

BUYERS GUIDE

Washing Machines

 euronics



INTRODUCTION

Are you thinking about buying a new washing machine? Do you know which features to look out for? There is a huge variety of models on the market, from basic machines to high-tech models.

It's important to make sure you purchase the right appliance for your family. You need a reliable model that gives you great results and suits your lifestyle. It's easier to choose than you might think – this simple guide will help you pick your perfect washing machine.



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CONTENTS

	4-8	TYPES OF WASHING MACHINES
	9-12	DRUM SIZES AND CAPACITY
	13-16	WASHING MACHINE SIZES
	17-19	STYLES OF WASHING MACHINE
	20-26	WASHING MACHINE FEATURES
	27-32	PROGRAMMES, CYCLES, AND SETTINGS
	33-37	TEMPERATURE SETTINGS
	38-40	PERFORMANCE AND SPIN SPEED RATINGS
	41-43	ENERGY RATINGS
	44-46	NOISE RATINGS
	47-52	BUY ONLINE OR IN-STORE?
	53-56	WASHING MACHINE PRICES

TYPES OF WASHING MACHINES



There is a vast range of washing machines available. We'll explain the differences of each type, from front loading models to cold fill. Choosing between them is simple as some types are much more common than others, especially in the UK.

The most important decision to make is generally Freestanding vs. Integrated.

FREESTANDING

The most common type of washing machine is freestanding. It's not built into your kitchen units, so it can be placed anywhere as long as it's connected to a drain and electrical socket.

This flexibility is useful if you don't have much space in your kitchen or if you have a laundry room. And, if you move house often, a freestanding design may be more suitable as it's easier to remove and transport.

If you have a gap in your kitchen where your old washing machine was, you can easily slot this style into the space. However, you'll need to make sure there's plenty of space on all sides. Freestanding models aren't fixed as securely in place as built-in versions, so vibrations can transfer into the surrounding area. This could then damage your kitchen units and any nearby built-in appliances.

As freestanding models are the most common, you'll get the largest choice of drum capacities, spin speeds, and colours.



“ This style gives you the largest choice of drum capacities, spin speeds, and colours.



INTEGRATED

If you're looking for a washing machine that blends in with your kitchen, you should consider an integrated model. Sometimes known as a built-in, this type can be placed behind a cupboard door as part of a kitchen unit. Hiding the machine helps to maintain the look and flow of the room.

The integrated design aids in reducing vibration noises too, as it's fitted securely. Plus, the cupboard door helps to muffle any sound that's produced. This style often features a lower spin speed to reduce the machine's movement and vibration.

Integrated machines can be more difficult to install and remove than freestanding models. This is because the cupboard door has to be lined up correctly and drill holes made. The machine also needs to be well levelled and secured into place properly. It's possible to install a built-in machine yourself, but you'll probably want to ask your retailer about installation costs.

“ Integrated or built-in washing machines are hidden from view behind a cupboard door. This helps maintain the look and flow of the room.



FRONT LOADING

The majority of washing machines in the UK are front loading, in that the door faces forward. This style has several benefits over American top-loading models.

These machines can be stacked with another washing machine or a tumble dryer as the doors won't be blocked. If you have limited floor space or have a large family, then this is a really helpful feature, although you may need a kit to ensure the machines are secure.

Research shows that front loaders give better cleaning results compared to top-loader models. They are also more energy efficient as they use less water in a wash cycle. Many front-loading machines have features that adjust the water level to the exact needs of the wash, so water isn't wasted.

Front-loaders often have high spin speeds which extract more of the water from your laundry, so drying times are shorter. Several models also have a large capacity, so you can do fewer washes and can easily fit in bulky items like towels, bed sheets or duvets.



“Front-loaders often have high spin speeds which extract more of the water from your laundry, so drying times are shorter.”



COLD FILL

All modern washing machines in the UK are cold fill. This means they heat the water inside the machine rather than using hot water from your boiler.

Manufacturers prefer cold fill machines as are they are cheaper to make, which then reduces the price.

The main advantage of cold fill machines is their efficiency. Instead of using large amounts of pre-heated water from a boiler, these machines only use the exact amount of water needed for a wash and heat it within the drum.

This type of washing machine is easy to install and cheap to maintain.

“Manufacturers prefer cold fill machines as they are cheaper to make, which then reduces the price.”



DRUM SIZES AND CAPACITY



Some washing machines have larger drums than others, but what size do you need? This section of our buyers guide helps explain what drum capacity really means, and whether a large or small machine is right for you.

WHAT IS THE DRUM CAPACITY?

A washing machine's drum capacity is the weight of dry clothing you can safely wash in one cycle. This is usually a bit less than the amount you could physically fit into the drum.

Most machines range in size from 6 kg to 12 kg. It's recommended to buy a drum size you won't struggle to fill.

WHAT SIZE DO I NEED?

When choosing a drum size, take into account your washing habits and needs. How large is your household? How many washes a week do you typically do? What types of fabric and clothing do you wash?

In most cases, a 7-8 kg drum will comfortably serve a medium-sized household in the UK. Machines in this size category will have enough space for standard washes, and include programmes tailored for smaller loads too.

If you have a larger household that does several washes a week, with large or heavily soiled loads, a bigger drum capacity may suit you better. Equally, if you are a smaller family who only do a few washes, a smaller capacity might be more suitable.

HOW MUCH CAN I WASH AT ONCE?

