AIR PURIFIERS Filtering the claims

Most people buy air purifiers to ease asthma or allergies. But despite product claims, there's little definitive medical evidence that purifiers help relieve respiratory symptoms. Some may pose a threat even to healthy users.

Electrostatic precipitators are the most heavily promoted purifiers, accounting for about half of the models sold. Oreck and Sharper Image versions are best sellers, despite their lackluster air-cleaning performance in our tests. Electrostatic precipitators trap particles by applying an electrical charge to them as they pass through the unit and depositing them on plates or filters. The process creates some ozone as a byproduct.

While ozone in the upper atmosphere protects us from the sun's ultraviolet rays, ground-level ozone is an irritant that can aggravate asthma and lessen lung function.

Another type of purifier, ozone generators, are a growing part of the market.



They create large amounts of ozone by design and claim to use it to purify the air. We rated two such models Not Acceptable because in our latest tests they reached up to 20 times the voluntary ozone standard based on the limit set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for medical devices. (See "Not Acceptable: Ozone generators," on the facing page.) The FDA, though, doesn't consider air purifiers a medical device. And the ozone emissions of home air purifiers aren't regulated by any federal agency. But as we went to press, California banned ozone generators for most uses, effective 2010.

Air purifiers that draw air through fabric filters are among those that do the best job of removing dust and smoke from the air without producing any ozone. Toprated models such as the Whirlpool Whispure, \$230, performed better at their lowest, quietest speeds than many others did at their higher, noisier settings. But simple steps such as those mentioned in First Things First could improve air quality enough so that you don't need a purifier. Other findings and issues:

Ozone is a growing concern. No standard exists for acceptable indoor ozone levels generated by a nonmedical device. Underwriters Laboratories (UL)

First things first Air purifiers alone won't clean the air or relieve asthma or allergy symptoms.

TRY THESE STEPS

Basic steps can be more effective than air purifiers, according to experts, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the American Lung Association. Less expensive options include:

- · Banning indoor smoking
- Keeping pets out of bedrooms
- Removing carpeting and other dust-mite harbors
- Opening windows whenever possible
- Using outdoor-venting fans in the bathroom and kitchen
- Maintaining heating equipment

For more simple ideas, go to www.Consumer Reports.org/aircleaning. Avoid ozone generators, which emit hazardous levels of ozone. They should be used only by professionals after serious contamination from a fire or flood, not for routine air cleaning.

FILTERS

Best for trapping dust, pollen, and smoke without emitting ozone, an irritant.

But effectiveness varies considerably among models. They typically cost more per year for both

electricity and replacement filters. Portable models tend to be noisy at high speeds. and do-it-yourself whole-house furnace filters were fair at best for smoke removal.

How they work A fan pulls air through a filter. Portable models typically use highefficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters: whole-house units use pleated fabric filters and are attached to forced-air systems.

Price \$100 to \$800 for portables; \$10 to \$30 for better DIY whole-house filters; \$200 to \$500 for whole-house systems (plus \$200 or more for installation).

ELECTROSTATIC **PRECIPITATORS**

Best for low operating costs. Some do a fine job of removing dust, pollen, and smoke.

But all create some ozone, which can aggravate asthma and decrease lung function. Models with small fans or no fans are ineffective at removing dust and smoke. Models with a fan can be noisy at high speeds. Models with plates need more maintenance than filters.

How they work An electrical charge is applied to the particles drawn into the device. Then the particles are captured onto flat plates or filters.

Price \$250 to \$800 for portables: \$400 to \$1,150 for professionally installed wholehouse models (plus \$200 or more for installation).



certifies electrostatic precipitators using the FDA limit of 50 parts per billion. But that limit is under scrutiny.

