



LONGER LASTING WASHING MACHINES

Washing machines from the most reliable brands and tips on extending the life of your machine

It's pointless spending hundreds of pounds on a washing machine from a brand with only a mediocre record for reliability, such as Hoover. If your machine does break down, calling in an engineer can cost as much as £100 – even before they've taken a look at the problem. We've found that a long-lasting washing machine needn't cost a fortune. Here, we pick the cheapest Best Buys from the six most reliable brands and offer tips on how to keep your washing machine running smoothly.



IS CALGON WORTH IT?

Calgon claims that, on average, one machine stops working in the UK every three minutes because of limescale. It promises to extend your machine's life for less than 30p a wash, claiming 'you should use

Calgon in every wash and at all temperatures'. But do washing machines really 'live longer' with Calgon? We wanted to put its claim to the test, so we simulated three years of washing in hard water – with and without Calgon – and asked an expert with 17 years of repairs experience to inspect the machines for damage.

While the element in the machine without Calgon had a thicker coating of limescale, it wasn't enough to affect the machine's performance or suggest future failure.

Our expert said: 'I've never met any circumstances where Calgon would've been a good investment. It takes six to eight years in hard water for a machine to require attention due to calcium build-up. In this time the consumer could have spent £295 on Calgon [washing three times a week]. For me to unblock and service a machine of this age, it would be £49.20 plus any parts required.'

DETERGENT DOES THE SAME JOB

Washing detergents also contain water softeners, so using the recommended dose should reduce limescale build-up unless your water's very hard. In that case, fitting a softener to the mains to treat the whole water supply might be worthwhile, as other appliances will also be affected.

Washing your laundry at lower temperatures will also reduce limescale deposits in your machine. Calgon ads show the effects of washing at 60°C, but the most commonly used temperature, and the one used in all our washing machine tests, is 40°C.

As well as using the right amount of detergent to reduce limescale, running a 90°C wash once a month with biological powder will help prevent the door seals on your washing machine from going black. Wiping round the drum and regularly checking the filter (if your machine has one) will also improve its performance.

which? MONEY SAVER Of the six most reliable washing machine brands on Which.co.uk, Zanussi washing machines are the cheapest, with online target prices between £250 and £517.

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We have full test results for more than 200 washing machines online, along with their cheapest online prices. Find the reviews and information on brand reliability at www.which.co.uk/washingmachines. Or if you'd prefer to speak to someone, call our helpline on 01992 822800.