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Choosing and Using Your Cleaning Appliances
Michigan State University Extension Service
Constance Burgess, Home Economics
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Choosing and using

YOUR CLEANING APPLIANCES

Cooperative Extension Service
Michigan State University



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The author is Constance Burgess, Extension Home Management Specialist.

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YOUR CLEANING APPLIANCES

Good cleaning equipment is worth its weight in gold. It will save your time, spare your energy, and do a better job of cleaning than you can do by hand. Through home cleaning may save on such bills as commercial rug cleaning and reupholstering, too.

You can spend a lot of money or a little on cleaning appliances. What you need for your home will depend on the surfaces to be cleaned, the kinds of soil that are likely to be around, and your own cleaning habits.

Ask Yourself Some Questions

Impulse buying, whether good or bad, is common in a grocery store. But it has no place in an appliance store. Here you are concerned with buying a costly item which should serve you for years. Before you buy cleaning equipment, ask yourself some leading questions, such as:

- If it's a vacuum cleaner I'm interested in, what's the job I want it to do? Do I have a lot of carpeting or rugs? If so, is there a deep pile which requires deep cleaning? Is the floor covering my main reason for buying a vacuum? Or do I have mostly hard-surface floors to clean? Do I want to dust furniture and other off-the-floor areas as well as underfoot areas? The type cleaner I buy will depend, in part, on my furnishings.
- Would I make good use of a shampoo-polisher, or of a floor washer? Do I want to tackle rug shampooing myself or have it done professionally? Do I do enough floor polishing or floor washing to warrant buying an appliance for this purpose?
- Will this appliance do a better job than I can do by hand? What size do we need—large or small, heavy or light? How awkward will it be to use and lift? Will it be satisfactory for corners and crevices?
- Where are we going to store it? Is our cleaning closet already bulging at the seams? This may be a good time to get rid of items no longer use and to reorganize this area. Will the appliance be easy to get out and put away? If not, is there a chance that we might not bother to use it sometimes?
- Can we really afford it? If it saves time and energy, it may pay for itself. (This is especially true in a household where the homemaker is employed away from home or where her energy is limited. And some of these appliances will keep rugs and furniture in better shape for more years of service, especially if you don't like to clean by hand.)
- What brand shall we buy? Any manufacturer who has established a good reputation is likely to put out a good product. Check to see whether he is noted especially for his cleaning equipment. Try maneuvering appliances at the store to see how easily they are handled. Compare extra features, ease of care, and guarantees. Don't be oversold on special features—you're buying the appliance mainly for routine jobs. Don't be unduly attracted by "specials" unless they meet all of your other requirements.

Now you are ready to select a cleaning appliance. We suggest that you shop around among the various brands before you buy. Don't buy on the basis of a home demonstration. You need to explore the field. Special pointers are given on the following pages about individual appliances. These should be helpful to you.

VACUUM CLEANERS

Gone are the days when a vacuum cleaner was used only for carpets or rugs. The modern cleaner can do deep cleaning on upholstered furniture, can dust walls, pictures, lamp shades, draperies, woodwork. It may have attachments which can mothproof woollens, polish furniture, clean floors, even spray paint and do other such odd jobs.

No vacuum is best suited for all kinds of cleaning. It is important to you to know which type cleaner is most likely to meet your needs. Let's look first at the makeup of carpets and at the soil that is apt to be found in homes.

CARPETS AND RUGS

Carpets or carpeting is installed (tacked down) and reaches from wall to wall. Rugs are not installed and frequently are smaller than room size, leaving a border of bare floor on two or more edges. Rugs may be easier to vacuum, since they are movable and because it may be easier to reach in around the baseboards. When due for a commercial cleaning, rugs can be sent out easily. It is usually more costly to have carpets cleaned commercially, because a service man will have to come to the house with the necessary equipment and supplies. Home shampooing is discussed later in this leaflet.

Carpeting and rugs are available in a variety of fibers, colors, weaves, and qualities. The pile may be cut or looped, high or low. Long loops create vacuuming problems, since they are likely to get caught by sharp edges or the revolving parts of a cleaner. While a high pile is generally more luxurious, it provides more opportunity for heavy soil to settle down between the fibers. This makes soil removal more difficult with some types of cleaning equipment.

KINDS OF SOIL

Surface litter includes thread, hair, and other such items that are too large to sink into rug pile.

Dust is less conspicuous, but present in all homes. Some time ago, the Mellon Institute conducted tests concerning dustfall in various cities.¹ It was discovered that 10 pounds of dust and dirt entered the average Boston house-

hold every month. Dust shows up on a dark tabletop, but you don't see it on a rug. Since dust is fine, it settles down between rug fibers and is tramped into the pile as you walk on it. It not only contributes to fiber wear, but the chemicals in dust attack colors in fabrics and eventually will create a dulling effect. Dust also contains germs.