"Fifty parts per billion is by no means universally accepted in the scientific community as being a low enough benchmark for ozone," says Richard Shaughnessy, Ph.D., director of the University of Tulsa's Indoor Air Research Program and the author of an analysis prepared for the Consumer Product Safety Commission on research pertaining to the current limit. A recent study of outdoor air in 98 urban areas, led by Michelle L. Bell, assistant professor of environmental health at Yale University, indicated that even low levels of ground-level ozone were associated with increased risk of premature death.

Ozone has other risks. Studies increasingly suggest that ozone creates other irritants as it reacts with household products such as scented cleaners and air fresheners. Among these irritants are formaldehyde, a carcinogen; acrolein, a toxic irritant found in cigarette smoke; and ultrafine particles. "Picture ultrafine particle behavior the way you see cigarette smoke behave in a lighted room," says Charles J. Weschler, Ph.D., a researcher at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. "They hang in the air for a long time. The concern is how easily the ultrafine particles are inhaled before they can settle."

Germ-cleaning claims are oversold. Many air purifiers claim to rid your home of airborne bacteria and viruses in addition to dust, pollen, and smoke. We ran tests on five portable air purifiers that made those claims. While our tests confirmed that they reduce germs in the air, so should any air purifier that effectively removes dust and smoke.

Still, germ removal isn't a good reason to buy an air purifier. "The limited effectiveness of the home air purifiers may give people a false sense of security," says Edward J. Septimus, M.D., an infectious-disease expert at Methodist Hospital in Houston. "Stick with the basics instead: Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds and cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze and cough."

Ozone testing is in flux. Even the UL ozone test is under review as UL and in-

dustry and cor summer oups, including Consumers Union, the nonprofit publisher of Consumer Reports, search for a better way to measure the ozone some purifiers emit. "You can get any results you want depending on how you run the current UL test," says Shaughnessy, who is on the committee revising the standard.

In the past we used the UL ozone test, among others. But because of concerns about the UL approach, we tested ozone-producing purifiers using our own test in an airtight, unfurnished room. While that won't exactly reproduce the levels in your home, given the increasing concerns about even low levels of ozone, it's useful to have this worst-case scenario of ozone buildup in a room.

IF YOU BUY AN AIR PURIFIER

Consumers Union continues to urge the CPSC to set indoor ozone limits for all air purifiers and mandate performance tests and labels disclosing the results. CU also urges the Federal Trade Commission to investigate air-purifier ads to determine the validity of health-related claims. If you're set on buying one, keep these points in mind:

Consider whole-house models. Forced-air heating/cooling systems circulate so much air that they can overwhelm portable purifiers. Whole-house purifiers are a better option. Better products range from \$10 to \$30 for do-it-yourself filters to \$1,000-plus systems that have to be installed by a pro. The latter are more effective at removing dust and smoke. DIY furnace filters do nearly as good a job of removing dust but aren't as good at removing smoke. Buy a whole-house model with a filter rather than an electrostatic precipitator, which produces some ozone.

Portables: Bigger is better. Portable air purifiers work best at high speeds but are quietest on low. Run the unit on the higher, louder setting when you're not in the room, and turn it down to low when you're nearby. Or buy a model certified for a larger area. We believe a clean-air delivery rate (CADR) above 350 is excellent, and one below 100 is poor Look for CADR figures with an Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM) logo. Only those were confirmed by AHAM.

Not Acceptable Ozone generators

Makers of ozone generators often target home users with claims that the devices reduce allergens such as dust, smoke, pollen, germs, and mold using "highly activated oxygen" or "super oxide ions," leaving the fresh scents of thunderstorms and waterfalls in their place. Two companies, Biotech Research and Eco-Quest, go much further in their ads.

The \$850 EcoQuest Fresh Air uses "exclusive 'Space Certified' " technology "used to scrub the air inside spacecraft," ads say. BioTech Research says its \$230 EdenPure Area's technology is "used by the federal government to purify air in the Space Shuttle and the International Space Station." And ABC Radio broadcaster Paul Harvey, who claims to use the EdenPure, describes it as "the best air purifier ever created by the hand of man" in an ad.