The exact amount you can fit into the machine will vary depending on the style and fabric of your clothes. However, as a general rule, a standard 7 kg machine can wash 35 cotton t-shirts or a double duvet in a single load.

An 8 kg machine can wash 40 t-shirts, a 10 kg machine 50 t-shirts, and a 12 kg machine 60 t-shirts. For larger households or those who want to wash bigger duvets, larger capacity washing machines can be really useful.



“Most machines range in size from 6 kg to 12 kg. It's recommended to buy a drum size you won't struggle to fill.”



IS A BIGGER CAPACITY BETTER?

Many people assume that getting the biggest and often most expensive washing machine will give them a better cleaning performance and value for money. Larger capacity machines do have advantages, but there are negatives too.

The main advantage is that a larger capacity machine can hold more items, so you can clean the same amount of clothing in fewer washes than with a smaller model. Fewer but larger washes are more economical and efficient than smaller washes, and can lower your water and electricity costs.

Larger capacity machines often include extra washing programmes for bulkier items such as duvets, towels or curtains.

However, larger machines are usually more expensive to buy due to the extra capacity and programmes. Plus, if you run half-full cycles, they can be more expensive to use as they require more water and electricity for each cycle.



“Larger capacity machines often include extra washing programmes for bulkier items, such as duvets, towels or curtains.”



COMMON LOADING ISSUES

OVERLOADING

It can be tempting to wash those last few items to save yourself running another load, but this can lead to performance issues.

If you overfill your drum, the items can clump and rotate together in one large ball. This stops the detergent from spreading evenly or getting rinsed out properly. Clumping also means clothes get very tangled and creased. They won't have enough room to move around and wash away any dirt either.

As most people don't weigh their laundry every time they use the washing machine, you can follow the general rule of only filling the drum 80% of the way up.

A drum's maximum capacity usually only refers to the main cotton programme, so bear in mind that other cycles may only take smaller loads. Silks, delicates or woollens need smaller load sizes, so they don't become damaged. This means you may not use the entire capacity on every wash.

UNDERLOADING

Underloading your machine wastes a lot of water and energy. This is because most machines are unlikely to sense the weight of the load, so they will use the same amount of water as a full load.

Having a smaller load can also cause issues with the detergent. Some detergents won't work properly or will produce excessive foam if you don't use the standard measurements.



WASHING MACHINE SIZES



When buying a washing machine, you need to take into account the amount of space you have to install it. There's nothing worse than having an appliance delivered, only to find out it doesn't fit – so make sure to measure up carefully before you order.

This part of our buyers guide is about the physical size of the washing machine. For information on drum capacities, [click here](#).



STANDARD SIZES

A standard washing machine is generally 85 cm high x 59-60 cm wide x 50-60 cm deep. Machines of this size are available in a full range of drum capacities, up to 12 kg and sometimes 13 kg. Some smaller models are available, but they have a smaller drum capacity and are harder to find.

We recommend measuring the area you plan to have the machine very precisely, as even a millimetre can make a difference. Remember that the machine needs to be a little smaller than the space it's going in, especially the width, so you have space to manoeuvre it into position.

If you have a gap in your kitchen where your old washing machine was, you can easily slot a freestanding standard sized model into the space. You'll need to make sure there's plenty of space on all sides, as these models aren't fixed as securely in place as built-in versions, so vibrations can transfer into the surrounding units.

As the standard size is the most common, it gives you the largest choice of drum capacities, spin speeds and colours.



“ A standard washing machine is generally 85 cm high x 59-60 cm wide x 50-60 cm deep.



OVERCOMING SIZING PROBLEMS

WIDTH

As most kitchens are designed to include a washing machine, choosing a model that's too wide isn't usually a problem, but it's important to measure up first. If there are several gaps near to the water supply and outlet pipe, you may have a choice to where you can position the machine.

Very few models have a considerably smaller width other than top loaders or compact machines, both of which are not popular styles in the UK. If width is an issue in your kitchen, you might have to consider installing the washing machine in a utility room or altering the layout slightly.

HEIGHT

Height is the easiest dimension to change on the majority of models. Most brands offer a height reduction kit. This allows you to remove the lid and replace it with a flatter version, helping to save a few millimetres. Adjustable feet can also help to lower the machine, or you can search for models of a specific height online.

DEPTH

The depth is the most variable dimension for washing machines, ranging from 42 cm to 65 cm. But it's not the most important measurement – if the machine is a little too big, it will just stick out slightly.

Bear in mind that a shallower machine may be easier to install when you're connecting the pipes at the back.

Something else to consider is if you have kitchen drawers, cupboard doors, main doors or anything else opening across the machine. Washing machine doors often bulge outwards and could get in the way. Control dials and knobs can also get caught too. Some machines do have reversible doors, which allows you to choose which way the door opens out.



SMALLER MACHINES

If you have limited space and don't mind a smaller drum capacity, a compact model may be better suited to your needs.

Compact machines generally measure 67-70 cm (H) x 50 cm (W) x 50 cm (D) and have a smaller but still functional 5-7 kg drum capacity. Slimline models are much narrower at around 34-48 cm width, and are perfect if you have a smaller flat or home.

These smaller styles are not as common, so they can be a bit more expensive.

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STYLES OF WASHING MACHINE



Washing machines are traditionally white, but that doesn't mean they have to all look the same. Modern designs feature large porthole doors, contrasting surrounds and high-tech control panels. You'll even find designs in alternative colours like silver and black.