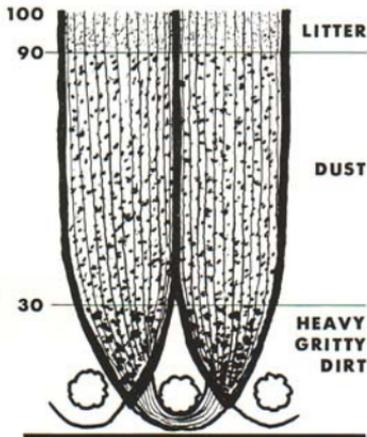
Grit is typical of the heavy dirt which works its way deep down into rug and furniture pile. Sand and fine gravel brought in on shoes are common examples. As you walk across your rug, the fibers are bent over against the sharp cutting edges of this grit. Unless your vacuum cleaner does a thorough job of loosening and removing such heavy dirt, your rugs will have excessively hard wear, especially across traffic areas.

Stains represent a totally different kind of soil. These require special treatment and are little affected by vacuuming. Stains are likely to result from spilled liquids, crumbs or other foods dropped on the rug, or from such sources as grass and tar tracked in on shoes.

Oily type soil, coming from cooking and airborne soot, adds to cleaning difficulties. Oil and grease cause color changes. They also bind dust more firmly to rug fibers. In time, this type of soil can be removed only by shampooing or drycleaning.

It is known that every rug can hold its own weight in dirt, yet look clean. One manufacturer of vacuum cleaners² illustrates the proportion of various types of dry soil (not including stains) in an average carpet as shown in the following illustration.

¹ ² See reference, inside back cover.



Proportion of dirt by weight in average carpet.

STYLES OF CLEANERS

There are three basic types of vacuum cleaners for home use. They differ in outward appearance, and in ease of use, and they excel in different kinds of cleaning.

Upright Type with Revolving Brush-Agitator

Most upright cleaners are similar to the one pictured. A long handle, attached to the motor, is used to guide the cleaner during use. Note that one end of the dust bag is attached near the top of the handle, the other end below, at the rear of the motor. The nozzle is supported by wheels that aid also in maneuvering the cleaner.

In the nozzle is a belt-driven revolving cylinder. Attached to this will be found one, two, or three rows of bristles. One model also has a metal bar attached to the roll. When the cleaner is in use, the suction pulls the rug up against the nozzle. As the belt-driven roller revolves, the bristles and/or metal bar push against the rug

to create continuous agitation. Imbedded dirt is thereby pulled upward through the rug pile to the airflow in the nozzle.

As dust and dirt are drawn into the cleaner, they pass through the fan chamber enroute to the dust bag or container. To prevent damage to the fan blades, it is important to keep sharp or hard objects from getting into the airflow.

For the most part, upright cleaners are ready to use on rugs and floors. However, on floors it may be wiser to use the special floor attachment to get the advantage of higher suction through the smaller nozzle. For above-the-floor cleaning there are usually attachments available, including a long, flexible hose, rigid metal tubes, and a variety of cleaning tools.



Upright cleaner - General Electric.

Upright Straight-Suction Type

In recent years a much lighter weight upright cleaner has appeared on the market. It is streamlined in appearance. Some times referred to as an electric sweeper, it's function is similar to that of a carpet sweeper. The wattage on most of these models is about half that of other upright cleaners, and there are few, if any, attachments. Nearly all manufacturers now offer lightweight uprights. This type serves as a good "second" vacuum for quick or daily cleaning. It does not clean as thoroughly as the heavier models that are needed for carpets and rugs.

Some manufacturers offer a small hand vacuum for above-the-floor cleaning.

Tank or Canister Type

Although the tank cleaner is long and narrow, and the canister is basically round or oval, there is little difference in the operation of these two styles. All currently have the motor, fan unit, and dust receptacle enclosed in one framework. The cleaning tools are used with the flexible hose and metal tubes (sometimes called the "wand"). Dirt is carried from the nozzle through the hose connectors directly into the dust receptacle without having to pass through the fan chamber. Cleaning is done by means of attachments.

Some canister models have a special rug nozzle equipped with a separate motor. This extra power is used to turn the small revolving brush roll in the nozzle. Other models provide for rug sweeping and agitating by nozzle construction, such as "teeth" in the nozzle lips or adjustable bristles.

Some manufacturers offer a nozzle that has a small turbine built into it. The turbine is driven by the flow of air drawn into the cleaner. In the path of the airflow may be specially constructed vibrators. Since part of the airflow is used for driving the turbine, this type may have less airflow available for cleaning purposes.²⁸

²⁸ See reference, inside back cover.