But our tests found that even at the generators' low everyday settings, their ozone production quickly exceeded the 50 parts per billion (ppb) FDA limit for

medical devices. Purifiers aren't considered medical devices by the FDA. Ozone concentrations in our test room measured about 650 to 990 ppb for the EdenPure, depending on the setting. The EcoQuest produced about 110 to 350 ppb at its normal and high settings and up to 4,300 ppb at its "away" settings, which the company says to use only when you and your pets aren't home.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency warns that relatively low levels of ozone can cause chest pain and shortness of breath. Ozone may also worsen asthma and compromise the ability of the body to fight respiratory infections. The EPA regulates outdoor ozone levels, but there is no federal agency that regulates indoor levels or air purifiers. As we went to press, California banned the sale of ozone generators for most uses.

Because both of these ozone generators produced very high amounts of ozone and have no way to automatically control its concentration in the air, we consider them Not Acceptable. They were also poor at removing dust and smoke in the air.

About those "space" claims: We sent NASA the ads, and spokeswomen told us that the space shuttle and the space station life-support and environmental-control systems have always relied on filtration to purify the air, not ozone.

CR Quick Recommendations

No air purifier alone will clean the air.

Nor should it be the first thing you try.

Based on increasing concern about exposure to even small amounts of ozone, we strongly suggest using whole-house and portable air purifiers that rely on filters and produce no ozor

At their lowest and quietest settings, the top-rated portable air purifiers outperformed or matched most of the other portables in the Ratings. There's no reason to choose any others.

Stick with whole-house systems if you have forced-air heating. The top-rated furnace filters are a simple, inexpensive upgrade from the standard furnace filter. For performance comparable to that of the best portables, opt for a professionally installed system.

Ventilation is still the best way to remove odors from your home. Although our latest tests show that the IQAir (20) and Austin Air (21) removed cooking odors, that capability will be reduced with use. And those models aren't very effective at removing dust or smoke.

The **Ratings** rank air purifiers by overall performance. **Quick Picks** lists models that combine performance and value.

OUICK PICKS

Best room air purifiers:

- 1 Whirlpool \$230
- 2 Kenmore \$270

Both combine fine performance with quieter operation, especially when set on low. The Hunter (3) costs a bit less in annual costs but was noisier when run on high. Though the Friedrich (28) and Kenmore (29) were better at dust removal on their high settings, they emitted moderate amounts of ozone in our tests, so we don't suggest you buy them.

Best whole-house air purifiers:

- 1 Lennox \$350, CR Best Buy
- 9 3M \$20
- 10 3M \$16

The Lennox is the only professionally installed system that does not produce ozone, and it's also the least expensive. But it will cost an extra \$200 or more for installation and has high annual costs for filter replacements. Do-it-yourself furnace filters like the 3M (9, 10) aren't the best if you live with a smoker, but these two were very good at removing dust without significantly limiting the heating/cooling system's airflow.

