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## Kirby or Dyson Vacuum- which is better?

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For years the Kirby vacuum has been king of the vacuum cleaners. As far as cleaning power and durability goes, they could not be beaten. But now there is a new kid in town...the Dyson vacuum. Dysons have only been around for a few years, but they made a big splash and lots of people have been buying them. Are they as good as all the hype? Let's discuss it now. Hi, my name is Dustin Chaffin, General Manager of Great-Vacs. We have sold over 10,000 vacuum cleaners online and we know vacuums. I get tons of emails asking, "Which is better: the Kirby or the Dyson?" I am excited to write this guide and answer this question once and for all. I feel qualified to write this article because unlike most shops, we sell both the Kirby and the Dyson vacuum and can give an honest review.

I have hesitated to write this guide because this is such an emotional subject. People LOVE their Kirby or LOVE their Dyson and it can be very emotional. So I will probably get some hate mail, but if I can help you pick the best vacuum, it will be worth it. Because it's such an emotional subject, I am going to perform most tests that I have never done before. I am going to try and keep my comments to a minimum and just present the facts. In the end there will be a winner and a loser, but we will know once and for all who is the King.

**This guide was so detailed that it turned out to be very long. So if you don't want to go over all the details (there is tons of good information though), scroll to the bottom and read my Conclusion where I sum up all the details.**

So let's get right to it. I'm going to write the article as if I were reading a diary to you. Most Dyson owners own a DCO7 or older, so we went one higher and used the high end Dyson DC14 Animal that was about 1 year old. For our Kirby Test we used a 2004 Kirby Diamond (3 years old).



### Test #1 - Best Vacuum Not to CLOG

Clogs are caused by small suction tubes and corners. So let's get right to it and take some pictures of the Kirby suction tubes and the Dyson tubes. Below is a picture of a Dyson

tube next to a Kirby tube.



As you can see from the pictures, the Kirby suction tube is almost twice the size as the Dyson one. The Dyson one also has a sharp corner in some of its tubing, which clogs easier and loses suction.

Fact - The very first used Dyson we received as a trade in was clogged.

Fact - If you read other reviews on the internet, they say people have had a problem with the Dyson clogging with long pet hair.

Fact - There is no vacuum that is impossible to clog. However, we have seen thousands of Kirbys and from normal vacuuming conditions have never seen a Kirby clog. For example, I have seen a Kirby clogged with a tooth brush, a rope, and a shirt. In other words, under normal vacuum conditions I have never seen a Kirby clog. The Dyson that came in clogged just had dirt and pet hair in it.

When was the last time you saw a Dyson commercial where they said "Guaranteed not to clog?" Also on the Dyson, the suction tubes are made to be taken off. If it never clogs, why are they made to be taken apart?

Winner of the Test #1 Best Vacuum Not to Clog - [KIRBY VACUUM](#)



## Test #2 - Most Airflow and Vacuum Power

This is one of the most important tests--after all, no matter how cool a vacuum looks, we buy a vacuum to pick up the dirt. Suction power is very important. Isn't that the reason we buy a vacuum, to vacuum up all the dirt?

Kirby Motor Size = 7 amps

Dyson Motor Size = 12 amps

For this test, we are going to use an Airflow Indicator meter tool made by Baird. This tool is designed to test power and airflow (see picture below).

On the tool is the saying "You have to move the air in order to move the dirt." This tool is a tube with a ball attached to a spring. It has a rating of 0 to 10. You hook it up to a vacuum, then turn on the vacuum to test vacuum power and airflow. The higher the suction, the further up the scale the the meter will read. 0 is really bad and 10 is amazing suction. So we will hook up the hose to the Kirby vacuum and we will test it. We will also test it on the hose for a Dyson vacuum. For our first test, we will test the power by hooking it up to the hose. Each hose it tested at the same length away from the vacuum.

After we tested the Dyson, the Suction Meter read = 1 out of 10 (see picture)



After we tested the Kirby, the Suction Meter read = 7 out of 10 (see picture)



Now we are going to test the power hooked up to the vacuum itself. You are about to learn a new principle here. It's a fact that the longer the hose the more suction you lose. That's why uprights are usually more powerful than canisters and why central vacuums in huge homes (a 100 feet of wall tubing to get to the central vacuum) can be the weakest vacuums of all.