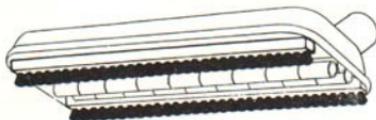
Lightweight uprights - Bissell, Eureka and Sunbeam.



Canister cleaner - Hoover Tank cleaner - Electrolux.



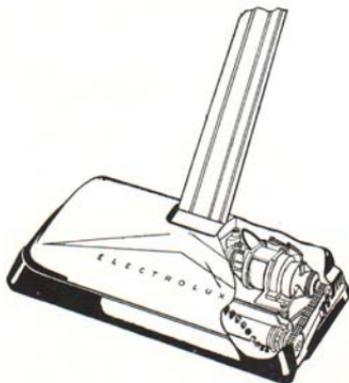
TWO TYPICAL COMBINATIONS



Special nozzles

ATTACHMENTS

You can buy an upright cleaner with or without attachments. To connect the hose and attachments, a small converter is inserted near the motor. The converter redirects the suction from the nozzle to the hose and increases the motor speed to create more suction for above-the-floor cleaning. There's no question that it is more difficult to maneuver an upright cleaner than a container type when using attachments. Since the container type is dependent upon attachments, these are included in the price tag. There is often an additional cost for attachments when you buy an upright model.



Power nozzle - Electrolux.



Cleaning tools.

Cleaning tools are used with extension tubes or a telescoping wand. Check to see how easily these are put together and taken apart. A locking device for connecting attachments is usually more satisfactory than the friction type. Note whether there are swivel joints on attachments for easy use in hard-to-reach places. Consider whether you will want to use such extra attachments as a venetian-blind cleaner, floor polisher, sprayer. These and other extras may be included in the purchase price, but not always.

SUCTION AND EFFECTIVE CLEANING

Every cleaner must have suction to do its job. In general, a more powerful motor creates more suction. However, suction is of little value in itself, since dirt must get into the path of the airflow to be picked up.

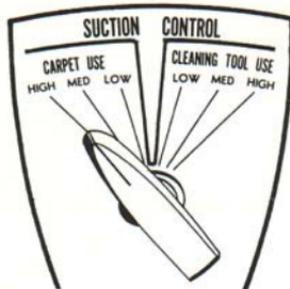
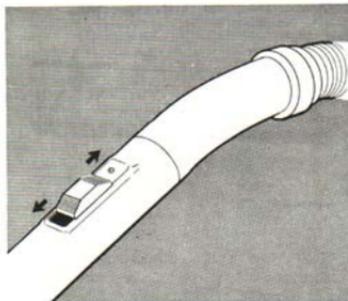
The amount of suction on any given surface relates to nozzle size. A small nozzle concentrates the full suction on a small area. A larger nozzle distributes the same amount of suction over a larger area, so there is actually less suction on any one spot.

Suction alone is all that is needed to pick up fine or coarse dirt on a surface. It is well known that tank and canister cleaners provide more airflow at the nozzle than the conventional upright cleaner of the revolving brush type. However, both types of cleaners do a good job of dirt removal from hard-surface floors, low-pile carpeting, upholstered furniture, and in dusting.

Suction alone cannot remove dirt satisfactorily from high-pile carpeting. Upright cleaners with revolving brushes or agitators have a built-in means of raising imbedded dirt to the surface. Only enough suction power is required to lift this dirt through the nozzle and up into the dust container. These cleaners need only to be pushed over the rug surface for effective cleaning.

Most canister cleaners depend for agitation upon the force of friction created by the nozzle lips, and any added device on the nozzle that brushes or opens up the pile. Effectiveness of agitation relates to the pressure and speed applied by the user and to the force of airflow. For this reason, the canister type is more dependent upon powerful suction for best cleaning than is the upright.

Motors on upright models of the revolving brush type have about $\frac{1}{2}$ horsepower (HP), light uprights of the straight-suction type range from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ HP, and canister types from $\frac{3}{8}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$ HP.



Suction regulators.

Suction control

It is possible to have too much suction, so this must be carefully controlled. Most uprights now can be adjusted to give low suction for rug cleaning, and higher speed with more powerful suction for attachment use. The strong suction of canister-type cleaners may be a disadvantage for above-floor cleaning. Lightweight fabrics, such as curtains and some draperies, can be partially sucked into the attachment. Suction control may be in the form of an opening in the wand handle, which can be opened or closed at will. Some models have two-speed motors, to provide high or low suction, as a desired.

ITEMS TO CONSIDER

Some features will be important to you, others will seem less so. Following are features found on many of today's models, with a few comments on items to consider when buying.