RatinirSurifiers

 Availability Most models at stores through April 2008. Excellent Very Good Fa

Fair Poor



Portables

1 Whirlpool

| | tables | | | | | | | | | | 1 W | hirt | pool |
|----------|--|------------|-----------------|--------|--|----------|----------------------|-------|------------|----------|------------|---------------|----------------|
| | types, in performance order. Brand & model | | y numb Annua | | Overall sco | | Test | resu | lts | 1705 | | | tail/ |
| | Similar model, in small | | | | | | Du | | Smo | ke | Noi | se | <u>_</u> |
| | type, is comparable to tested model. | | | | | | reme | | | | 7 | - | Ozore emission |
| umber | lested model. | | 1 | | | | High speed | speed | High speed | ow speed | High speed | speed | e em |
| Key | incent of the | | Energy | Filter | 0. F F G V | 100 E | ligh | WO. | ligh | ow s | ligh | WO. | JOZ(|
| | FILTER PURIFIERS M | ost use l | | CTT. | 樂 | Here | 7-7 | | L | | | | O |
| 1 | Whirlpool Whispure | \$230 | \$77 | \$130 | 63 | | • | 0 | | 0 | 0 | • | |
| | AP45030S Kenmore Progressive | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | ĵ | 0 | bel | |
| 2 | 83202 Whirlpool AP510303 | 270 | 81 | 145 | 57 | | • | 0 | • | 0 | 0 | • | |
| 3 | Hunter Permalife 30547 | 270 | 128 | 44 | 56 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | • | 0 | • |
| 4 | Blueair 601 | 600 | 60 | 200 | Aff | | 0 | • | 0 | • | • | 0 | |
| 5 | 3M Ultra Slim Air Purifier FAP03-RS | 200 | 105 | 68 | 45 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 -1 |
| 6 | Honeywell Enviracaire 50250 | 170 | 56 | 60 | 45 | | 0 | • | 0 | • | | 0 | 19.0 |
| 7 | Blueair 501 | 500 | 64 | 176 | 44 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | • | 0 | |
| В | Hunter Quietflo 30401 | 260 | 149 | 120 | 44 | | 0 | • | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| 9 | Vornado 35 AQS35 | 200 | 130 | 95 | 44 | | • | • | • | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| 10 | Bionaire Galileo BAP1250-U | 200 | 79 | 102 | 42 | S.E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | lan |
| 11 | Holmes HAP756 | 140 | 77 | 105 | 41 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.6 |
| 2 | Holmes HAP726 | 125 | 1 | | 39 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | elis. |
| 13 | Sharp Plasmacluster FP-P60CX | 400 | | | 35 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | 0 | fair |
| 14 | Panasonic F-P20HU1 | 100 | 102 | 77 | 35 | | 0 | • | 0 | • | • | 0 | |
| 5 | Holmes Harmony HAP422-U | 85 | 58 | 160 | 34 | | 0 | 0 | • | • | 0 | 0 | |
| 16 | Atmosphere (Quixtar.com) Air Purifier | 970 | 27 | 869 | 33 | | 0 | • | 0 | • | • | 0 | |
| 17 | Honeywell QuietClean | 150 | 32 | 0 | * 33 | | 0 | | 0 | • | | 0 | w |
| 18 | HFD-120-Q TrueAir 04492 | 130 | 41 | 0 | 32 | | 0 | | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | |
| 19 | Winix PlasmaWave 5000 | 300 | 36 | 100 | 32 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | • | 20 30 M |
| 20 | IQAir HealthPro Plus | 800 | 124 | 230 | 32 | | 0 | • | 0 | • | 0 | 0 | |
| 21 | Austin Air HealthMate | 450 | 96 | 95 | 30 | | 0 | | 0 | | | 0 | |
| -· 22 | HM-400 Amcor AM130 | 120 | 80 | 34 | 28 | | 0 | • | 0 | | 0 | 6 | 05 |
| 23 | Bionaire Permatech | 150 | 61 | 0 | 27 | | 0 | - | 0 | | 0 | 9 | L/ E |
| 24 | BAP1500 3M Ultra Slim FAP04-RC | | | | | | - | _ | - | • | 0 | • | 1 01 |
| 24 25 | SoleusAir SA-150R | 300 200 | 42 | 80 | 26 | | ٥ | • | • | • | ○ | 0 | |
| 25 26 | Zojirushi PA-MTC14 | 170 | 35 | 24 | 24 | | | • | • | • | 0 | 0 | |
| 27 | Blueair Airpod | 100 | 6 | 76 | 16 | | | • | - | • | - | 0 | |
| | ELECTROSTATIC PR | | | | 1100 | e ozo |) — Опе; і | попе | ехсе | eded | the 5 | • 0-pp | ь |
| 28 | Friedrich C-90B | 500 | 48 | 80 | 64 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | • | 0 | М |
| 29 | Kenmore (Sears) K6 85264 | 370 | 129 | 0 | 57 | | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 20 150 | | М |
| 30 | Bio-Net EGF Enhanced च | 750 | 90 | 122 | 39 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | L |
| 31 | Sharper Image Hybrid Germicidal Purifier S1724GRY | 500 | 10 | Û | 34 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 1. |
| 32 | | 200 | 31 | 0 | 31 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 0 | M |
| 33 | Brookstone Pure-Ion | 300 | 70 | 0 | 30 | | | - | 0 | • | 0 | 0 | |
| | Advanced Honeywell QuietClean | | | | 11 1200 (Body Sint) 11 3 2000 (Body Sint) | | - | • | - | • | • | 0 | L |
| 34 | HFD-135 | 300 | 51 | 90 | 26 | 17. BA | 0 | | • | • | - | 0 | L |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |







2 Kenmore

| | Brand & model | Price | Annual | costs | Ove | rall | score | Test | resu | lts | | 7 3 | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|----------|------|-------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| | | | | | | | | Du rem | | Sm | | No | ise | ion |
| Key number | | | Energy | Filter | 0 P F | G | VG I | High speed | Low speed | High speed | Low speed | High speed | Low speed | Ozone emission |
| - | ELECTROSTATIC PRI | ECIPI" | TATOR | S con | tinued | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 35 | Oreck XL Tower Professional | 700 | 43 | 50 | _24 | | | 0 | • | \odot | ullet | • | 0 | L |
| 36 | Oreck XL Tableton | 470 | 22 | 30 | | | | | | _ | _ | \circ | | 1 |

38

Professional AIRF 1 Uses a nonreplaceable filter as well as electrostatic technology.

470

33

| Whole-house | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Brand & model | Price | Annual cost | Overall score | Test results | |
| Similar models, in small ty comparable to tested mode | | | 0 1 P F G VG | n S Dust removal Smoke removal | Airflow resistance Ozone emission |

PRO-INSTALLED FILTER SYSTEM Uses non-HEPA filtration and emits no ozone.

| ĸ | 137 | • |
|---|----------------|---|
| v | <u> 122</u> () | |

| 1 | Lennox Healthy Climate HC | 16 \$ 350 | \$99 | 84 | 0 | lacktriangle | lacktriangle |
|---|--|--------------------------------|--------|--------------|---------|--------------|--------------|
| | PRO-INSTALLED EL exceeded the 50-ppb volun | ECTROSTATIC tary FDA limit. | PRECIP | PITATORS All | emit so | me ozo | ne; none |
| 2 | Trane Clean Effects 2 | 1 025 | 16 | 89 | | • | |

| 2 | American Standard Accidean 2 | 1,025 | 16 | | • | • | lue | L |
|---|--|-------|----|-----|---|--------------|--------------|---|
| 3 | Aprilaire 5000 🗉 | 450 | 36 | 37 | 0 | 0 | lacktriangle | L |
| 4 | Carrier Infinity A r Purifier GAPA Bryant Perfect Air | 1,135 | 89 | *84 | • | • | • | L |
| 5 | Trion SE1400 | 700 | 33 | 33 | 0 | 0 | • | М |
| 6 | Trane Perfect Fit TFE210A9FR3 | 600 | 22 | 198 | 0 | 0 | • | М |
| 7 | Carrier EACB | 500 | 29 | | 0 | 0 | • | М |
| 8 | Honeywelf F300 | 600 | 25 | | 0 | lacktriangle | • | М |
| | | | | | ٠ | | | |

| DO-IT-YOURSELF Stan | lard non-HFP | I filters, about 1-inch thick. | They emit no ozone |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| | | | |