Hooked up to the vacuum on the Dyson, the Power Meter read = 2.8 out of 10 (see picture)



On the Kirby, it read = 10 out of 10 (see picture)



Fact - The motor size in amps does not mean a vacuum is more powerful.

Fact - The Kirby had over 3 times the power and airflow as the Dyson when testing it with the airflow meter.

The winner of Test #2 The Most Airflow and Vacuum Power - [KIRBY VACUUM](#)



### Test #3 - Most Suction When Full of Dirt

The other Dyson promise is that it is "Guaranteed not to lose airflow as the vacuum fills up with dirt." Their "not clogging" guarantee bombed, so let's test out this guarantee.

Dyson - So we grabbed 3 Dysons. One was our tester Dyson that was cleaned and had no dirt in it, one was 1/3 full of dirt, and one was three quarters full of dirt.

On the Power Meter, they all pulled the same = 2.8

Kirby - We grabbed a full Kirby bag and put it inside our Kirby. We tested it with the full bag and the Power Meter read a 10 out of 10 (the meter only goes to 10). So then with the full bag still in it, I hooked up the 9 foot hose to the vacuum and tested it. The Power Meter read = a 5.9. So, we then tried it with the hose attached and an empty bag. The Kirby had a 7.0 and with a full bag it read a 5.9.

Fact - James Dyson is correct--the Dyson did not lose power as it filled with dirt.

Fact - As a vacuum bag fills up, airflow and power do decrease.

Fact - Even with a full bag, the Kirby had over DOUBLE the airflow and power as the Dyson as measured by our Air Flow Meter.

Fact - Dyson claims to be the first vacuum not to lose suction as it fills with dirt. This is not true. I can personally think of 5 other vacuums that don't lose suction. The Rainbow vacuum for example uses water to filter and does not lose suction. The Rainbow has been around for nearly a century.

Winner of Test #3 Most Suction When Full of Dirt - [KIRBY VACUUM](#)



### Test #4 - Vacuums Up Better

This is really starting to get fun. This is the most important test. Which vacuum actually vacuums up the most dirt. What I did here was I went next door to the Carpet Store and they were nice enough to give me a large piece of brand new carpet (so our results would not be tainted). I then took a piece of tape and marked off the carpet. On the left side of the tape we are going to vacuum with the Dyson and on the right side of the tape we are going to vacuum with the Kirby.

Then I took 2 cups, went outside and filled them up with normal dirt and sand--just like would be tracked into your house. I then measured the 2 cups (see picture) so they had the exact amount of dirt in them - 1 pound and .2 of one ounce in each cup. I then poured the dirt onto each side of the carpet and worked it into the carpet with my fingers.



I weighed the dirt that is now in the carpet and now I am going to weigh the dirt that comes out of the carpet. Now the Kirby is not bagless, so we have to use tester filter pads to show the dirt that is picked up. I am afraid this test was a little harder on the Kirby because every time I changed the pads (lots of times) dust would escape from the tester. To be fair, after I put the Kirby tester on the Kirby, I tested the power again with the hose. With the tester on, it read a 6.5 on the airflow meter, while it had read a 7 when the bag was on (bag has more surface area for air to push through). So because of those 2 things, the Kirby was at a small disadvantage. I knew that we were not going to get up all the dirt

because in each vacuum a small part of it would stick to the dirt chamber and fans, etc., in each of the 2 vacuums. So this was a very fair test. Before I started the test, I decided that I would take the vacuum that pulled the most dirt up and vacuum another 50 strokes in the vacuum's area that pulled the least dirt.

**Dyson Results** - We put the dirt down and vacuumed 50 strokes on its side. We put 1 lb of dirt down and were able to pick up 6.5 ozs of dirt from the Dyson vacuum, or 40% of the dirt was picked up.

**Kirby Results** - We put the dirt down and vacuumed 50 strokes on its side. We put 1 lb of dirt down and (after subtracting the dirt meter filter pads weight) were able to pick up 12.1 ozs of dirt from the Kirby, or 75% of the dirt was picked up.

Then, since the Dyson picked up the least amount of dirt and it was the loser, we vacuumed in the Dyson's area with the Kirby. The picture below shows how much dirt and sand that we pulled out of the Dyson's side with the Kirby. I was able to pull out 44 pads of dirt that the Dyson left behind. In fact, I was still pulling out dirt when I ran out of pads (see picture). I wish you could have seen this in person. I had no idea that the Kirby would pick up that much extra dirt left behind by the Dyson. These pads were not just dusty, but jam packed full of dirt and sand (see picture). Looking at the dirt sample pulled from each vacuum, the Dyson really did not pick up much sand at all.