On-off control

Location of the on-off control has much to do with ease of using it. Type of switch is important, also. On upright models, this is usually found on the handle, or there may be a toe lever. Switches on container-type cleaners generally are operated by the toe. The toe switch may be found at the front end or the rear of the tank; a few are located at the center. Be sure the on-off control is easy for you to reach.

Brush construction

Placement of bristles on a revolving brush will affect cleaning. Look for rows that are diagonal rather than straight across. This gives you the advantage of suction and brushing at the same time.



Brush construction.

Noise level

A vacuum cleaner may sound quite different in your home than in a store. Even so, it will pay you to try out several cleaners at the store to compare the noise. Some of the air-vibrator models are especially noisy.

Dust container

Disposable paper dust bags have done much to simplify the care of your vacuum cleaner. Generally speaking, it is advisable to use only the disposable bags designed for your brand of cleaner. One manufacturer uses a water container in which to collect the soil.

Maneuverability and portability

Regardless of type, a cleaner must be used in several rooms for above-the-floor cleaning, under low furniture, and frequently on stairs. Length of cord and attachment hose determine how far you can reach without having to plug into another outlet or move the cleaner. Balance is important, particularly when using attachments with an upright model. On canister types, glides or wheels permit easy maneuvering, although not all models have these. Upright models are relatively easy to maneuver.

Weight is a real factor if the cleaner must be carried up and down stairs. Light uprights weigh about 6-9 pounds, only half as much as other types. One manufacturer features a portable cleaner that is stored and carried in a case. It looks like a typewriter case when closed.



Portable cleaner - Hoover.

Bumper guards and smooth edges

Furniture and other furnishings are costly. To prevent marring of furniture, many cleaners are equipped with a bumper guard of soft rubber or plastic. Attachments, also, should protect against damage. It's a good idea to check attachments for possible sharp edges which could pull threads on fabrics or scratch furniture.

Cost

You can pay as little as \$27 for a cleaner, or as much as \$259. Quality of workmanship, type cleaner, materials, and effectiveness are major factors. Features and convenience are important.

USE AND CARE

Once-over-lightly is not enough when using a vacuum cleaner. Good cleaning occurs only when you make several strokes over the same area. The speed and vigor of your stroke will be influenced by the type cleaner you use.

Since a straight-suction cleaner has no revolving brush, agitation depends upon the speed with which you operate the nozzle. Short, quick strokes will provide more agitation than long, slow strokes. By contrast, a motor-driven or air-driven revolving brush provides its own agitation. Therefore, you can use slower and longer strokes. This is true of the uprights and also of the special nozzles available with some of the tank or canister models.

Since vacuum cleaners are suction appliances, their efficiency depends in part on the condition of the cleaner. Any interference with airflow inside the cleaner reduces the airflow at the nozzle. Loose connections of attachment tubes, balls of paper or dirt caught in the flexible hose, and a too-full container are typical trouble makers.

Whether the dust container is disposable or reusable, it needs proper attention. Many manufacturers recommend that the bag be emptied or disposed of when it is about half full. You're likely to get better results if you empty it more often, especially if there is a great deal of fine

dust in your area. A cleaner depends on the inflow and outflow of air to operate. Even a thin coating of dust can build up a feltlike layer inside the bag and cause the motor to work harder. Bag construction varies, of course. Some cleaners are designed to stop operating when there is a specified amount of dust in the container. If your cleaner has a secondary filter as well as a dust container, be sure to clean this frequently, also.

Do's and Don'ts in Use and Care of Vacuum Cleaners

- Do pick up sharp and hard objects before you vacuum, instead of running the risk of injuring parts of your cleaner.
- Don't wash a cloth dust bag, if your cleaner has this type. These are specially treated to retain dust.
- Do take care of the cord. Avoid running the cleaner over it and do wind it loosely when you store it. Some cleaners have special provision for cord storage.
- Don't hang the attachment hose. Coil it loosely on a shelf or box. If the hose has become clogged, attach one end to the blower outlet and hold the other at the suction inlet and operate the motor.
- Do remember that suction depends upon a tight seal between the nozzle and the surface to be cleaned.
- Don't overlook the secondary filter if you have a container-type cleaner. You'll find this as a shield between the dust bag and the motor. Keep the filter clean and buy a new one from your dealer when necessary.
- Do check the belt on your cleaner occasionally. It should be firm, not stretched or cut. If too loose, it may not turn the brush well. You can replace the belt yourself, but be sure to buy the correct size and type of belt. Then follow the instructions for attaching.
- Don't forget to check nozzle brushes. Lay a stiff card across the nozzle. Bristles should extend beyond the card. If not, then it's time to replace the brushes on canister-type cleaners or to change the position of the brush roll on most uprights.