| | DO-IT-YOURSELF Standard, non- | HEP 4 fil | ters, abo | ut 1-inch thick. T | hey emit r | o ozoi | ne. | |
|----|---|------------------|-----------|--------------------|------------|--------|--------------|------|
| 9 | 3M Filtrete 1700 | 20 | 80 | 52 | | • | lacktriangle | - |
| 10 | 3M Filtrete Ultra Allergen Reduction 1250 | 16 | 64 | 48 | • | • | • | - |
| 11 | True Blue RP8202014 | 15 | 60 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 0 | turi |
| 12 | 3M Filtrete Micro Allergen Reduction 1000 | 10 | 40 | 4.2 | 0 | • | • | |
| 13 | Precisionaire NaturalAire Elite | | 52 | 37 | 0 | • | • | 431 |
| 14 | American Air Filter Breathe Fight Allergen Barrier | | 76 | 35 | 0 | • | • | - |
| 15 | 3M Filtrete Dust and Pollen Reduction 600 | 8 | 32 | 34 | 0 | • | • | 7.0 |
| 16 | Web Hepa-Pure | 30 | 120 | 33 | 0 | • | 0 | 1 |
| 17 | American Air Filter Dirt Demon Dust Shield | 3 | 12 | 19. | • | • | 0 | - 1 |
| 18 | Precisionaire NaturalAire Plus | 4 | 16 | 17 | | • | • | |
| 19 | Web The Original WEB | 20 | 0 | 15 | | • | • | - |
| 20 | American Air Filter ElectroKlean | 26 | 0 | 14 | | • | \bullet | - |
| 21 | Precisionaire EZ Flow | 1 | 12 | 14. | • | • | • | - |
| 22 | Web WEB Lifetime | 20 | 0 | 13 | | • | • | - |
| 23 | American Air Filter StrataDensity | 2 | . 6 | 12 | • | • | 0 | - |

I Uses non-HEPA filtration as well as an electrostatic precipitator. 🔞 Recalled because electrical arcing inside the collection cells can pose a fire hazard. (3) Comes in four-pack.

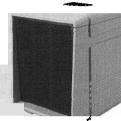
closeup

ELECTROSTATIC PRECIPITATOR ADVICE

For the past 15 years, Consumer Reports has recommended some electrostatic precipitators. The Friedrich C-90B and Aprilaire 5000 were effective air purifiers with low annual maintenance costs but produced small amounts of ozone. These portable and whole-house purifiers apply an electrical charge to the particles drawn into the device and produce some ozone as a byproduct.

These products' performance

has not changed significantly, but our advice has. We now believe that air purifiers that emit even small amounts of ozone (less than 50 parts per billion) are not your best choice. Research is increasingly warning against adding ozone to



Friedrich C-90B

indoor air. But more studies need to be conducted to determine the effects of low-level ozone exposure.

If you own one of these models, we suggest that you err on the side of caution. If a member of your household has asthma or allergy symptoms that aren't improving, even though you've removed allergy and asthma triggers and keep your home well ventilated, you might want to consider switching to one of our highly rated, filter-based models if you still want a purifier.

Guide to the Ratings

Overall score is mainly how well models removed dust and smoke from a test chamber, plus quietness for room models and airflow resistance for whole-house. Dust and smoke are how well models cleared the air of fine clay dust and cigarette smoke. Pollen removal is typically similar to dust removal. Noise for room models denotes instrument and panel judgments at highest and lowest speeds. Airflow resistance reflects how freely air passed through the unit. Annual cost is our estimate based on continuous operation. Ozone emission is our classification of ozone generated by a product in our tests: 1 to 25 parts per billion (ppb) is low (L); 26 to 50 ppb, medium (M). For whole-house products, ozone calculations are adjusted to be comparable to those for portables. Price is approximate retail, Scores for previously tested models may have changed based on the performance of newly tested models and testing changes.