**Fact** - Sand ruins carpet. When it gets down deep into the carpet, its sharp jagged edges cut the carpet fibers when people walk on your carpet. That's what causes "trails" in your carpet. High traffic areas get sand tracked on them from people coming in from outside, then if the vacuum does not have the power to pick up the sand, the brushroll grinds it deep in the carpet. Then when people walk on the carpet, it cuts the carpet fibers. The next time you vacuum, the carpet fiber gets vacuumed up. Pretty soon the "high traffic" area has less carpet fibers and starts lying down, the "trail" appears, and you have to buy new carpet. If you have a vacuum that can pick up the sand and a deep cleaner, you can extend your carpet by years and save thousands of dollars.

Winner of Test #4 Vacuums Up Better - [KIRBY VACUUMS](#)



## Test #5 - Durability

The Kirby is made of a light weight metal and is one of the most durable vacuums made. In fact, Kirby home care systems are rated #1 in reliability by a popular consumer products magazine. We have noticed an average life span of 25 years for the Kirby vacuum.

The Dyson vacuum is made from a low-grade plastic. Just because a vacuum is made from plastic does not necessarily mean that it is not durable. A perfect example of this is the Aerus Vacuum (used to be Electrolux). When the Electrolux salesman was showing you the vacuum, they used to lay down the vacuum and jump on it with all their weight! Of course, they did not break. The Dyson is so new that we don't have a durability time to work with at this time.

I also did the following test, but the results were inconclusive because the Hydraulic Press only measured in increments of 500 lbs.

With this test, I tested the breaking point of both Kirby and Dyson heads. We have a Hydraulic Press with a stress gauge that tells you how much pressure something endures before it breaks. The problem with it is that it only gauges it in 500 lb. increments.

So, I performed the test on the Dyson first. When I was pumping down the press with the hand handle, there was hardly any resistance. It was like a hot knife through butter. The plastic started bending and then it broke through. The problem (and the reason I don't like this test) was it did not even register on the gauge. It could have broken at 100 lbs of pressure or 499 lbs of pressure.

Then I performed the test on the Kirby. Again, its metal started bending without even registering on the gauge (I wish I had a more accurate gauge). However, it then started registering and right before it broke it got to about 1000 lbs!

Because of the gauge problem with the above test I am not going to count it in this contest to determine the winner.

**Fact** - When packing the Kirby Vacuum for shipping, we wrap it in a half an inch of bubble wrap with no breakage.

**Fact** - When packing the Dyson Vacuum for shipping, to avoid breakage we have to pack it in 3 inches of bubble wrap. Because of this fact, we have to use an extra large box to hold the Dyson and all the extra bubble they require. Because ground shipping is now based on dimensional weights (box size vs. actual weight), the Dyson costs more than its heavier counterpart, the Kirby, to ship. Common parts to break in shipping on the Dyson are the head, the handle, and the cord wraps.

So, we can determine our winner based upon our experience with shipping, Consumer Reports, and the Kirby's long life span.

Winner of Test #5 Reliability - [KIRBY VACUUM](#)



## Test #6 - Weight & Ease of Vacuuming

For the first test on this one I got out our shipping scales and weighed each vacuum. The Kirby weighed 23 lbs, 14 oz. and the Dyson weighed 18 lbs, 10 oz. So the Kirby weighed about 5 lbs more than the Dyson. The Kirby has a carrying handle and the Dyson did not. The carrying handle did make a difference regarding ease of moving the vacuum around. The second test was ease of vacuuming. Both seemed easy to vacuum with, but the Kirby seemed better because of its self-propelled transmission. Unlike other self-propelled vacuums, it was very smooth and I could vacuum with one finger. Most people think the reason Kirby has the self-propelled transmission is because of its weight. That's only

partially true. The main reason is the Kirby actually creates a vacuum seal with your carpet, which is then hard to push.

Concerning 'Ease of Vacuuming' we also have to consider how easy it is to use your vacuum's tools. Now the Dyson has on-board tools (very nice) and the Kirby does not. So you have to store your Kirby tools somewhere else (most likely your closet). For Kirby lovers, this is the only complaint I have heard from them. They wish there were an easier way to put on your tools without taking off the power nozzle each time.