- Do take your cleaner for an occasional service checkup and greasing. Don't attempt to do this yourself. About every three years is advisable.

A vacuum cleaner is one of the key appliances in your home. Brooms, mops, brushes and dust cloths may be used in addition to a vacuum but not in place of one. Used properly and given good care, your cleaner will give you service for many years. It is estimated that a new upright cleaner will last up to 18 years, a new tank type up to 15 years.

A vacuum cleaner can be rebuilt or reconditioned after years of service and it will be good for many more years. Buying a reconditioned or rebuilt cleaner as a "second" vacuum may be a real bargain if you are sure of your dealer's reputation. A "used" upright cleaner may be expected to last up to 8 years.

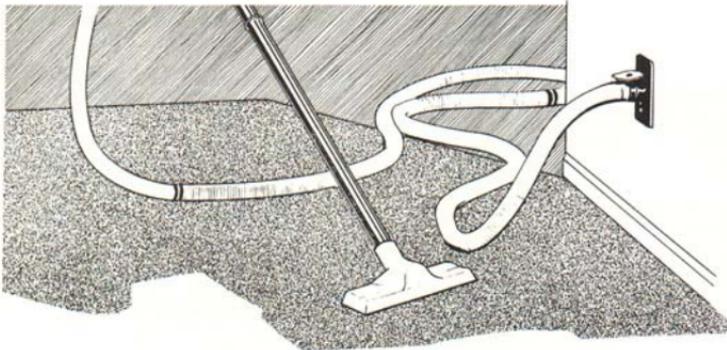
You might consider having two vacuum cleaners in your home. This is a real convenience, especially for large houses or for bi-level or tri-level houses. Some families like to have one cleaner for quick cleanup jobs or light cleaning, and another for heavier cleaning. This calls for additional storage space, of course.

THE INSTALLED CLEANING SYSTEM

Mention should be made of another type of cleaning appliance now being used in some homes. The installed vacuum system has been used commercially in hotels, office buildings, hospitals and other public buildings for some time. Such a cleaning system is several times as expensive for a home as the usual vacuum cleaner. Since it is built in, it cannot be moved if the house is sold.

This installed system provides attachment tools, metal tubing, and a flexible hose. Instead of being connected to a canister or tank-type container, the tubing is connected to special inlets in the wall. The hose comes in several lengths; one manufacturer offers a choice from 14 to 28 feet. If there is a central hallway in the house, the one inlet may serve several rooms. The power unit is located elsewhere, perhaps in the attached garage. The dirt and air are channeled through this to the outdoors, similar to the way that a vacuum cleaner filters the air.

There is little likelihood that the installed cleaning system will replace the traditional vacuum cleaner on a large scale.



Built-in cleaning system - Vacu-Flo.

FLOOR POLISHERS

Polishers come in a variety of models. Their attachments vary, and they differ in the jobs they will do. Some polishers will apply wax and buff floors only, others will scrub floors and even shampoo rugs. The appliance you need will depend on the kinds of floors and floor coverings you have in your home.

Hardware and grocery stores are doing a lively business of renting polishers on a day basis. We suggest that you try several different models before you buy.

CONSIDER THE SURFACE

Regardless of type, your floors and floor coverings need periodic cleaning. A hard-surface flooring also needs protection against imbedded soil, scuffing, and general wear.

Wood and concrete sometimes are used as is, with no covering. If a rug or carpeting is laid on top, you then have a soft-surface floor covering. Smooth-surface floor coverings include linoleum (whether printed felt base or inlaid), vinyl plastic, vinyl asbestos, cork tile, rubber tile, asphalt tile, and ceramic tile. More exotic floorings include terrazzo and marble, brick, flagstone, and quarry tile.

We will assume that the initial proper treatment has been given to your flooring. Some types are

sealed, glazed or grease-proofed at the factory. Others need to be sealed after they are laid. In this leaflet we discuss the electrical appliances available for home care of floors and floor coverings. All may do a more satisfactory job than you can do by hand, if they are used and cared for properly.

SELECT THE POLISHER

You'll find that floor polishers are called by a variety of names. Included among these are waxer-polisher, polisher-scrubber, shampoo-polisher, and combination rug shampoo-polisher. One manufacturer offers seven models, another offers five, so it will pay you to know what you want and to shop carefully.



Floor polishers with rug shampoo dispensers - Hoover and General Electric.

