



Factors to Consider

When purchasing a new dishwasher

A real time saver in the kitchen, dishwashers allow us to get on with other tasks while it gets on with cleaning all those messy pots and pans. They're a staple of the home nowadays but do you know exactly what you're looking for in a dishwasher, or what the best programmes are for the type of household you run? Take a look at our handy guide and find out what you should be considering when purchasing your new dishwasher.

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Programmes

Not all dishwashers have the same programmes, there are varying settings you can choose from manufacturer to manufacturer. There should be at least three main programmes as well as a rinse cycle on even the most basic models.

The first washing function should operate at around 65°C for heavy cleaning, the second function will be an economy setting which is for your general load and a third setting to take care of a light wash or for those more delicate items.

- **Glasses Function** - For when you need to get through a lot of glassware but don't want to use the whole of the machine. This could also be called a half load setting, because of the ability to wash only one shelf.
- **Rinse and Hold** - This is a good function for those people who don't fill their dishwasher very quickly. If you leave food and grime on your dishes it can start to create a bad odour and harden onto surfaces, but with a rinse function you can wash away this mess without using any detergent. You can then continue to fill the machine until it's ready for a proper wash with a full load.
- **Adaptable Function** - Many dishwashers now have an adaptable function whereby it will gauge the load in your dishwasher to decide how much water should be used during the wash, increasing or decreasing as necessary.



Drying Programmes

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Your pots, pans, cutlery and crockery could be dried by a few different things, the first is the actual heat of the washing itself, but the most efficient and effective modes of drying come from either a heated air process or a fan assisted drying programme. These last two are more energy efficient and can be far quicker than a residual drying method.

Spray Arm Technology

Standard Spray Arms

Every dishwasher will have the standard spray arm technique for cleaning your dishes. This is a simple mechanism where water is drawn into the arms (one on the bottom level, one underneath your top level) and the pressure forces them to spin. Each arm has a number of spouts through which the water is forced and the different spin patterns wash the contents of the unit.

Upper Spray Arms

You might find with some models that they come with an additional third spray arm in the roof of your dishwasher. This is a smaller arm which sprays down onto the top tray of items and assists in washing items from above. Not all manufacturers have this third arm so if you're keen on cleaning a dishwasher full to the brim it might be worth considering.

Satellite Spray Arms

Do you have lots of awkwardly shaped items you wash regularly? If so, ordinary spray arms might not be able to wash your items very well, leaving blind spots in terms of where the spray arms can reach. To combat this, some manufacturers have introduced an extra, tiny arm at the apex of the large arm which rotates itself and simply provides extra coverage within the original spinning circle as it goes.

Waterwall™ Jet Spray

Introduced by Samsung, this is a revolutionary new dishwasher, with a different take on the spray arm. With three different arms, the machine produces jets of water - wall to wall - to provide a quicker, more thorough clean. Other manufacturers are now catching on to idea of using something other than a rotating arm, but these are high-end models so you'll need to consider your budget before making a purchase.





Energy Efficiency

Like all appliances, dishwashers are subject to the A-G energy efficiency rating scheme - A being the best and G being the worst. These ratings are based on tests carried out by the manufacturer in accordance with standardised tests which are checked by Trading Standards.

Energy efficiency has an impact on your bills as well as the environment, with water becoming a precious commodity. If you're on a water meter, the better your energy efficiency rating is the less you'll spend, and if you get cheaper electricity at night you might want a dishwasher with the option to programme it for running at night to make the best of those rates.

The dishwashers with the best energy rating will be higher in price, but it will be down to you to decide if the extra cost for the initial outlay will be offset when it comes to your bills at the end of the month.



Think about economy settings...

Look out for dishwashers with special economy settings if you're really keen on having an energy efficient unit, but be warned that they might not wash your most stubborn and messy items as well as a normal setting would. A quick cycle might also save you money if you're not fully loading the unit with lots of awkward items.



Fitting

Where To Fit Your Dishwasher

In terms of practicality, and for the ease of plumbing, you should have your dishwasher installed as close to your kitchen sink as possible. Anything more than 1.2m away and you'll have problems getting the unit plumbed in, this is due to the length of the piping. This should always be under your countertop, but it's up to you whether you integrate the appliance with a door to match your existing kitchen decor. Once connected up to your cold water you should be ready to go.

Some people opt to have their dishwasher fitted in a utility room, but given that a washing machine and tumble dryer might also be in the same space, it may not be ideal. Fitting the unit in your kitchen means you can put dirty pots straight in the dishwasher without trailing mess around.

Your Old Dishwasher

Many suppliers will offer to remove your old dishwasher as long as you disconnect it first. If they don't offer to take it away you can always look up your nearest waste centre, some of which will happily take in your appliance and who can hopefully recycle it as best as possible. Find your nearest free centre at www.recycle-more.co.uk.

Think about professional fitting...

It's recommended that you have a professional install your dishwasher; only attempt to install the appliance if you have had previous experience of carrying out such tasks. With a professional fitting of your appliance you lower the chance of damaging the appliance and needing repair work.



Size & Measurements

The size and capacity of your dishwasher is going to be important, as it will be an indication of how much you can expect to wash in one go - useful information if you run a busy household.

When talking about the capacity of your appliance it usually comes down to how many place settings you could wash up for. The regular sized dishwasher you're probably used to seeing can take 12 place settings which includes:



12 Dinner Plates



12 Soup Plates



12 Dessert Plates



12 Cups and Saucers



12 Glass Tumblers



12 Sets of Cutlery

(Including various spoon sizes)



Despite this being the standard size, it doesn't mean you can't go bigger or smaller. You'll need to decide how much you rely on your dishwasher to get through your washing up, but you'll also need to decide how well a dishwasher fits into your kitchen. If you're having a brand new kitchen you can factor in whichever model you like, but if you have an existing recess then you'll want to measure it up to check which models will fit your space.

You can also find integrated models for your kitchen if you're planning refurbishments and want to hide the dishwasher door to match your units, just bear in mind you might have to damage your units to carry out repairs should any faults arise.

Think about slimline dishwashers...

If you're worried about being able to fit a dishwasher into your already cramped kitchen then consider a slimline model. Many manufacturers offer these smaller units for households where there might only be one or two people, saving on the amount of space the appliance takes up and the amount you spend on running costs.

Extra Dishwasher Tips

There are several products you'll need to purchase to keep your dishwasher working at its best.

Dishwasher Salt

In order to create softened water your appliance needs dishwasher salt. This removes calcium and magnesium if you live in a hard water area, protecting your appliance.

Rinse Aid

This helps to create a better shine finish to your items, it also cuts your drying time.

Detergent

Detergents are standard for dishwashers, coming in tablet, liquid or powder form to assist in cleaning your pots and pans.

While keeping your dishes clean will be a doddle, you also need to keep the inside of your dishwasher clean and odour free. You can do this with a dishwasher freshener and by regularly cleaning out your filters to remove food stuffs.



How To Load Your Dishwasher

Usually, the lower rack which wheels out along the bottom is for your bigger, heavily soiled items such as plates, dishes and pans, while the top rack is for smaller items which will see less exposure to the water streams. Some dishwashers now use the top layer for a cutlery and utensils rack, featuring a mat which can be pulled out to collect all of these items all at once.

Think about what can and cannot be washed

While it's tempting to throw all of your things into the dishwasher at once, think carefully about what you put into your dishwasher. Most items will state whether they are dishwasher friendly on their packaging or on their underside - delicate items and patterned china are the two key things to avoid placing in your dishwasher.

