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Consumer Reports™

RATINGS

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- **EYEGLASSES** Retailers where you can save big

SECRETS TO A GREAT NIGHT'S



74 MATTRESSES TESTED & RATED

plus **HELP FOR PEOPLE IN PAIN**, finding the **PERFECT PILLOW**, and warnings about over-the-counter **SLEEP AIDS**.



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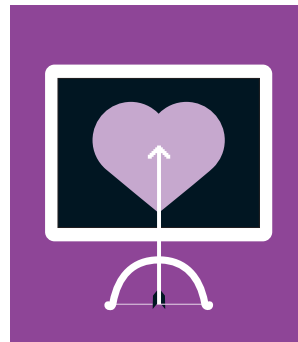
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ABOUT CONSUMER REPORTS

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🔴 POOR 🟡 FAIR 🟢 GOOD
🟠 VERY GOOD 🟩 EXCELLENT

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From the President

A Legacy of Safety Lives On

ON NOV. 10, 2016, the world lost Clarence Ditlow, a lifelong advocate for auto safety and a former board member of Consumer Reports. Clarence may not have been a household name outside of the halls of power in Washington, D.C., and the auto plants of Detroit, but his fearlessness and tenacity prompted critical safety recalls that reduced traffic deaths and made a profound difference in the lives of millions—families spared from untold tragedies because of his determination and the many victories he won on their behalf. Here at CR, our mission is to carry that legacy of zealous consumer advocacy forward by fighting for safety, quality, and value. We do this not only when it comes to cars but also in every part of your life that can be made better by the presence of a responsible marketplace and a steadfast partner who has your back.

This month we're featuring our latest report on car owner satisfaction, shining a light on what consumers love most—and least—about their vehicles. As we continue to push manufacturers and lawmakers to improve auto safety—including in emerging areas like autonomous-driving features—you will always be able to count on us to amplify your voices and advance your interests.



That promise doesn't stop at the off-ramp, either. We know that readers look forward to our guidance on the best mattresses and pillows; that's why this month we're bringing you our latest reviews and advice on how to get a truly restful night's sleep. We also have vital information on sleep-aid overuse, as well as a new report on the risks of taking prescription drugs to treat conditions they aren't approved for. As always, whether it's cars or mattresses, we purchase every product we test from the dealership or retailer, just like you—which is why we're so grateful for your support, because it makes it possible for us to maintain the ironclad independence we've always been known for.

Marta Tellado

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Self-Driving-Car Safety

TRAFFIC DEATHS were up 7 percent in 2015, the biggest annual spike in almost 50 years. In an effort to address concerns over these fatalities, the car industry has pointed to the potential of autonomous vehicles. In fact, certain manufacturers have already started equipping their rides with technology that relieves drivers of many cockpit duties. Such advances could make roads safer—eventually—but first, more needs to be done to protect drivers from the unique risks posed by automated driving.

Our experts recently spoke at separate hearings held by Congress and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, urging automakers and regulators to be vigilant in promoting safety at every step of autonomous development.

Of particular concern is the current crop of cars with automated driver-assistance systems. The cars aren't fully self-driving, and consumers need to be ready to take over the controls at a moment's

notice. But some car companies aren't clearly communicating what the systems can and can't do. Consumers should be made aware of the limitations.

What's more, CR believes that the auto industry should make its internal data on the technologies available to the government and the public. The benefits of driver-assistance systems are murky because companies keep their research under wraps.

To help you stay informed, CR now identifies in our ratings which models offer semi-autonomous features. Check out CR.org/selfdriving for more on this technology.

A Victory for Solar Power

FLORIDIANS HAVE had their fair share of political chaos over the years, but voters of all political stripes came together this past November on at least one front. They joined to defeat an industry-driven ballot initiative aimed at making it more difficult and expensive for consumers to switch to rooftop solar power. The

utility industry tried hard to misrepresent the amendment as “pro solar,” and major power companies spent tens of millions of dollars in support of the deceptive ballot measure. But voters saw through the subterfuge and rejected it.

CR strongly opposed the initiative and worked to defeat it, alongside a diverse coalition of more than 200 organizations, elected officials, and thousands of concerned citizens.

“It was a cynical attempt by the utilities to deceive voters and would have cast a dark cloud over the Sunshine State’s ability to take advantage of plentiful solar power,” says Shannon Baker-Branstetter, energy and environment policy counsel for Consumers Union, the policy and mobilization arm of CR. “Floridians stood up to the utility giants and will benefit from the expansion of rooftop solar panels.”

As more households switch to solar, overall electric costs are likely to come down, leading to lower bills for all ratepayers. To find out whether solar is right for you, go to CR.org/solar0217 or see the August 2016 issue of the magazine.