So, for this test I timed myself going from vacuum mode to putting on the duster tool (in this example). How long does it take?

The Dyson took 19 seconds for me to go from vacuuming to putting the hose on the on-board duster tool.

The Kirby took me 25 seconds to go from vacuuming, shutting off the vacuum, casually strolling to my pretend closet, grabbing the hose and duster tool, returning to the vacuum, taking off the power nozzle, and putting on the hose and duster tool.

So, accessing the on-board tools was 6 seconds faster on the Dyson than the Kirby.

Regarding the actual ease of vacuuming (could vacuum with one finger), I would say the Kirby was easier. However, including results for carrying weight and use of tools, the Dyson won.

Winner of Test #6 Weight & Ease of Vacuuming - [Dyson](#)



### Test #7 - Tools and Accessories

Using our Dyson DC14, this model comes with 5 tools (3 of which are on-board). Those tools are:

1. Duster Brush (on-board)
2. Upholstery tool (on-board)
3. Crevice tool (on-board)
4. Floor tool
5. The Animal Turbo tool (standard air turbine-driven upholstery tool with brushroll)
6. Some may come with the Zorb groomer to work the zorb smell good powder into your carpet.

The Kirby has the following standard tools:

1. The tool caddy (can hang on a wall)
2. 2 extension wands
3. Crevice tool with scrubber
4. Floor tool
5. Air Intake Guard
6. Portable Shampooer Cap
7. Massage Cup (sometimes called the pet grooming tool and can be used to remove light bulbs)
8. Inflator tool
9. Duster Brush
10. Upholstery tool
11. Portable Spayer (also called hand held shampooer)
12. Portable Handle
13. Wall and Ceiling Brush
14. Suction Control Grip tool
15. Main Hose

The Kirby also has several additional accessories:

1. The Kirby carpet shampoo system: this is an actual shampooer to keep your carpets washed and clean. I really like the Kirby shampoo because it has a chemical kind of like scotch guard in it that protects your carpets from those same stains from coming back.
2. Floor Care system: this can be used to clean your hard floor surfaces or if you have hardwood floors it can actually be used to buff wax into your wood floors to make them look new. It can also have a floor tool plate that snaps onto the vacuum itself so you can use your Kirby to vacuum your hardwood floor surfaces.
3. Turbo Accessory System: this can be a sander (dust is sucked into the Kirby), Buffer, Scouring (like cleaning tile grout) and Massaging.
4. Zipp Brush: powered upholstery tool that runs off of the Kirby's power and airflow. Most people use it on pet hair, couches, stairs and more.

So, including the Tool Caddy, the Kirby has 15 standard tools. The Dyson has 5 standard tools (I am going to call the floor tool and animal brush standard). The Kirby has a carpet shampooer and 3 other accessory kits you can buy, as well. The Dyson had the Zorb kit.

Winner of Test #7 Tools and Accessories - [KIRBY VACUUM](#)



### Test #8 - Filtration

Here I would also suggest reading my guide "[HEPA Filtration - Fact from Myth](#)" as well as "[Best Vacuum For You](#)."

The Kirby vacuum can filter as small as .1 of a micron. To be considered a HEPA filter you have to filter at least .3 of one micron.

I could not find anything on the Dyson website or on the Dyson itself as to what its filtration was. However, by going a google search, people that were selling the washable HEPA

filter said it filtered down to .1 of one micron.

So, as far as published 'Filtration,' it is a tie between the two vacuums.

I would also suggest reading my guide "[Bags vs Bagless Vacuum Cleaner - Which is best.](#)"

I have been a lone voice of warning since the beginning of the 'bagless' craze. Everybody wanted bagless vacuums. My issue with them was when I would get them in used, the vacuum would be covered in dust on the outside, but the HEPA filter would be clean. Doctors were actually recommending bagless vacuums to allergy patients! I felt so badly for those people. The reason that I don't like bagless vacuums is the dirt hits the HEPA filter and looks for the easiest way out. The HEPA filter is hard to get through (tight filtration), so the dirt back-tracks through the system, blows out through the seals in the tubing, and back into the air. That is why I don't like normal bagless vacuums.

Now to Dyson's credit, they have a washable filter located before the dirt goes to the bag chamber (that's good). Then in the bag chamber, most of the heavy dirt falls into the bagless dirt chamber while the rest of the dirt is carried out to hit the last filter. So, most of the dirt never reaches the last filter, but it still has a filter that dirt and air have to push through. That's the good news.