Convenience in use and effectiveness are key points to consider when selecting a polisher. As you compare brands and models, take note of the following:

Brushes

Twin-brush polishers are currently most popular for the home. Also available are models with a single large brush, others with three or even four small brushes. A greater number of brushes does not necessarily indicate better performance. Because of its design, the single-brush type seems to be more difficult to guide than the others.

There are brushes for scrubbing, others for waxing and polishing smooth-surface floor coverings or floors. There are brushes for shampooing rugs. Some brushes are dual purpose. In general, scrubbing brushes have stiffer bristles, while polishing brushes have softer bristles.

Buffers and pads

Most manufacturers offer more accessories as the price increases. First to be added often are felt or nylon buffers or pads, perhaps steel wool pads and/or sanding pads. There also may be disposable pads. Higher on the price list may be found lambswool buffers.

Weight

The weight of a polisher does not determine the effectiveness of the appliance as much as many people think. Most models weigh from 9 to 15 pounds. Three models weigh about 30 pounds.



Brushes and pads.

Only enough weight is needed to keep the appliance balanced and in contact with the floor. It is neither necessary nor advisable to bear down on a polisher when using it. Often this results in a greater tendency for the appliance to wander and get out of hand. Weight is of particular importance if you need to carry the polisher up and down stairs.

Horsepower

Most models use about $\frac{1}{4}$ HP, although the three heavier models are rated at $\frac{1}{2}$ HP. Here, again, only enough power is needed to operate the polisher.

Revolutions per minute

RPM's are set by the manufacturer and are not necessarily related to horsepower. One brand increased the RPM's on all models recently from about 600 to 14,000 without changing horsepower. There is a difference between motor RPM's and brush RPM's. For example, one model currently has a motor RPM of 16,500 and a brush RPM of 500.

Cord length

You are likely to be using a polisher in several connecting rooms and hallways. A long cord will make it unnecessary to keep changing to another outlet. Most models have cords from 17 to 22 feet long. The three top-priced models provide somewhat longer cords.

Bumper guards and splash guards

A polisher moves along quickly and may run into furniture if not guided carefully. For the sake of your furnishings you will want to make sure that a bumper guard offers them protection against bumps and scratches. A splash guard will help to keep your clothes and house furnishings protected from splattering liquid wax. Some splash guards are more effective than others.

Controls

Most polishers have simple-to-operate toggle switches located in an easy-to-reach position on the handle. On some models the motor starts when the handle is lowered. This arrangement prevents an accidental start when the appliance is plugged in.

Dispensers

Wax and detergent solution dispensers do not always come with polishers. Some manufacturers offer solvent-based liquid wax sprayers or paste wax applicators. If you have no wax dispenser, you can apply the paste type by hand to the proper brush or pad. Or you can pour a little of the liquid wax directly onto the floor. Detergent dispensers for use when scrubbing are much larger than wax dispensers, since they must hold the detergent solution.

Rug cleaning attachments

In many cases a waxer-polisher can be transformed into a rug shampooer by adding an attachment. Until recently, most of these attachments were in the form of rug shampooing bristle brushes and a three- or four-wheel dolly. The dolly can be fastened to the floor polisher to support it so that there is little penetration of the bristles into the rug. Dollies are rapidly giving way to improved foamer devices.

The rug cleaning dispenser may be included in the purchase price or may be an extra. Foamer devices consist of a dispensing tank that holds the cleaning solution made of a high-sudsing detergent. Basically, this device aerates the liquid cleaning agent, resulting in foaming. The foam is dispensed either in front of the polisher or down through the bristles. The dry suds can get down between the fibers without soaking the carpeting, an important factor in rug shampooing.

Convenience of handling

Check to see how convenient it is to connect attachments. Some snap on easily, others require both hands to manipulate fasteners. Is it easy to change brushes or buffers, to reach controls, to remove dispensers and keep them clean? Can you hang the polisher so it won't rest on the brushes?

Cost

Prices depend in part on the kind and number of features offered. Most polishers can be bought within the \$25 to \$50 range. However, one manufacturer offers a spread of prices from less than \$30 to \$140; another from \$35 to \$133.

USE AND CARE OF YOUR POLISHER

A floor polisher can be used only to apply solvent-based waxes. These are available in liquid and paste forms. If a polisher were used to apply self-polishing waxes, the results would be most unsatisfactory. The wax would dry smeared and streaked, and the polisher would be very difficult to clean. For water-based waxes, the chief value of a floor polisher will be in buffing the surface to increase or restore gloss.

Most electric polishers can be used effectively for scrubbing simply by changing the polishing brush(es) for scrubbing brushes. A floor polisher will be used frequently for buffing, less often for applying wax, and only occasionally for removing old wax. Under normal circumstances it will be used about once or twice a year for shampooing rugs. Here are a few suggestions for use of an electric polisher.

