home
- Limited to nearby retailers, so you may have a smaller selection of models
- Not as easy to compare prices
- You'll need to depend on online research for reviews



OTHER TIPS AND TRICKS

COMPARE PRICES

Comparing prices online is much easier than doing it in-store. If you have the flexibility to order either way, it's worth doing both. Some stores let you check prices and product stock online before you visit, saving you a wasted trip. You might also be able to click and collect, and reserve your item online for in-store collection.

CHECK THE REVIEWS

Online reviews can give you an idea of a vacuum cleaner's true performance. While it's important that you take them with a pinch of salt, if there are a high number of reviews which sound genuine, they can help you make a decision.

“Comparing prices online is much easier than doing it in-store. If you have the flexibility to order either way, it's worth doing both.”

WARRANTIES

Many vacuum manufacturers provide a guarantee as standard, covering any faults which arise within one to five years of purchase. Some retailers offer the opportunity to extend it, or also cover accidental damage. The choice of an extended warranty may affect where you decide to buy your vacuum cleaner.



OTHER POINTS TO CONSIDER



The last thing to consider is whether your floorcare appliance will suit your home and family. You can have a myriad of features, but if the cable won't stretch the length of your living room, or if it's no good at picking up hair from your beloved pets, then it's not right for you.

HOME SIZE

The size of your floor space should have a significant impact on your choice of vacuum cleaner.

Uprights generally have wide cleaning heads, which cover a large area in one motion. This, plus their high suction power and long handles, makes them ideal for bigger homes and longer periods of vacuuming.

Cylinder vacuums are more compact and easier to manoeuvre. This means they're suited to smaller homes, where the distance you'll need to cover is minimal. They're especially useful for tackling difficult areas such as the stairs and under furniture.

Cordless vacuums sometimes have a limited battery life of 20 minutes or less. Make sure this is long enough to clean all of your rooms in a single session.

Robotic models are best suited to small homes, due to their run time and size, and so are carpet sweepers, because of their light-cleaning nature.

If you have a larger house, you'll pick up more dust and dirt. So, choosing a cylinder or upright model with a more generous capacity, and a longer cable of at least 10 metres, will make life easier.



FLOOR TYPES

Hard floors and carpets have different cleaning requirements. Cylinder vacuums glide over wooden, tiled and vinyl flooring with ease, but might need a turbo brush attachment for cut pile carpets.

Uprights are perfect for carpeted areas, and while they clean hard floors well, you'll need to use an attachment without a roller to prevent damage to loop pile carpets.

Steam mops are better suited to hard surfaces, while carpet washers are designed to revitalise your carpets.

If your home has a mix of flooring types, a model with automatic height adjustment will let you move from room to room without stopping.

More power and stronger suction will come in useful if most of your home is carpeted. Most vacuum cleaners have variable power levels and a range of attachments, which will help you switch between different floor types, rugs and upholstery.



“ If your home has a mix of flooring types, a model with automatic height adjustment will let you move from room to room without stopping.



WEIGHT

If you have steep stairs, or someone in your household may struggle lifting your vacuum cleaner, the weight of it is particularly important. Stay away from heavy upright designs, and perhaps look at lightweight models. Robotic vacuums could remove the physical strain of cleaning completely.

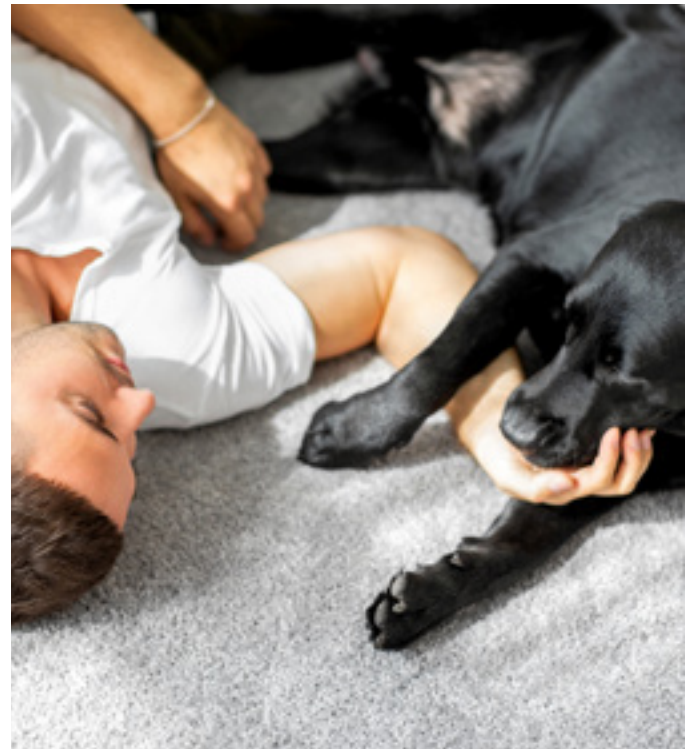
LIVING WITH ALLERGIES

Allergy and asthma sufferers need to take extra care to keep their home hygienic. HEPA and S-Class filters are proven to remove up to 99.97% of allergens. Bagged vacuums lock in dust when you're emptying, hypoallergenic sealed systems prevent it escaping when you're cleaning, and carpet washers can get rid of deeply ingrained dirt.

LIVING WITH PETS

Pet hair can be a real pain to clean. You'll need a vacuum with a beater brush, turbo tool or specific pet attachment to keep everything spotless – some models are even designed just for pet owners. Handheld cleaners can also help you regularly keep on top of pet hair.

“ Handheld cleaners can also help you regularly keep on top of pet hair.



BUSY LIFESTYLES

If you find yourself struggling to vacuum as often as you'd like, some designs make quick cleans much easier. Look for a grab-and-go cordless or carpet sweeper model, or a robotic vacuum which you can leave to take care of your home.



ALTERNATIVE SURFACES

If you don't own a handheld vacuum, additional tools can help you cover a wider range of surfaces with your regular cleaner. A dusting brush can be used to clean bookshelves and window sills, while upholstery tools will help you freshen up curtains and furniture. A crevice nozzle is perfect for cleaning in between stairs, reaching cobwebs in the corners of a room, or removing dust from behind radiators. Think about how you can get the most out of your new vacuum cleaner.

“ If you find yourself struggling to vacuum as often as you'd like, some designs make quick cleans much easier.



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