The bad news is that I counted 7 different seals on the Dyson vacuum. I assume there are so many seals so that you can take the vacuum apart if it clogs (I can't think of any other reason). 7 seals is a lot of places for air and dirt to blow out. The other bad news is they are not the tightest seals. The Kirby does have 2 seals outside the bag chamber, but they are very tight.

So, were it not because of all the seals in the Dyson, this would have been a tie.

Winner of Test #8 Filtration - [KIRBY VACUUM](#)



### Test #9 - Marketing & Cool Factor

The Kirby is not sold in stores or retail. In fact, you can't get a new one except from an authorized Kirby dealer. There are some dealers who take the risk of trying to sell some new ones on eBay or sell to someone else who will sell them on eBay. However, Kirby is usually pretty proactive about finding out who is doing that (against the rules) and shutting them down. So aside from that, if you want to buy a new Kirby with the Kirby warranty you will have to buy from a Kirby salesman directly. He will come to your home and demonstrate the vacuum for you. Usually they will charge from \$1300 to \$1700 for a new one (from what I have seen). This is why we sell [reconditioned Kirbys](#) because it's more affordable (\$200s-\$800) and legal (we do not sell any brand new Kirbys).

So, a lot of Kirby salespeople are young and a lot are college-aged. They will do a lot to get a sale. Because of that some people have a bad image of Kirby. For example, go to google and type in "Kirby Vacuum" and see what the first page is that comes up. Sometimes there are some bad reviews on salespeople. However, many Kirby salesmen are very professional and courteous. Don't lose faith in the vacuum itself due to the distribution chain!

In other words, the Kirby is an awesome product, but its marketing has put a lot of people off.

The Dyson on the other hand, is everywhere. It is in most independent vacuum shops, most big box stores, on the internet and it is even on eBay. If you look on eBay, there are tons of brand new, in-the-box Dysons for sale. Even some of their authorized internet dealers sell on eBay. So, just about everyone has access to buy a Dyson vacuum. Since the Dyson is for sale almost everywhere, it really can't be demonstrated, so James Dyson had to make it visually appealing to get the extra money out of it.

That's one thing we have come to realize here at Great-Vacs is the #1 reason that people buy vacuums is based on looks. Most never admit it, but if it looks good they will buy it. So, think about it. You go to Wal-mart and go to the vacuum aisle. You see about 10 plastic vacuums displayed. You know absolutely nothing about vacuums and no one is there to demonstrate them to you. So, you do one of two things: you either buy the cheapest one or you buy the coolest looking one. Usually what happens is your last vacuum was the cheap one (that only lasted 2 years or so), broke down, and you want a better vacuum. So, you are looking for a better vacuum, then you see the Dyson and it looks cool. You think that what makes a better vacuum is HEPA filtration (that's the best right?) and the higher the amp motor the better the vacuum (not true, as we showed in this guide). So, when James Dyson was building the Dyson I believe he understood this and knew he had to make it visually appealing.

Dyson and marketing. Let's review some of their marketing strategies:

1. "Guaranteed not to clog." As we showed you in this review, it's not the best vacuum for that and there are other vacuums that clog less than the Dyson. However, Dyson was the first one to market it.
2. "The first vacuum cleaner that doesn't lose suction." Again not true, as there were other vacuum cleaners that have done this before the Dyson, but I don't really recall those vacuums really marketing that point.
3. "100 times the force of Gravity..." As this test showed, the Kirby had more power, but "100 times the force of Gravity" sounds amazing.
4. Vacuum is very visually appealing. The Dyson looks really cool and new age.

So, Dyson has done an AWESOME job at marketing. They are geniuses at it. They continue to add models and different [Dysons](#) (like the canister Dyson or the light weight Dyson) and make improvements to their image and product.

COOL FACTOR-

A nice buffed out Kirby that looks all chrome is very nice and is very cool. With the newest model of Kirby, they have done a good job of modernizing it. However, the problem with the Kirby is when people look at it in their mind's eye, they think of their grandma's Kirby and think it's the same thing (even though it's not).

The Dyson has this new bagless system like no other vacuum. It looks very modern and very new age. It has all these tubes and looks very cool. Plus, most people test suction with their finger or hand (not an accurate test). So, when you turn on the vacuum it actually sounds powerful. You can hear it the power and when you shut off the vacuum it sounds like a turbo shutting off. Also, the suction handle is narrow at the top so when you put your finger on it, it feels like amazing suction.