What style is right for you? Is it worth spending more on a model for the appearance? This section of our washing machine buyers guide will help you decide.

COLOUR OPTIONS

It's well known that the majority of washing machines are white. It's a colour that fits in with any décor and looks clean and fresh. But there are also other options available.

Shades of silver and grey are popular and give a sophisticated, high-tech finish. Graphite is another colour to look for, as it's a term often used by manufacturers.

A range of other colours are also available, although for some more unusual options you may have to pick a lesser known or more expensive brand. Black, red and cream can sometimes be found as an alternative colour.

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STYLING

Many of the washing machines on sale today look fantastic. As a general rule, the most attractive machines are typically more expensive, but it isn't always the case.

Large porthole doors are a great design feature that allows you to get your washing in and out more easily, and they also look stunning. Some models use dark or blue glass to create a dramatic effect too. Several brands also feature lights in the interior of the machine which gives you better visibility when loading and unloading.

Selected models even have contrasting door trims in black or chrome, shiny displays, or exceptionally well-designed control panels.



SHOULD I THINK ABOUT THE DESIGN?

Whether the colour and style of your washing machine is worth considering is mainly affected by where you plan to put it.

If you want a functional machine for a utility or laundry room, the look of the appliance probably isn't that important. However, if you want it to be the centrepiece of your new kitchen, choosing a stylish model is more essential.

A NOTE ON BUILT-IN MODELS

You might decide that you like the look of your kitchen so much that you don't want to see your washing machine at all.

In that case, you should pick a built-in or integrated model. These are installed within your kitchen units and hidden behind a cupboard door.

If you don't want to see your washing machine, buy an integrated version to hide it from view.



WASHING MACHINE FEATURES



Washing machine technology is always improving, and there are a whole host of features available on modern models. Exactly what you get varies with the brand and model. Usually the more expensive and high quality the machine, the more features it will have.

This section of our buyers guide explains what these features do, from time delays to fuzzy logic, so that you can compare machines more easily.

Looking for information on washing machine programmes? [Click here.](#)

DISPLAYS AND CONTROLS

Most washing machines have a control panel with all the buttons, switches or dials used to set the machine. High-end models now feature touch control displays, making it easier than ever to control and set up a cycle.

Indicator lights tell you what settings you've chosen and how far through the cycle the machine is. Some machines also have a memory or favourite button, which lets you save your favourite wash settings to use again.

Pause buttons are another useful feature – especially when you've found an extra sock to go in the wash when the cycle has already started.

Some machines have an LCD or LED display instead of, or as well as, indicator lights. These are clear and well-lit for good visibility, and often have a countdown timer to show how long the wash will take.

You may want a model with a time delay, which allows you to set a programme to start or finish when you want. This is useful if you have cheaper night-time electricity rates, or don't like your damp clothes sitting in the machine for hours while you're out.



EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES

With environmental impact a big concern, washing machine manufacturers are adding features that make their models more efficient – in terms of electricity, water and even detergent usage.

Many machines will give you a range of different temperatures you can use, as low as 20°C, to help you to lower the energy used by the appliance.

Some machines use sensors to calculate the exact amount of energy and water required for a wash cycle. This is a very efficient way of washing and helps to lower your bills. Siemens iSensonic models are just one example of machines with this technology.

Automatic dosing features ensure only the correct amount of detergent is used in each wash. The machine determines how much detergent a particular wash programme needs, based on the type of material and weight. This saves you money on detergent and makes sure that too much foam isn't created.

Some high-end brands now also feature a consumption forecast, so you know how much energy and water each cycle will use before it starts.



SAFETY FEATURES

Many washing machines feature various safety features to protect you against floods or accidents.

Child locks stop curious fingers altering programme settings once a wash has started. Door locks can also stop little ones from opening the machine and making a mess.

Overflow and leak prevention systems have sensors to detect any potential problems. This cuts off the water supply if something happens so you won't come home to a flood. Many machines also have overheating protection for the water heater or motor, which helps to extend their life span.

If you add an excessive amount of detergent to a wash, it can cause an overflow of foam or bubbles. Anti-foam technology prevents this as it automatically adjusts the length of the cycle to compensate.



DESIGN FEATURES

New technology helps to make washing machines quieter than ever before. Modern brushless inverter motors reduce high-frequency noise for quieter, shorter and more efficient wash programmes. And, the machine walls can be designed to absorb more of the sound and reduce the vibrations.

Self-cleaning detergent drawers and drums are handy additions to some higher end machines. They use powerful water jets to flush out any residue after a wash, to keep your machine clean for the next use.

Recently, brands like Samsung have included port holes with mini doors which allow you to add items to the wash once it has started.

Variable spin options let you manually alter the spin speed of wash programmes. This is ideal if your clothes and sheets are coming out very creased. Just lower the spin speed, and they won't get as tangled. Different fabrics also require different speeds; for example, silk items get the best results at around 400 RPM.

Some machines have specially designed drums, created to move your laundry items around evenly during a wash. This helps to ensure that every piece is thoroughly cleaned and washed.

If you have uneven floors, look out for levelling legs. These are adjustable, and ensure that the machine sits level. This is important in getting an evenly distributed wash, and ensures the machine is quiet and doesn't move around.



WASH CYCLE EXTRAS

An anti-stain feature is a great addition for messy households. By using carefully controlled temperatures, the cycle can remove everything from red wine to grass. This is a particular feature of some Hotpoint machines, although other brands have similar functions.

