

HEALTHY, WEALTHY & WISE

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Which Vacuum Cleaner is Really BEST?

Hoover, Eureka, Kirby, Dyson, Oreck, Bissel, Electrolux, Rainbow and Miele. Most of these are household names thanks to relentless marketing on TV, in magazines, and at retail stores. There are many more brands of vacuum cleaners besides these. Every one of them wants you to believe that they have the best vacuum cleaner on the market.

There are different styles of vacuum cleaners; upright, canister, backpack and cordless stick-type machines that use a variety of methods to capture particulates. Cyclonic filtration, bags, bag-less, HEPA filtration and even filters that utilize water to remove dust particles from the processed air are available.

And those commercials! You'll see demonstrations of vacuum cleaners picking up everything from Cheerios to bowling balls. But before you buy into the marketing hype, you should know

that there is a far more objective way to choose a vacuum cleaner. Since 2005, the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) in cooperation with independent testing laboratories has used technology developed for the NASA space program for testing the effectiveness of vacuum cleaners. The program is called Carpet and Rug Institute Seal of Approval (CRI-SoA).

The CRI-SoA measures 3 important performance aspects of a vacuum cleaner:

See "BEST" on next page

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Soil Removal Standard — CRI uses NASA-enhanced x-ray fluorescence technology to measure the precise amount of soil removed from carpet. The vacuum cleaner must remove at least 40% of the test soil to be considered for CRI-SOA. Higher soil removal efficiency makes the vacuum cleaner eligible for a higher rating.

Dust Containment Standard — The vacuum must not release more than 100 micrograms of dust particles per cubic meter of air (100 µg/m³), keeping dirt and dust locked tight in the vacuum — not escaping back into the air where it can be inhaled. To achieve Gold rating, the vacuum cleaner must not release more than 35 µg/m³.

Texture Protection Standard — The vacuum must not affect the texture of the carpet after 900 passes. If the roller brush or beater bar is too aggressive, permanent damage can occur. If the vacuum cleaner fails to pass this test, it will not be considered for the CRI-SOA program.

The Good Life



Good Clean Funnies

What type of diet did the snowman go on?

The Meltdown Diet

What's a good winter tip?

Never catch snowflakes on your tongue until all the birds have flown south for the winter.

What the ratings mean:

Rating	Soil	Dust Particles Released
Bronze	40 - 49%	100 µg/m ³ or less
Silver	50 - 54%	100 µg/m ³ or less
Gold	55%+	35 µg/m ³ or less

The results of this testing are available online at the CRI website (carpet-rug.org).

Some of the other considerations are the style of the vacuum cleaner that best suits your needs. Dual-motor uprights with on-board attachments are the most popular because they offer the most versatility, but they can be somewhat heavy to use. Canister vacuums usually have better suction and can be easier to use, but they are not as easy to store. Pulling the canister behind you might be a bit of a pain in larger homes.

Bagless machines generally do not

retain particles as well as machines with bags. The quality of the bag is also important; some bags filter better than others. Then there is additional filtration with many models boasting HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filtration. HEPA filters remove 99.97% of all particles at .3 microns. Air that passes through the HEPA filter has been effectively cleaned of particles that can aggravate respiratory symptoms from allergies and asthma.

In order to get the best performance out of your vacuum cleaner, replace bags and filters according to manufacturer's recommendations. Replace belts and roller brushes or beater bars when they become worn. Every year or two, have your vacuum cleaner serviced by a qualified technician so that you can keep getting the most out of your carpet investment.

Call **ServiceMaster by A-Town Hi-Tech** for more tips, recommendations or to schedule your next cleaning.



Start your year and day off right with this nutritionally packed and delicious breakfast.

Ingredients

- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 1 cup frozen pineapple chunks
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt*
- 1/2 cup coconut water
- 2 tablespoons frozen acai berry pulp
- * Vanilla Greek yogurt can be used in place of plain, if desired.

Recipe courtesy allrecipes.com



Berry Smoothie Bowl

Directions

Blend strawberries, pineapple, yogurt, coconut water, and acai pulp in a blender until smooth. Pour into a bowl.

Top smoothie with kiwi, banana, blueberries, raspberries, almonds, granola, and chia seeds.

Optional Toppings:

- 1 kiwi, peeled and sliced
- 1/2 banana, sliced
- 1/2 cup fresh blueberries
- 1/2 cup fresh raspberries
- 2 tablespoons sliced almonds
- 2 tablespoons granola
- 1/4 teaspoon chia seeds



Tips to Help PREVENT Strokes



Up to 80% of first strokes may be prevented by following these healthy lifestyle tips.

Stroke is often thought of as something that happens to older people, but more people under 50 are having strokes due to increased risky behaviors, such as smoking and untreated high blood pressure.

Strokes don't discriminate, according to the American Stroke Association. They can happen to anyone, at any age, at any time. About 1 in 4 people worldwide will have a stroke in their lifetime.

The American Stroke Association

offers these tips to help reduce your risk of stroke:

Keep blood pressure in mind and under control. Eat colorful fruits and veggies. Rest up, getting 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night.

Exercise. Getting active activates brain cells, encouraging them to grow and connect more efficiently. Aerobic exercise also gives your arteries a workout and makes your brain more resilient to reductions in blood flow that can cause strokes.

Celebrate DRY January



The term "Dry January" has been growing in popularity in recent years. Going "dry" is a trend that encourages it's participants to abstain from alcohol for the month of January. Well known in the UK, there are two main benefits for participating.

The first benefit is to save a little extra money after the holidays. Every time you find yourself going to buy a bottle of wine or enjoying a cocktail, save the money instead. If your wallet didn't feel the holiday pinch,

you could donate all of the savings to your favorite charity. If you don't regularly partake in alcohol, you could substitute for your favorite coffee.

The second benefit is to detox your system after some holiday over-indulgence. Many people already feel inspired to hit the gym and eat healthier this time of year. Abstaining from alcohol for the month can also provide positive returns on your health such as more energy and better sleep.



Participating in Dry January may also help kick-start any weight loss New Year's resolutions.



Home ORGANIZATION Tips



A good strategy to eliminate clutter is to create piles of items: keep, sell, donate and discard.

Start the new year off by recommitting to an organized household to keep your family's chaos contained. These small changes can help you get organized and stay that way.

Embrace routines. The idea of spending large chunks of time organizing and tidying can be overwhelming. However, making time to clean as you go through the day can help control clutter and keep the time commitment more manageable. Commit to cleaning up the kitchen after dinner each night. Clean up bedrooms

before bed. Before long, routines become productive habits that make a visible difference.

Purge the excess. Nearly everyone collects too much stuff, and clutter is often more an indication of too much volume and not poor organization.

Be mindful about use. When you're on a mission to eliminate clutter, it can be tempting to go overboard. Be realistic about where you store the things you need and err on the side of keeping the things you use regularly within reach.



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2020

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