So on this test there was no contest.

Test # 9 Marketing and Cool Factor - [DYSON VACUUM](#)



## Test #10 - Suction & Vacuum Seal

Aside from the test vacuuming up the dirt, I think this was the most important test. I saved it until the very last because I had to order some special equipment for this test. For this I used a suction plate and then I attached a set of scales that measure resistance (see picture).



This test actually measures suction. Remember we already tested airflow, so the other test to see how well a vacuum performs is suction. This will determine if the vacuum actually seals down on the carpet and gets the dirt deep down or if the vacuum is essentially a "good sweeper" with some suction.

So, the suction plate represents your carpet. What I did was to put it on the Dyson and Kirby vacuum (shut off the brushroll so it does not knock off the plate) and then when it seals to the powerhead, I am going to put the pull scales on the suction plate and see how many lbs of pulling it takes before the suction plate comes off. The higher the # of lbs to pull off the suction plate, the more suction the vacuum has and the better the "Deep Cleaner" it is. This tension scale is harder to pull off than you think. I pulled on it as hard as I could and could only get it up to about 35 lbs.

The Dyson vacuum had 1.5 lbs of pressure on it before it came off. I could easily pull off the suction plate by hand, but it had enough power to hold the plate on against gravity. I think one of the main problems with it was again all the suction was on one side of the cleaning head. With no suction on the other side, the vacuum seal and suction were very weak.

The Kirby vacuum had 12 lbs of pressure on it and it was very hard to pull off by hand.

Winner of Test #10 Suction and Vacuum Seal - [KIRBY VACUUM](#)



## IMPROVEMENTS

Listed below are the improvements I would personally try to make if I were the manufacturer. After doing all these tests, these are the suggestions I would make for improvements.

Kirby -

1. Try to make it 5 lbs lighter.
2. Make it so you can use the hose without taking the head off.

Dyson -

1. Make the suction tubes larger so there is more airflow and less chance of clogging.
2. Get rid of so many seals because if there were less chance of clogging, you would not need to take the vacuum parts apart. Where seals were necessary, I would make the seals tighter and better.
3. Make the vacuum out of a higher grade of plastic (like what Electrolux did).
4. Make suction all the way across the head instead of just on one side. Do this by having the suction tube in the middle of the power nozzle.
5. Improve airflow and power. Partially this would be solved with the bigger tubes. The motor is large enough, so perhaps put larger fans in. I would like to see it pull a 5 on the meter.

If each of the vacuum manufacturers did those things...wow! Then that would be a PERFECT vacuum.

## CONCLUSION

1. Winner of the Test #1 Best Vacuum not to Clog = KIRBY VACUUM

The Kirby vacuum had almost twice the size of suction piping (see pictures in test #1). The Dyson tubing at its smallest point measures right at 1 3/8 inches. The Kirby tubing at its smallest point measured 2 1/4 inches--nearly a inch larger.

2. The winner of Test #2 The Most Airflow and Vacuum Power is = KIRBY VACUUM

The Kirby had over 3 times the power and airflow as the Dyson when testing it with the airflow meter.

3. Winner of Test #3 Most Power When Full of Dirt = KIRBY VACUUM

On the dirt meter, the Dyson pulled a 2.8 and the Kirby pulled a 5.9 with a bag full of dirt. The Kirby did lose power when full of dirt (pulled a 7 with an empty bag), but was still almost twice as powerful when full. The Dyson pulled a 2.8 empty and a 2.8 full. So Dyson was right--it did not lose any power as it filled with dirt.

4. Winner of Test #4 Best Cleaner = KIRBY VACUUM



In our dirt test, Kirby dominated. It pulled up almost double the dirt that the Dyson did. The Dyson pulled up 40% of its dirt in this test and the Kirby pulled up 75% of its dirt in the same test.

#### 5. Winner of Test #5 Reliability = KIRBY VACUUM

The Dyson is made of plastic and the Kirby is made of metal. We don't know how long Dysons will last on average, but we have personally seen a 25 year average lifespan with a Kirby. We have to pack the Dysons with much more bubble wrap than Kirbys when shipping to avoid breakage. According to "a leading consumer products magazine," the Kirby ranked #1 in reliability and with the least number of repairs needed. They ranked it based upon 134,000 reader responses and a point system. The lower the points, the more reliable. The Kirby was #1 with only 4 points while the average vacuum they tested got a 10.25. So the Kirby was not only #1, but much more reliable than the average vacuum tested.