Some machines offer a wash tailored for organic washing detergents, like laundry balls or soap nuts. These cycles use more water and hotter temperatures to give you optimal results.

If you want the best performance with minimum fuss, it's worth looking for a machine with Fuzzy Logic. This is a sensor system that monitors and controls the conditions inside the machine, including the washing process, water intake, temperature, wash time, rinse performance, and speed. The machine automatically detects the type of fabric, soiling levels, water hardness, and weight of the load, then alters the conditions for the best results.

Concerned about hygiene? A service/maintenance wash will help to keep your machine as clean as possible. This cycle runs at a very high temperature (about 90°)

to sterilise the inside of the machine and remove bacteria, soap scum and mould.

Bosch and Siemens washing machines often have a feature called VarioPerfect, which allows you to select either a shorter or more eco-friendly wash. However, other brands offer short and eco cycles too. These are great if you need something washed quickly, or have more time and would like to save some electricity.

Some washing machines have a steam refresh option. This isn't a wash programme as such, but a cycle where your clothes are steamed to remove odours and freshen them up. This option can be added onto the end of a wash cycle to help reduce creases, and remove particles that may irritate people with allergies or sensitive skin.

“Are you concerned about hygiene? A service/maintenance wash helps keep your machine as clean as possible.”



THE FUTURE OF WASHING MACHINES

Wi-Fi enabled washing machines are the latest trend. Although this technology is relatively new, models with this feature are starting to become much more common.

As long as you have a Wi-Fi connection, you can remotely monitor and control your washing machine using an app on your Smartphone. Start, stop, pause, or receive an alert when your load has finished, all at the touch of a screen. Some apps can also detect any issues with your machine and

suggest solutions. Plus, you can download additional cycles to use and receive a programme suggestion based on the items you're washing.

“ Some apps can detect any issues with your machine and suggest solutions.



PROGRAMMES, CYCLES, AND SETTINGS



Before buying your new washing machine, you'll need to consider which programmes will be most useful to you and your family. If you're environmentally conscious, you'll want a machine with energy efficient cycles. If you lead a busy lifestyle, you're likely to be looking for a model with quick wash options.

The latest washing machines have lots of programmes, ranging from the conventional to the high-tech. When choosing a machine, you'll need to work out which cycles you're willing to pay a little bit extra for, and which ones you don't need.

Here, we take a look at the range of cycles available, all of which are designed to give your clothes the best care possible.



WASHES FOR SPECIFIC FABRICS AND MATERIALS

Most washing machines have cycles for cleaning common materials such as cotton, and synthetic fabrics like polyester and viscose. The synthetics programme is sometimes known as Easy Care. However, if you have items in your wardrobe that require a little more attention, you can choose from plenty of specialised programmes.

Fragile garments such as lace underwear and silk shirts can be given extra care by selecting a programme designed for delicates. Cycles developed for woollens are also great for keeping your cardigans and jumpers clean. Some exceptionally gentle wool programmes have even been given the Woolmark seal of approval.

Several washing machines also boast programmes for bulkier items such as sheets and blankets. For example, Zanussi offers a Duvet programme designed to clean your bedding perfectly.

Advanced models often offer laundry care programmes for more specialist materials. If you lead an active lifestyle or have kids, a washing machine with a Sportswear or

Outerwear cycle would be ideal. Some leading brands have even created programmes for taking care of your jeans, to keep them looking like new for as long as possible.

Wi-Fi enabled machines sometimes allow you to download new cycles to use. These specially designed programmes are tailored to specific loads, such as school uniform, swimming wear and blankets.

Some brands, such as Siemens, offer a cycle that applies a waterproof treatment to breathable fabrics when you use the compatible detergent.



WHITES AND COLOURS

It's important to sort your laundry into whites and colours, and wash them separately to prevent any colour transfer. Some washing machines even have programmes designed specifically for dark items, to help them retain their colour for longer. If you have a lot of suits, black items or jeans, this is definitely something to consider. You can find models with washes designed to help preserve white garments too.

Brands like Bosch have even designed a Mixed Load cycle, which allows you to wash different types of fabric and colours together. This is a great feature to save you time and energy.

NEAT OR MESSY – THERE'S A SETTING FOR YOU

The programmes you'll need also depend on whether you and your family usually wash heavily soiled items or not.

If you wash items like sport kits or outdoor gear regularly, selecting a machine with an Intensive cycle is a great choice. These cycles tend to take a little longer, but ensure your clothes are extra clean.

Sometimes you may only have a few almost-clean items in your washing basket. You can easily get these smelling and looking great again with a quick Freshen Up programme.

Accidents often happen, and your favourite item of clothing can easily end up stained. Pre-wash cycles are ideal for loosening up dried-on marks before the main cycle, to ensure your clothes come out in perfect condition again.

Most higher-end models will also feature a stain cycle, designed to tackle some of the most common everyday marks including grass, ink, coffee, and make-up.

“Pre-wash cycles are ideal for loosening up dried-on marks before the main cycle.



IN A HURRY?

Many washing machines offer flexibility when it comes to cycle times, which is great if you don't have much time on your hands.

Quick wash cycles clean clothes in around 14 to 30 minutes. You can save time by using these programmes to freshen up smaller loads. Blomberg has a Mini 14' programme, which can wash around 2 kg of lightly soiled clothing in just 14 minutes.