Vacuum first. Whether you plan to shampoo rugs, wax floors, or just do an in-between buffing, use your vacuum cleaner first. This will be easier on your floor and polisher, and it will give you better results.

Wood floors. Wood has a grain. Try to stay with the grain as you guide the polisher.

Shampooing rugs. After shampooing the rugs according to your direction booklet, allow them to dry thoroughly, at least overnight. Vacuum them well several times to remove dried detergent residue. Be sure you have a clean, empty vacuum bag when you start. This will allow the best suction and prevent as much blowing of dust as possible.

It is well to recognize that there are some carpets which you may prefer to have cleaned commercially, if you can afford it. This might be true particularly for large tacked-down areas, for light-colored and plain-weave textures, and for long shaggy piles. These may show streaks unless you are skillful at following directions and handling your appliance.

Take care of brushes, pads and containers. A floor-polisher brush, like a paint brush, needs proper care to keep it in good condition. Brushes

should be washed before they accumulate thick or dirty wax. Washing them in a warm water solution of soap or detergent will do wonders for them. After rinsing and shaking, stand the brushes on their bristles to dry.

Some of the sanding, dusting and buffing pads are disposable. If not, follow directions for their care, also for care of dispensers.

BEFORE YOU BUY

Consider carefully whether you will have sufficient use for a polisher to warrant buying one. Unless you have a great deal of hard-surface flooring, you may find that you'll be just as far ahead to rent one as to buy and store your own appliance.

USE THE RIGHT WAX

A mistake in this department can be costly. The Vacuum Cleaner Manufacturers' Association suggests the following waxes for floors and floor coverings.

WHICH WAX YOU SHOULD USE ON YOUR FLOOR WITH YOUR ELECTRIC POLISHER*

	SOLVENT BASE	WATER BASE
WOOD:		
New (sealed)	OK	**
Good condition	OK	**
Worn	OK	NO
LINOLEUM:		
Printed, Inlaid or Tile	OK	OK
TILE:		
Asphalt	NO	OK
Cork (well sealed)	OK	**
Cork (worn)	OK	NO
Rubber	OK	OK
Vinyl Asbestos	OK	OK
Vinyl Plastic	OK	OK
STONE:		
Ceramic Tile (glazed)	OK	OK
Flagstone	OK	OK
Floor Brick (smooth)	OK	OK
Indoor Concrete (sealed)	OK	OK
Marble (sealed)	OK	OK
Quarry Tile (sealed)	OK	OK
Paving Brick (sealed)	OK	OK
Slate	OK	OK
Terrazzo (sealed)	OK	OK

* Taken from "Modern Floor Care with an Electric Polisher."

** Many wax manufacturers suggest self-polishing wax for certain wood and cork floors. We believe you'll have better results if you use a solvent-base wax.

FLOOR WASHER - DRYER

Relatively new among cleaning appliances is the electric floor washer. Designed specifically for use with water, it can be used on linoleum, ceramic tile, asphalt, vinyl and other washable floor coverings, but not on wood or natural cork. Several manufacturers offer a separate floor-washing appliance, and at least one manufacturer offers this as an attachment to a tank-type vacuum cleaner.



Floor washer-dryers — Bissell, Hoover and General Electric

STYLE

In appearance the floor washer is similar to a lightweight upright vacuum cleaner. The streamlined floor-washer tank, however, contains two compartments. One compartment holds the clean water, the other is a storage tank for the dirty water.

Sometimes referred to as a washer-scrubber, this appliance is designed to provide mechanical action against the soil on floors. All models have bristles on the nozzle.

ACTION

A floor washer releases a solution of water and detergent onto the area to be cleaned. Scrubbing

action occurs as the operator moves the appliance back and forth over the floor. When you press the proper lever the washer becomes a dryer as the suction draws the dirty water up into a second compartment. Some models have an additional air stream which hastens drying.

Ideally, there should be a third compartment in the tank to hold clear water for rinsing, but this isn't practical. The extra compartment would add considerable bulk to the appliance. This would make it necessary also to have a larger receptacle for the dirty water.

Rinsing, if done, is another step in the process. Clear water is put into the emptied (and rinsed) detergent compartment. This water is then dispersed and vacuumed up, as was the detergent solution.

FEATURES

Although similar in action, models differ in convenience of use. Design and location of features will influence your satisfaction with this appliance.

Weight

Weight is a factor in maneuvering a floor washer. Models currently range from 8 to 11 pounds when empty. Another 2 or 3 pounds is added when the water is put into the tank.

Support

Handling of this appliance is made easier if some type of support is provided. One brand has wheels, another has a stand. The support is useful during filling and emptying as well as during the washing process. Not all models have this convenience.