#### 6. Winner of Test #6 Weight & Ease of Vacuuming = DYSON VACUUM

The Dyson was a little over 5 lbs lighter than the Kirby when we weighed them on our shipping scales. Ease of vacuuming was easier with the Kirby, but with on-board tools and lower carrying weight, the Dyson won this contest. When we tested how long it took to use the tools it took the Dyson 19 seconds and the Kirby 25 seconds.

#### 7. Winner of Test #7 Tools and Accessories = KIRBY VACUUM

The Kirby won this contest because it had about 3 times the tools and accessories as the Dyson.

#### 8. Winner of Test #8 Filtration = KIRBY VACUUM

Test #8 was very close. Both actually said they had the same filtration: .1 of a micron. However, the concern we had with the Dyson is it had 7 different seals (they were not very tight seals) out of which air and dirt could possibly leak. Kirby had 2 seals, but they were very tight. When "a leading Consumer Products Magazine" tested emissions (filtration), they gave each the same rating.

#### 9. Test # 9 Marketing and Cool Factor = DYSON VACUUM

The Dyson dominated this test. IMHO, Dyson is genius when it comes to marketing. I personally feel that Dyson did not create the best vacuum, but they created a vacuum that would lead us to believe it was the best vacuum. Visually it seems to do a very good job and looks very cool.

#### 10. Winner of Test #10 Suction and Vacuum Seal = KIRBY VACUUM

The Kirby dominated the suction test. The Dyson only had 1.5 lbs of pull before the seal was broken and the Kirby had 12 lbs of pull before the seal was broken. The air coming into the vacuum on the Dyson appeared to come from on top of the carpet. On the Kirby the air coming to the vacuum appeared to be coming from under the carpet. Also, the Dyson had great suction on one side of the power nozzle and no suction on the other side (see picture), while the Kirby had suction all the way across. To see more on this check out my guide called "[How to Buy the Best Vacuum.](#)"

### MY THOUGHTS

I am tired :) These tests were so thorough that it took almost a week to do them and type this up. If I had known that I probably would never have done this guide. I have tried keeping my thoughts to a minimum in all the tests we did. However, here is where I get a chance to give my thoughts. Out of 10 tests, the Dyson won 2 and the Kirby won 8. The Dyson won the most user friendly and best marketing, while the Kirby basically won all the performance tests. In Dyson's defense, they are only a few years old (unlike the Kirby who has had decades to make the perfect vacuum). The good news is they are constantly making improvements. I will test them again in a few years to see if they have improved. I believe Dyson is here to stay and will continue to make improvements. As it stands right now, the Kirby and Dyson are not even in the same playing field. In these tests we performed, the Kirby manhandled the Dyson and just blew it away. In the performance tests, it seemed to do 2 to 3 times better. Of course, as far as new vacuums are concerned, the Kirby asks 2 to 3 times the price as well. I have to say I was a little disappointed with this test overall. Before I started this guide, I really thought it was going to be close. I had seen and heard so many good things about Dyson. I was fully expecting the Dyson to do a lot better than it did. Remember how above I said "I personally feel that Dyson did not create the best vacuum, but they created a vacuum that would lead us to believe it was the best vacuum? Visually it seems to do a very good job." I think Dyson did such a good job marketing that I actually thought it was as good as they wanted to me think. I personally think that as consumers, we see the dirt disappear from on top of our carpet and we see the bagless part fill up with some dirt and we think, "WOW this thing works great!" That's why I write these guides and do these tests.

Sorry Dyson lovers...The King of Vacuums is the still [THE KIRBY](#)


A LEADING CONSUMER MAGAZINE tested over 65 Vacuums. Between the two vacuums in our test, it had the following information. What was different about this edition vs. previous editions was they did a Pet-Hair test. What was ironic was "the DC14 was one of seven uprights (out of 40 uprights) in this report to score only fair or poor at removing hair from carpets." According to their scores on the Pet Hair test, the Dyson DC14 scored a FAIR, the Dyson DC15 scored a POOR and the Dyson DC07 scored a FAIR. On the same Pet Hair test, the Kirby scored a VERY GOOD.