1 Panasonic

26 Black & Decker

r 32 Hitachi

52 Ryobi

| | Brand & model | Price V | olts | Cell type | Weight (lb.) | Overall score | Test | result | S | | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----------|---------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------|
| | Carried of Assessed P. | | | type | (10.) | FIRST CANADA | | | | dunn | | |
| - | | | | | | | | | | e | | |
| number | | | | | | | | | me | Charge time | ing | |
| | | | | | | P F G VG | Speed | Power | Run time | harg | Handling | Noise |
| ₹ e | DRILLS FOR LARG | ED IOD | e conti | aund . | | P F G VG | ı is | Ğ. | Ē | Ö | I | Z |
| 37 | Makita 6347DWD! | \$200 | 3 contil | NiMH | 5.4 | 79 | lo | • | _ | • | 0 | 0 |
| 38 | DeWalt DC900KL II | 450 | 36 | Li-lon | 7.2 | 779 | | • | 0 | | ٥ | ٥ |
| | Bosch 38636-01 | 3 60 | 36 | Li-lon | 5.7 | PI | | • | _ | | ٥ | 0 |
| 40 | DeWalt DC759KA | 200 | 18 | NiCd | 5.2 | | | _ | 0 | • | | 0 |
| 41 | Porter-Cable 9984 | 240 | 19.2 | NiCd | 6.3 | 74 | | • | <u> </u> | • | 0 | 0 |
| 42 | DeWalt DC925KA III | 300 | 18 | NiCd | 6.4 | 70 | 0 | • | 0 | • | 0 | • |
| 43 | Porter-Cable 9987 a | 250 | 19.2 | NiCd | 6.6 | - 19 | 0 | • | $\overline{\bullet}$ | • | 0 | • |
| 44 | Craftsman 28169 | 240 | 20 | Li-lon | 5.6 | -2 | 0 | • | 0 | $\tilde{\bullet}$ | <u> </u> | 0 |
| 45 | DeWalt DC935KA II | 230 | 14.4 | NiCd | 5.9 | | 0 | • | • | • | 0 | • |
| 46 | Ridgid R83015 | 160 | 14.4 | NiCd | 6.6 | | 0 | • | ٥ | 0 | • | 0 |
| 47 | Ridgid R840011 | 190 | 18 | NiCd | 5.2 | | 0 | • | • | 0 | 0 | Ö |
| 48 | Black & Decker FS1800D-2 | 100 | 18 | NiCd | 5.5 | | 0 | • | • | • | 0 | 0 |
| | IMPACT DRIVERS | The best ac | dd tightei | ning and l | loosening | power, but all | are slow | er at d | rillin | g. | | _ |
| 49 | Panasonic EY7202GOW 3 | 250 | 12 | NiMH | 4 | 8 | | • | 0 | • | • | |
| 50 | Panasonic EY7540LN2S | 310 | 14.4 | Li-lon | 3.2 | | | • | 0 | • | • | • |
| 51 | Makita 6980FDWDE ® | 200 | 12 | NIMH | 3.6 | 7,9 | | • | • | • | 0 | • |
| 3 52 | Ryobi P230C ज | 130 | 18 | NiCd | 4.6 | 7.75 | | • | 0 | $ \bigcirc $ | $ \bigcirc $ | |
| 53 | Milwaukee 9082-22 🕫 | 220 | 14.4 | NiCd | 4.4 | 75 | 0 | 0 | • | lacktriangle | lacktriangle | • |
| 54 | DeWalt DW054K-2 3 | 230 | 14.4 | NiCd | 4.2 | 70 | 0 | 0 | - | • | lacktriangle | • |
| 55 | Bosch 23614 ® | 230 | 14.4 | NiCd | 4.3 | 69 | 0 | • | \to | lacksquare | 0 | • |
| 56 | Makita BTD142HW 🕸 | 210 | 18 | Li-lon | 2.9 | 69 | 0 | • | 0 | 0 | 0 | • |
| 57 | Hitachi WH14DMR 🖫 | 240 | 14.4 | NiCd | 4.2 | 68 | 0 | 0 | 0 | lacktriangle | lacktriangle | • |
| 58 | Craftsman 11546 18 | 120 | 14.4 | NiCd | 4 | 66 | 0 | 0 | • | lacktriangle | lacktriangle | • |
| 59 | Ridgid R82320 (2) (3) | 180 | 14.4 | NiCd | 4.9 | 62 | 0 | 0 | • | 0 | lacktriangle | • |
| 60 | Hitachi WH14DAF2 3 | 160 | 14.4 | NiCd | 3.9 | 60 | 0 | 0 | • | 0 | 0 | |
| 61 | Bosch, LITHEON PS40-2 10 | 180 | 10.8 | Li-lon | 2.2 | 52 | • | • | • | 0 | 0 | C |
| 62 | Black & Decker BDID1202 s | 100 | 12 | NiCd | 3.6 | 49 | 0 | • | • | • | 0 | |
| 63 | Makita TD020DSEW ₹ | 100 | 7.2 | Li-lon | 1.2 | 44 | | 0 | • | 0 | 0 | |
| 64 | Black & Decker Firestorm FS181D 19 | 152 | 18 | NiCd | 4.7 | 44 | 0 | • | 0 | • | 0 | • |
| | CORDLESS SCREV | | | se ultralig | nht pocket | t drivers are ea | sy to ha | ndle, i | but li | imite | d. | |
| 65 | Panasonic EY7410LA2S | 160 | 3.6 | Li-lon | 1.1 | 44 | • | • | lacktriangle | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 66 | Hitachi DB3DL | 90 | 3.6 | Li-lon | 0.9 | 44 | • | • | • | 0 | 0 | 0 |