Capacity

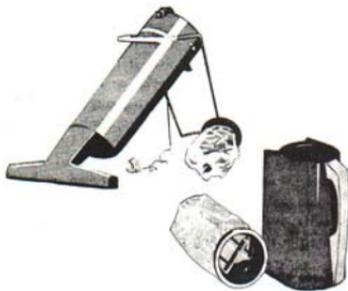
A larger tank will permit more floor area to be washed without having to refill the compartment. Clean water tanks vary in capacity from 2½ pints to 3½ pints. Ease of filling and emptying the tanks is a real factor. Some models have a detachable container which can be taken to the sink to fill and empty. Other models are less convenient, since the clean solution must be poured into the appliance on the floor. Emptying the dirty water tank of these brands can be awkward.

Controls

Type and position of controls influence ease of use. Foot pedals, for example, are more awkward to reach than triggers or switches located on the upper part of handles. Try using these as you compare models.

Nozzle

Some nozzles are fixed, while some manufacturers provide a rotating nozzle. Obviously a washer-dryer must be steered around corners and under edges of cupboards and appliances. A nozzle that rotates or swivels is easier to maneuver than one that is stationary.



Water tanks — General Electric and Hoover

Suds control

A few manufacturers provide a suds control cake in the nozzle. This reduces foam and suds caused by the detergent. The cake lasts about 50 washes and can then be replaced.

USE AND CARE

All appliances give most satisfaction if they are selected according to need, used according to directions, and cared for as recommended by the manufacturer. A floor washer-dryer will save you energy. It may not save you time. It may or may not do as thorough a cleaning job as you would do by hand. Much depends on you.

Detergent solution

Most manufacturers recommend a specific type of cleaning agent, usually a low-sudsing detergent. A high-sudsing detergent may fill the dirty-water container with suds that will overflow onto the floor. Some manufacturers suggest that lukewarm water be used.

Scrubbing

After releasing the desired amount of solution, the operator scrubs a small area of floor, about one yard square. The dirty water is vacuumed up, and the next floor area is then washed. If the floor is only lightly soiled, a clear water solution may be used instead of a detergent solution.

Rinsing

There is usually no provision for rinsing. Directions may suggest that it is unnecessary to rinse, since all of the solution is removed from the floor by suction. Rinsing may be advisable for three reasons: (1) there is likely to be some detergent residue remaining on the floor, (2) if so, this will interfere with additional waxing, and (3) additional soil will be taken up by the rinse water. We recommend rinsing for best results, even though at present it requires another step in the washing process.

Care of parts

Just as a mop needs washing and a vacuum cleaner needs emptying, so must the parts of a floor washer be cared for. The dispensers and

brushes perform better and last longer if they are thoroughly rinsed and kept free of dirt and wax. This is easier if tanks and nozzle are removable. Follow the manufacturer's directions for care and servicing. Avoid running into sharp edges or over the cord, and handle all parts and levers carefully. Store the washer by hanging it on a hook in a convenient, dry place.

BEFORE YOU BUY

Moderate in price, this appliance may be a bargain if you have need for it. It can be used on most hard-surface floor coverings, but not on wood, cork, or carpeting. It can make scrubbing easier if you have enough floor area to make it worthwhile. Remember that it has to be taken care of and stored.

GENERAL POINTERS ABOUT CLEANING APPLIANCES

Regardless of the type appliance you are considering, you'll want to look for a quality product. Be sure to check on such items as:

Safety features

Good quality materials, good workmanship, absence of sharp edges, tight-fitting connections—all these and others are important to both you and your furnishings.

Manufacturer

Is the brand familiar? Do you know that the company is reliable, that it will stand behind its product?

Dealer and service

Do you know your dealer's reputation? Does he stand behind his merchandise? Does he provide service? If not, where can you get good service?

Guarantee, warranty

Who pays for service, for replacement? How long is the guarantee or warranty period? Is labor covered, as well as parts?

Seals of approval

Every electrical appliance should carry the seal of the Underwriters' Laboratories for safety. Other seals of approval are given by such magazines as McCall's and Good Housekeeping.



IT'S UP TO YOU

Cleaning appliances are essential to good home maintenance. Your selection will be guided by your need, by your pocketbook, and by your knowledge of brands, features, and quality. Remember that the instruction book for any appliance is very important. All appliances of the same type do not operate in the same manner. Your instruction book is a guide to selection as well as use and care of an appliance.

Manufacturers add new features and develop new products from year to year. It is important, then, for you to have a basic understanding of appliance quality, use, and care. This we have tried to give you. The rest is up to you!

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OTHER LEAFLETS IN THIS SERIES INCLUDE:

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