The Kirby Vacuum ranked #1 in the "Brand Repair Test" and had the fewest repairs of any vacuum tested. However, because of its weight, they gave it a POOR score in "handling" and dropped its ranking to #9 out of 65 vacuums. It scored 3 EXCELLENTs in the Carpet Vacuum test, the Bare Floor test, and the Emissions test (filtration). It also scored 2 VERY GOODS in the Tool Airflow tests and the Pet Hair test. In fact, of all the 65 vacuums tested there was only 1 vacuum that rated better with 4 EXCELLENTs and one VERY GOOD (vs. the Kirby's 3 EXCELLENTs and 2 VERY GOODS). The Dyson DC14 ranked #16, the DC15 Ball ranked #17 and the DCO7 ranked #24. It had two EXCELLENT ratings in the Bare Floor test and the Emissions test. It had no VERY GOOD ratings as the rest of the ratings were GOOD and FAIR.


Even though they did not do as many tests as I did or test the deep cleaning as much, I could probably have saved a week of my time by reading this article first (I read it after I was all done with my tests). I usually don't put much faith in their reports because they should be testing these models used, not new, and some of the vacuums they say are GOOD perform totally different used, but this article was interesting. The data they pulled was very similar to what I found. To sum up, the data I found was the Kirby is the most dependable and least likely to break. As far as all the performance tests, the Kirby was quite a bit better. As far as "user friendly" goes (lighter, on-board tools), the Dyson was better. They tied when it came to filtration. Of course, the main reason we vacuum is to get the dirt out of the floor and out of our house. The Dyson is easier to use, but when it comes to vacuuming power, the Kirby is better by far.

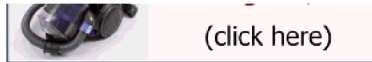
I spent a lot of time on this guide and tried to be very fair and thorough. I hope it was useful to you. We are one of the largest vacuum dealers on the internet and we know vacuums. If you are still confused by the exact vacuum that is best for your needs go to our "[Best Vacuum for You](#)" Form or check out our vacuums on our website. We don't always suggest the Kirby. For example, if you have mostly hardwood, back problems, or lots of stairs, then we would not suggest the Kirby. There are other vacuums that would work better in those scenarios.

**Kirby Vacuum Cleaners**  
Best Models  
Starting at \$299



**Dyson Vacuum Cleaners**  
Many Models  
Starting at \$239





Thank You,

Dustin Chaffin  
Great-Vacs Manager

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Janet N.  
Rainbow



I have had a rainbow in the past, and I loved it, I wanted another but I'm retired and couldn't afford a new one, so I got rebuilt, works like new, and it works as well as my first rainbow.

Janet

2014-08-11

On [Rainbow Canister Bagless Pet D4 SE Vacuum Cleaner With extras 5 year warranty and new head](#)

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BRENDA J.  
GREAT BUY



THE HYLAS ARE VERY GOOD VACUUMS. I'VE HAD ONE FOR YEARS. MY DAUGHTER KEPT BORROWING MINE SO WHEN I FOUND YOUR WEBSITE I JUST HAD TO ORDER ANOTHER ONE SO I DIDN'T HAVE TO BORROW MINE BACK EVERY TIME I NEED TO CLEAN.

2014-08-11

On [HYLA NST Vacuum Cleaner Mint Condition loaded with tools & WARRANTY](#)

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Ivan M.  
Great !



Although used, the water bowl is great and was greatly refurbished. Thank you for my water bowl

2014-08-11

On [NICE Rainbow Vacuum Cleaner E Series 2 qt Water Bowl](#)

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scott b.  
new commercial air purifier



So far working good to remove odors. Used it in a car to remove cigarette smell, it definatly did the job. Can't tell it was ever smoked in!

2014-08-10

On [New Comfort Commercial Air Purifier Cleaner Ozone Generator with UV and 3 year warranty BEST MODEL \(700\)](#)

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Greg A.  
Great service very quick



Great service very quick

2014-08-09

On [5 Pack Vanilla Bean, Cinnamon Apple, Green Apple, Rain Forest, and Eucalyptus vacuum fragrance scents for Rainbow, Rainmate, Thermax, Hyla, &...](#)

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Mark W.  
Great Vac great service



If ever in the market again for a vac GreatVacs will be my first and only stop

2014-08-09

On [Tristar Canister TRI STAR MG2 Vacuum Cleaner LOADED with 5 yr warranty](#)

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Melissa Y.

Luv it!



Fanstastic experience & great service. Thanks...

2014-08-08

On [Replacement order](#)

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