Many brands have Eco-Friendly programmes, designed to reduce your electricity and water bills, and help protect the planet. Some models have a Half Load setting which also saves energy and is ideal for smaller loads.

If you have some items you've washed by hand, you can select a spin only cycle to remove most of the water from the material and reduce drying times. If you like to tumble dry your clothes, this is a big help.

REDUCED IRONING

Although reduced ironing programmes don't eliminate ironing completely, they are specially designed to make it quicker and easier. This is thanks to the reduced crease technology and slower spin speeds.



SPECIAL CARE PROGRAMMES

Allergen removal programmes are great if you have an allergy sufferer in the family. These are designed to remove pollen and dust mites from your clothes throughout the wash. Some cycles are even endorsed by Allergy UK. Extra rinse cycles also mean those sensitive to detergents won't have to deal with irritated skin either.

Some washing machines offer special cycles created for garments with a 'hand wash only' label. These protect your clothes with a gentle wash, while still giving them a thorough clean.

Baby cycles are perfect if you have a little one at home. Items such as bibs and baby grows are cleaned intensively to remove food stains and dirt. Brands like Blomberg even offer hygiene cycles, capable of killing 99.9% of bacteria at wash temperatures as low as 30°C.

“Extra rinse cycles mean those sensitive to detergents will no longer have to deal with irritated skin.

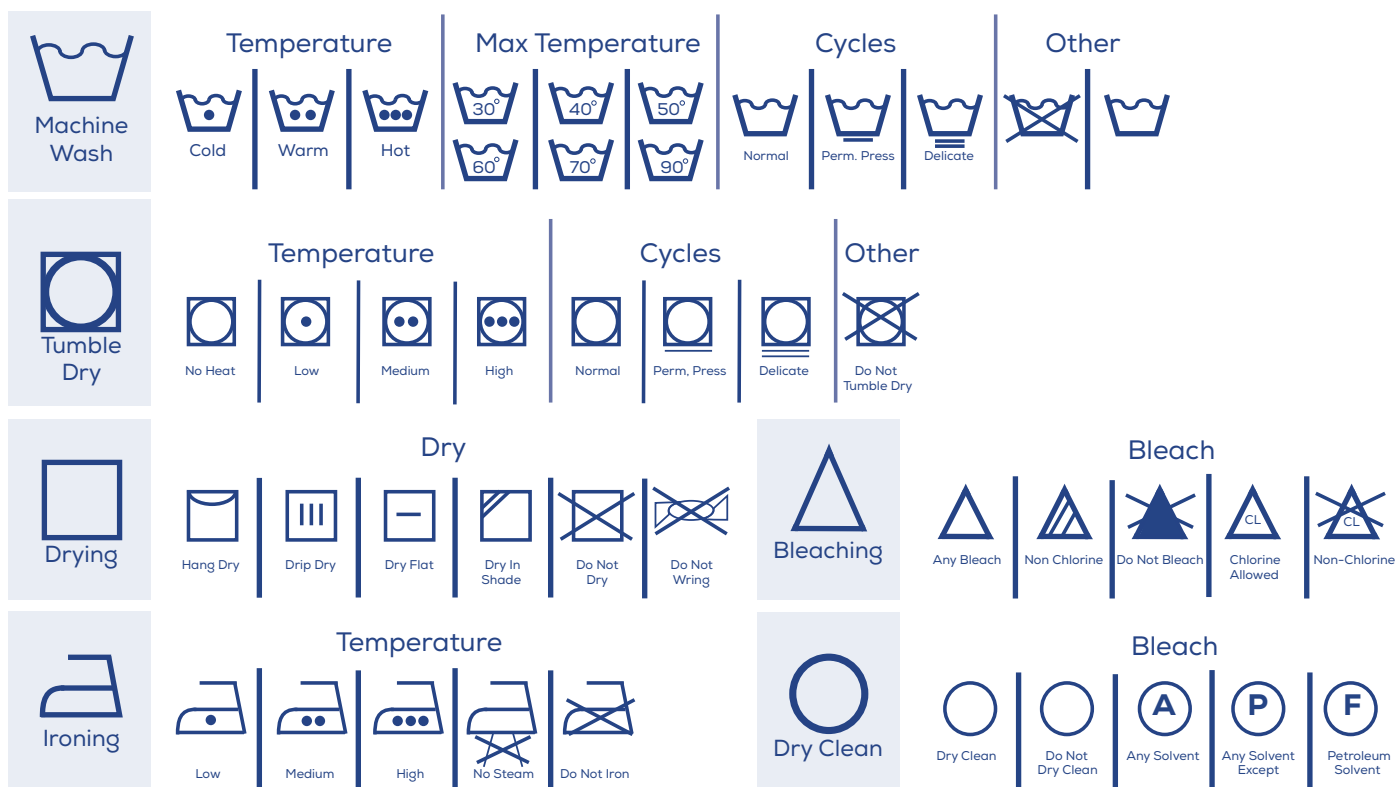


LAUNDRY CARE SYMBOLS

What if you're not sure what cycles you actually need?

The best thing to do is take a look and check the labels in your clothes. You might find you have more delicate or hand wash items than you thought, or garments that need a particularly hot cycle.

Here's a handy diagram of the most common laundry care symbols, so you can work out what they mean:



TEMPERATURE SETTINGS



Modern washing machines have a range of temperatures to choose from, including hot, warm, and cold options. Since 2013, all washing machines in the UK must feature a 20°C wash, which still washes clothes effectively. Some models will also offer a boil wash at 95°C, although the majority will only wash at 90°C.