CR Quick Recommendations

The **Ratings** rank cordless tools by overall score in categories. Drills for larger jobs were excellent in speed and at least very good in power. Our **Quick Picks** include tested models that deliver performance and value for specific needs.

QUICK PICKS

Ample performance for most needs:

- 1 Panasonic \$200
- **5 Bosch** \$160
- 6 Makita \$200
- 8 Hitachi \$150
- D LITACIII SIDO
- 9 Makita \$140 14 Craftsman \$95, CR Best Buy

The Panasonic delivers superb speed and run time. The Bosch is also fast, while the Makita (6) is very light and charges very quickly, as do the Hitachi and Makita (9). The Craftsman is the best value; consider the similar Ryobi (15) for its larger selection of battery-sharing tools.

If your tasks are light-duty only:

20 Hitachi \$80

26 Black & Decker \$65

The 3.4-pound Hitachi has fast charging, two speeds, and two batteries; the heavier Black & Decker adds power.

For added speed, power, and run time:

- 32 Hitachi \$200, CR Best Buy
- 33 Makita \$280
- **35 Milwaukee** \$300
- 36 Bosch \$250
- 37 Makita \$200

The Hitachi is the best value; the similarly priced Makita (37) weighs a bit less. The Makita (33) is even lighter, the Milwaukee adds a hammer-drill mode for masonry, and the Bosch has more power.

If you want an impact driver:

- 51 Makita \$200
- 52 Ryobi \$130, CR Best Buy

Paying more for the Makita buys a tool that's light for its price and performance. The Ryobi delivers the better value.

Guide to the Ratings

Overall score is speed, power, run time, charge time, handling, and noise at ear level. Displayed scores are rounded; models are listed by precise overall score. Speed is speed of drilling holes and driving screws. Power is twisting force (torque) for tightening and loosening. Run time is work per battery charge. Charge time is the time it takes to recharge a fully discharged battery. Handling is weight, balance, and effort needed to position the head.

Noise denotes our decibel measurements at ear level; those judged fair or poor were at or above the 85 dBA at which we recommend hearing protection. Under cell type, NiMH is nickel-metal-hydride, Li-lon is lithium-ion, and NiCd is nickel-cadmium. Weight is to the nearest tenth of a pound for the tool and battery. Volts are per manufacturers. Price is approximate retail with batteries and charger. Most replacement cells cost \$40 to \$70.