

Keeping It Clean: Bissell's Consumer Guide to Vacuum Cleaners



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With so many options and features out there, choosing a vacuum can seem overwhelming. It doesn't need to be that way. This guide answers your questions about different kinds of vacuum cleaners and their features, as well as how to best maintain your vacuum for years to come.

What is the difference between an upright vacuum and a canister vacuum?

Canister vacuums are low-to-the-ground vacuums that have a long hose with a wand on the end. As you clean through the hose and wand, you pull the canister unit behind you. Upright vacuums stand tall and have a handle, which is used to push the vacuum. When cleaning carpets, the debris is removed through the foot or base of the unit. Most uprights also have a hose and on-board tools, which are typically used for hard-to-reach places and when cleaning furniture.

At one time, canisters were thought to be easier to use for cleaning hard-to-reach places and for cleaning a larger variety of floors' surfaces. However, the uprights of today have added cleaning features, such as bare floor height adjustments, brush roll on/off switches, and are easily maneuverable. In addition, the on-board cleaning tools have made upright vacuums even more versatile.

Although uprights are easier to use and more effective at cleaning larger areas in the home, they can still be a challenge when cleaning stairs. Canisters may generally clean stairs more easily, but uprights have the advantage of being easier to store than canisters.

What exactly is a deep cleaner?

Deep cleaning is a carpet-cleaning process that loosens and removes the most harmful dirt and ground-in grit which sit at the base of carpet fibers. Deep cleaning machines force a warm cleaning mixture deep into your carpet to blast out dirt and grime as built-in brushes help root out deeply embedded dirt. At the same time, powerful suction immediately pulls out the dirt and liquid.

Which type of vacuum is better, bagless or bagged?

Neither type of vacuum is better than the other. Our testing shows that with proper maintenance, both can clean equally well. The cleaning performance of an individual vacuum depends on many different factors, including how often the dirt receptacle or filter is changed.

A bagged vacuum will lose its cleaning effectiveness as the bag fills with debris. The bag must be changed when it is about half-to-two-thirds full for the best cleaning performance. In a bagless vacuum, the clear container captures dirt so there is not a bag to fill up and get clogged. Plus with the clear dirt container, you can see when you need to empty it. The result with the bagless system is more constant airflow and suction power.

Bagless vacuums will begin to lose suction power when filters clog with fine dust particles. The filter(s) need to be checked and cleaned, or replaced, as recommended by the manufacturer. Many bagless vacuums today have washable filters that are easy to clean and maintain.

The latest innovation in bagless vacuums is multi-cyclonic technology, which uses centrifugal force to separate the dirt and particles before they get to the vacuum's filter. The cyclonic design forces the air into a rotational pattern, dropping dirt particles in the outer dirt cup. Next, the airflow is separated into smaller cyclonic chambers, where the remaining fine dust is forced out and collected in the inner bin of the dust cup. The result is non-stop suction for superior cleaning and a filter that stays clean longer.

With bagless units, convenience is the greatest advantage. There are no more bags to search for, change or buy. The clear dirt container allows you to see how much you have vacuumed up, and accomplished. It is also easy to remove an object that was picked up by accident.

The choice between a bagged and bagless vacuum really depends on your personal preference.

Does the amps number mean greater cleaning ability?

No. The amps number is a measurement of the electrical current used by the motor. Performance is not necessarily dependent on the size of the electrical current; rather, it depends on a combination of (A) airflow/suction plus (B) brush action to provide (C) cleaning. Therefore, an easy way to remember what is important for good cleaning performance is "A + B = C™." Some manufacturers focus on only A or B. BISSELL, however, realizes the importance of both.

When do I replace my vacuum bag?

It is best to check the dirt level in the bag before each use. For the best cleaning performance, it is recommended that you change your bag when it is half-to-two-thirds full. When accumulated, small dust particles can keep the air from circulating within the vacuum, which in turn can reduce the suction power. You may need to change your bag more frequently when vacuuming drywall dust, pet hair, other fine particles or new carpet. Some bagged units also offer a "check bag" indicator to make it easier for you to know when to change the bag.

When do I replace the belt or the filter for my vacuum?

If the vacuum is not cleaning as well as it had before or the brush roll has stopped turning, you may have to change the belt. To change the belt, please refer to your model's user guide for installation instructions.

With bagless vacuums, having clean filters is critical in order to maintain cleaning performance. Over time, filters can become dirty and eventually clog up. A dirty or worn filter can diminish the cleaning performance of your vacuum, so it is important to regularly clean and monitor it.

What should I do if the vacuum is not picking up debris?

First, turn off and unplug your vacuum. Give the vacuum a good look over. Check to see if the belt is worn, broken or missing. If the vacuum has a bag, check to see if it is full. For bagless units, make sure the filters are clean. Also, check all the hoses and airflow areas to ensure they are free from cracks, debris and clogs.

If you are still having a problem, be sure to reference your model's user guide for handy troubleshooting tips. Other possible causes include an incorrect height adjustment setting, a hose not attached to the suction opening, the twist-and-snap hose not being securely attached, worn or jammed floor brush bristles, a clog in the vacuum, a full or improperly installed dirt container, or missing/incorrectly installed louvers.

How many times do I need to go over a certain spot before the area is clean?

For heavier traffic areas, it is recommended to go over the area five to seven times. For less-traveled areas, it is recommended to go over it three to four times. To get the best possible results, be sure to vacuum the area slowly and go from side to side. Occasionally change direction to help stand the pile upright and reduce matting.

What are different cleaning attachments used for?

The **Crevice Tool** is excellent for cleaning in tight or narrow, hard-to-reach spaces, like along baseboards, door tracks, heating and air-conditioning vents and behind and between appliances.

The **Turbo Brush** – uses rotating brush action for deep down cleaning of mattresses, upholstered chairs and couches, and automobile interiors.

The **Extension Wand** – is great for above-floor cleaning. Use the extension wand with the desired tool attachment for a longer reach when cleaning items like ceiling fans, wall corners and drapes.

The **Upholstery Brushes** – are used for curtains, draperies, cushions, and fabrics. Use the **Dusting Brush** to dust furniture, blinds, books, lampshades, shelves, and baseboards.

Which of the numerous height adjustment settings do I use?

The level you set your vacuum depends on the height of your carpet. For bare floors, use the lowest or bare floor setting. For short and medium pile carpets, use a medium setting. Finally, for plush carpets, use the highest setting. When vacuuming, there should be minimal resistance. If it is difficult to push, adjust to the next highest setting.

Please note some Berber carpets have a tendency to fuzz with wear. Repeated passes with your vacuum over the same area may aggravate this condition. Consider using the highest height setting or turning off the rotating brush for this type of carpet.

Hopefully, we've answered some of your questions about vacuum cleaners. Our knowledge comes from more than 130 years of developing and creating the world's best cleaning tools, celebrated for their quality and superior performance. Our vacuums are engineered, designed and manufactured specifically for consumer needs. Using our innovative spirit, we're constantly searching for new ways to make our products better to use and safer for the environment.

BISSELL's family of innovative floor care products have redefined the concept of clean, along with a full line of time-tested floor cleaning chemicals. See our [vacuum cleaners](#) and other cleaning products, plus FAQ's, contests, cleaning tips and a whole lot more on our website. When BISSELL says clean, we mean clean.

Call our fully staffed consumer services department to get answers to any of your cleaning questions: (800) 237-7691.