When you're buying a washing machine, think about your lifestyle and the contents of your wardrobe to help you decide which temperature settings you'll use the most.



WHY IS TEMPERATURE IMPORTANT?

Washing clothes at the right temperature is really important. A higher temperature kills germs, but the heat can damage certain types of fabric. Low temperatures save electricity, but may not get your clothes as clean.

The wash temperature not only affects the lifespan of your clothes, but also the performance of the detergent and level of creasing.

Following clothing label instructions is the best way to ensure that your items retain their colour, shape, and condition for as long as possible.

“ Higher temperatures kill germs, but the heat can damage certain types of fabric.



WHEN TO USE HOT WATER

Do you have a baby at home, an elderly relative, or a family member who has allergies? If so, it's worth buying a washing machine that's capable of cleaning your clothes at high temperatures.

Hot water settings tend to work best for white clothing that's made from hard-wearing materials such as cotton. Items like bedding and towels should also be washed at high temperatures so that they remain hygienic. This is because heat is one of the best ways to kill germs.

The majority of washing machines offer hot cycles for cottons, with a temperature range of up to 90°C. A few brands even have more specialised high-temperature programmes.

Some Bosch models have an Allergy+ programme. This prolongs the maximum wash temperature during the cycle to reduce the number of allergens that irritate sensitive skin. Hotpoint also have an Anti-Allergy programme, which heats the water to 60° to remove dust mites and pollen.

Selected Siemens models have a Hygiene cycle to ensure items like baby clothes and bedding are cleaned hygienically.

PROS

- Produces better overall cleaning results
- Dissolves detergent more effectively
- Removes allergens from clothing
- Sanitises and removes germs effectively

CONS

- Can cause shrinking, fading and wrinkling
- Can set some types of stains
- Not as energy efficient



WHEN TO USE WARM WATER

Do you wear a lot of dark items or have clothing made from man-made fabrics? If this is the case, you're likely to want a washing machine that has a selection of warm temperature settings to keep your clothes looking their best.

Warm temperatures are the best choice for clothing items such as denim jeans and moderately soiled items. Most washing machine models tend to offer 30°, 40°, or 60° cycles, which are great all-rounders.

Bosch has an Easy Care programme, which uses a range of temperatures designed for synthetic fabrics which absorb minimal moisture and dirt. Other machines may have cycles specifically for jeans or dark colours.

PROS

- More energy efficient than using hot water
- Effective at dissolving powder detergents
- Great for cleaning man-made fabrics

CONS

- Can fade some colours
- Does not sanitise fabrics as effectively as hot water
- Cannot remove some heavy soils and stains
- Warm temperatures are the best choice for clothing items such as denim jeans and moderately soiled items.



“Some machines have cycles specifically for jeans or dark colours.”



WHEN TO USE COLD WATER

Are you conscious of the environment? Do you like to keep your energy bills as low as possible?

Washing machines that have cold water cycles are great for looking after the planet as well as your pocket.

Advances in washing machines and laundry detergents mean that you can now get your clothes clean and fresh again at temperatures as low as 20 or 30°C.

Cold water cycles are perfect for brightly coloured items that are likely to bleed, lightly soiled items, woollens, and delicates.

Samsung ecobubble™ washing machines froth the detergent before the cycle starts, creating bubbles which clean your clothes quicker. This means you can wash clothes as effectively in cool water as you would in warm water while saving energy.

Zanussi also offers a Mix 20° programme, where you can wash cottons, synthetics and colours together.

PROS

- More energy efficient compared to warm and hot cycles
- Less likely to fade and shrink clothes
- Acceptable to use for most fabrics
- Rinsing in cold water can reduce creasing

CONS

- Not as effective at removing stains
- Will not sanitise clothes
- Cold water cycles are perfect for brightly coloured items that are likely to bleed, lightly soiled items, woollens and delicates.



PERFORMANCE AND SPIN SPEED RATINGS



When you're buying a new washing machine, you'll see a variety of ratings on the label or in the specification. These include wash and spin performance ratings, and the spin speed of the machine. But what do they really mean?

SPIN SPEED

Spin speed is measured in Revolutions Per Minute (RPM), and refers to the speed at which the drum rotates during a spin cycle. These speeds commonly range between 400 and 1800 RPM.

When buying a washing machine, look for a model with a high RPM. The faster the spin of your machine, the more water is squeezed out of your laundry and the quicker it will dry.

Some models allow you to alter the spin speed to suit the type of load better. Delicates and silks, for example, could get damaged at high speeds. Lowering the spin speed can also help to reduce creasing.

Models with higher spin speeds tend to be more expensive, and it has been said that the difference in the amount of water extracted at the top end of the range isn't that noticeable. However, if you dry your clothes in a tumble dryer, a higher spin means the dryer has less work to do, saving you energy and money.

“ Lowering the spin speed can help to reduce creasing.



SPIN PERFORMANCE

As well as stating the spin speed, washing machines also get a spin performance rating from A to G.

Most models sold score at least a C, so although this is useful for comparing different models, the actual speed in RPM is often a better measurement to look at.

WASH PERFORMANCE

The washing performance rating is based on how well the washing machine cleans the load during a cycle.

These theoretically range from A to G, although in recent years all machines are required to have an A rating. This rating is also only measured on the appliance's 60°C wash which you may not use the most frequently. That means this information isn't as useful any more unless you're comparing with an older model.



“ Wash Performance ratings theoretically range from A to G, although in recent years all machines are required to have an A rating.



ENERGY RATINGS



If you're thinking about upgrading your washing machine to a newer model, it's worth knowing about energy efficiency ratings. Appliances with a good energy rating can save you money on electricity and water bills, as well as helping to look after the environment.

EU energy efficiency ratings can be a little confusing at first, but we've put together this guide to answer all your questions.



WHY DO WE NEED ENERGY LABELS?

All household appliances now must have an EU energy efficiency label. This means you can easily compare different models to check running costs and get an idea of how efficient they are. It also forces manufacturers to take more responsibility for the environment.

Energy efficiency ratings are shown on the label and take the form of a letter.



WASHING MACHINE ENERGY LABELS EXPLAINED

Since 2014, washing machines can only be rated A+++ (most energy efficient), A++, A+, or A (least energy efficient). However, you may still find older models for sale with B to D ratings.

You'll also find other information on washing machine energy labels, including annual water consumption (in litres), capacity (in kilogrammes), spin drying efficiency (rated from A to G) and noise emission (in decibels). This is really useful if you're struggling to choose between two models.

The Energy Saving Trust endorse the most energy efficient washing machines. The easiest way to find these models is to look for the Energy Saving Recommended logo.

“Energy efficiency ratings are shown on the label and take the form of a letter.”



HOW ARE ENERGY RATINGS CALCULATED?

Washing machine ratings are based on the kilowatt hours used annually for full and partial 60°C cotton loads and a 40°C partial cotton load.

It's worth keeping in mind that the label may not provide a true reflection of the energy efficiency of the machine if you use different cycles to those tested.

WHAT ABOUT WATER CONSUMPTION?

The EU energy rating doesn't take water usage into account, only electricity. The water consumption is shown on the label but doesn't contribute to the overall rating.

Water usage per kilogram ranges between 6-14 litres in the average machine.

“ The label may not always provide a true reflection of the energy efficiency.



NOISE RATINGS



Manufacturers include the noise level of every washing machine in the model specifications. This is the average volume of the machine's wash and spin cycles, in decibels (dB). The higher the rating, the noisier the machine will be.



WHY QUIET MACHINES MATTER

If you have young children, want to run your machine at night, or just enjoy a peaceful home, how loud the washing machine is could be a big factor in which model you choose.

Quiet models are also great if you have an open-plan kitchen and living room.

If you don't mind a noisy household or you have a separate laundry or utility room, it might not be as important.

Most people want the quietest washing machine possible, although noise might not be as high a priority for you as other features like the number and range of programmes.

“ High-end models have new features like brushless or quiet drive motors, and anti vibration systems, to reduce noise levels as much as possible.

WHAT AFFECTS THE NOISE LEVEL?

Noise ratings vary depending on the quality of the washing machine.

High-end models have new features like brushless or quiet drive motors, and anti-vibration systems, to reduce noise levels as much as possible. Water pumps have also become quieter as their design has improved.

Where you put the machine is also a factor. Ensure you choose a model that's the right size so it won't vibrate against your kitchen units or another appliance.



AVERAGE NOISE RATINGS

Most washing machines average between 40-80 dB, with anything below 50 dB considered a particularly quiet model. These machines are less likely to disturb your conversations or interrupt the TV.

To help you understand what decibel ratings compare to, vacuum cleaning is about 70 dB, someone talking normally is about 50-60 dB, and a quiet library is about 40 dB. The chart below gives you equivalent sounds at a glance.

If the noise level of the washing machine is important to you, then look for models with technology like brushless or inverter motors or anti-vibration designs. You should also look out for machines with the Quiet Mark award as these have been recognised as being especially quiet.



“ You should also look out for machines with the Quiet Mark award as these have been recognised as being especially quiet.



BUY ONLINE OR IN-STORE?



Buying a washing machine can be a daunting prospect, with the huge choice of brands, styles, features and sizes on offer. In this section we'll help you decide whether to shop in-store or online.

IN-STORE

Before you go into a store, do as much research as you can. Technology and features are always being updated, so it helps to have an idea of what you're after.

Research the average prices for the type of machine you're interested in, so you know roughly how much you'll be paying. Energy ratings are also worth finding out about if you don't want huge running costs.

If you find certain models or brands you like the look of, check if your local store stocks them and if not, why not. Write down any questions or features you want explained and take the list with you so you can ask the shop assistant. They'll provide more information and can help you narrow down your options.

“Technology and features are always being updated, so it helps to have an idea of what you're after.”

BE CLEAR ABOUT YOUR NEEDS

Figure out what your priorities for a machine are based on your washing needs.

If you have a large, active household, a sportswear programme will be a useful addition. Similarly, a large drum is helpful if you have lots of large bed sheets and towels to wash regularly.

Take a look through the rest of our buyers guide for help on programmes, features and more. If you have a clear idea of what you need, you'll be less likely to feel overwhelmed in the store.



STICK TO YOUR BUDGET

Decide on a rough budget and stick to it. If you only have the money for a basic design, don't look at the top of the range, high-tech models. Remember to ask an assistant if they have any sales or discounts coming up. You could also sign up to their email newsletter to see the latest deals.

INSTALLATION

Ask the shop assistants what their delivery and installation policy is. Sometimes, the terms and conditions when you buy in-store are slightly different from those online.

Do they deliver from the store, a central warehouse, or direct from the manufacturer? Do they deliver for free or have an extra charge? Will they take away and dispose of your old machine? Do you need to disconnect your current machine yourself? Some shops will also charge more for a weekend delivery, so it may work out cheaper if you can get the machine delivered during the week.

“ Decide on a rough budget and stick to it.



PHYSICAL TESTING

Once you're in store take a good look at the machine itself. First, measure the dimensions to make sure it will fit into your space at home.

Check that the machine has the features, programmes, wash rating, energy rating and noise level you want.

Open the door. On a freestanding model it should open almost flat against the machine, so it doesn't get in the way when you're loading a wash. It should be weighted, so it doesn't swing shut on you, and the handle should be easy to open. Note which way the door opens, as this can affect how well it fits into your home. Some models do have reversible doors so you can change the direction the door opens out.

Check the drum. Spin it to check it moves smoothly and doesn't make any loud, clunky noises. You could even put a jumper or jacket inside to get a feel for its size.

Check the opening. It should comfortably fit an A4 sheet of paper and the larger it is, the easier it will be to fit bulky items like towels in.

Open the detergent drawer. Check it's easy to slide in and out, comfortable to grip and doesn't stick. Is it removable for cleaning or does the machine have an automatic cleaning feature?

Take a look at the control panel to familiarise yourself with the dials, display and buttons.

Ask the shop assistant about the model you're interested in. It's worth finding out about a warranty and how popular the machine is with customers.

Don't buy the first model you look at. Shop around to find one that suits your needs and budget.



SHOPPING ONLINE

Nearly all online retailers will have a reviews section for each washing machine.

This means customers can score and rate the machine on factors like cycle times and value for money. There will also be comments, where customers discuss positive aspects of the machine and any negative experiences they have had.

All this information is incredibly helpful when it comes to choosing an appliance. You may need to take very negative comments with a pinch of salt, but reviews are definitely useful for narrowing down your choice of machine.

Some sites even have a feature where you can ask questions to people who own a particular model.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS

As you won't see the machine in-person to take measurements or look inside, it's important to read the description on the website carefully.

Every model online comes with a full specification, including sizes, features, programmes, and energy ratings.

FINDING THE RIGHT MACHINE

Shopping online gives you access to a much wider variety of washing machines, from a range of brands.

The filters on the website make finding a machine with the exact qualities you want easier. You can usually filter by type of machine, brand, spin speed, washing capacity, colour, and energy rating. Some websites also allow you to filter machines by a specific feature – for example, an Anti-Allergy cycle or interior light. You'll also be able to sort the products by popularity and price.



PRICE AND PAYMENT

Buying online is sometimes cheaper than shopping in-store.

Exclusive discounts and seasonal sales are often advertised online so you can save extra money on your machine.

Online payments are now very secure, especially if you shop with a reputable, well-known brand. Just make sure you see a padlock or green bar in the address bar of your web browser when you're at the checkout. Paying with a credit card also gives you some extra security.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Business websites have an array of customer service functions. Be sure to take a look at information on installation and delivery before you order, as well as reviews of the retailer.

If you're still unsure on which model to choose, remember that you can always do some research online before popping into your local store. Most websites also have a store finder function to help you locate your nearest location.



“ Online payments are now very secure, especially if you shop with a reputable, well-known brand.



WASHING MACHINE PRICES



For most of us, the cost is a big factor when making purchases – especially with something like a washing machine. But what represents good value and what's simply cheap? This section of our buyers guide has all the answers.



MACHINES FOR EVERY BUDGET

Washing machines range from around £200 for a basic model, up to £800 or more for something with additional features.

There are also some machines that cost less than £200 – with many of these offering extremely good value for money.

It's important to remember that price is only one factor. Cheaper machines are now more reliable, especially if you go for a reputable brand with a decent warranty. On the other hand, if you do a lot of washing and need particular features, a more expensive model might suit your needs better.



It's important to remember that price is only one factor.



WHAT YOU GET FOR YOUR MONEY

Several factors affect the price of a washing machine, but in general, a more expensive machine will have at least one of the following:

- A larger drum
- A faster spin speed
- More features sometimes including Wi-Fi connectivity
- More programme options
- Better energy efficiency
- Improved water efficiency
- Quieter running noises
- Attractive appearance
- Touch controls

The quality and reputation of the brand, place of manufacture, and attractiveness of the design all affect the price.

“Several factors affect the price of a washing machine.”



SALES AND PROMOTIONS

If your old washing machine has broken down, you may not be able to wait for a better price, but it's worth checking what offers are available.

Most retailers run a promotion all year round.

As well as simple money off deals, it's also worth keeping an eye open for promotions such as cashbacks and trade-ins. This is also a great way of disposing of your old appliance too.



RRP ISN'T EVERYTHING

The price of the appliance isn't the only thing you should consider.

Buying a machine with a long warranty means you can be sure you won't have to buy another one any time soon. This means you can save money long-term. There are also running costs to consider, so choosing a more efficient model can help save money on electricity and water bills.

Remember to take charges for delivery, installation and removing your old machine into account when comparison shopping. All washing machines ordered online from www.euronics.co.uk are delivered free of charge. Other retailers may have a price threshold or charge for delivery as standard.

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BUYERS GUIDE - Washing Machines

Want to view our full buyers guides range? [Click here](#)



Find your local store [here](#)

Phone 01264 320504 - Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm

Order enquiries - orders@euronics.co.uk

Customer support - customersupport@euronics.co.uk

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