Relief for College Debt

STUDENTS ENROLLED at schools that suddenly close—such as those who attended the scandal-plagued Corinthian Colleges—can be left in debt without receiving the education they signed on for.

“Hundreds of thousands of students have been harmed in recent years by predatory schools that have treated them as little more than dollar signs,” says Suzanne Martindale, staff attorney for Consumers Union.

All eyes have been on the government to step in as more schools failed, and thankfully, regulators just took action.

The Department of Education adopted new rules that provide a smoother pathway for students to cancel loans when schools engage in misconduct and that make it more difficult for colleges that commit fraud to stay in business.

Specifically, students who’ve been defrauded might be eligible as a group to have their loans automatically discharged instead of having to submit individual applications for relief. And financially troubled institutions must provide the government with a financial guarantee to protect against the risks they create.

Forced arbitration clauses will also be banned, preserving students’ legal rights.

CR is concerned, however, that the claim process still takes too long for wronged students, even when there’s substantial evidence of misconduct, as the former Corinthian students still waiting for relief bear witness.

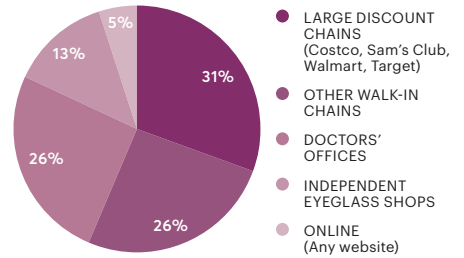
We’re calling on the government to move swiftly to resolve claims and stop collection on debts in cases where people were clearly defrauded.

Go to CR.org/studentdebt to find more on the problematic student-loan industry.

Product Updates

The latest ratings from our survey

WHERE PEOPLE BUY THEIR GLASSES



The Joy of Specs

Tired of being gouged when you buy glasses? Our reader survey reveals ways to get surprisingly great deals on frames and lenses.

by **Anthony Giorgianni**



Frame and Fortune

Why spend more? These Contour FM14093 women's frames cost \$9 at a Walmart store and \$38 at Walmart.com.

Product Updates

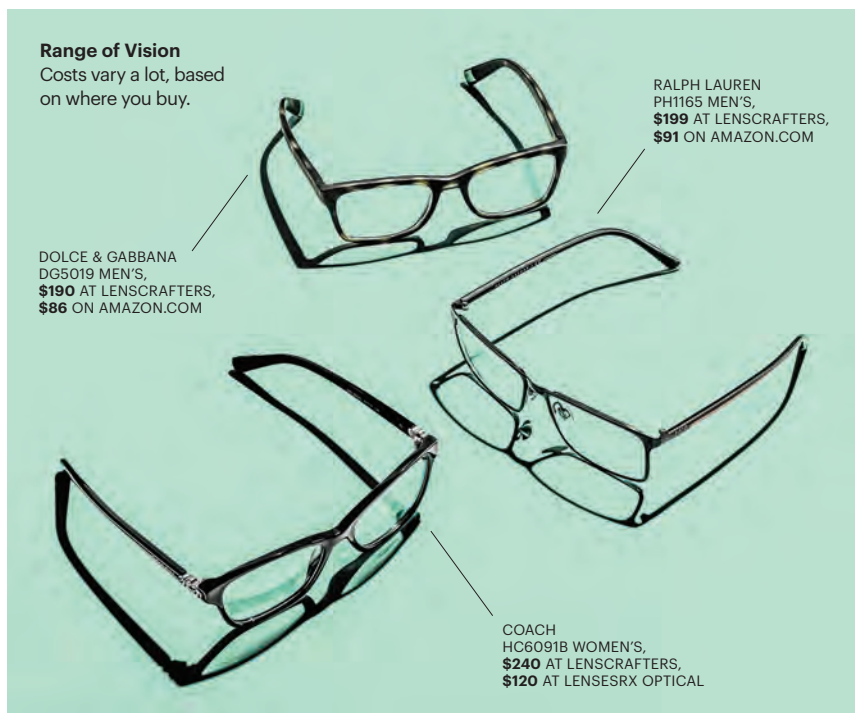
FOR THE APPROXIMATELY 64 percent of Americans who wear them, prescription eyeglasses are part medical device and part fashion accessory. They correct your vision and, faster than you can say Jackie O or Harry Potter, help you tell the world how you'd like to be viewed, too.

Even a simple pair, however, can easily set you back hundreds of dollars. That's especially true if you're buying them the old-fashioned way, at a doctor's office or an eyewear chain—or if you have a complicated prescription. Online retailers offer ways to save, as do big-box stores, but you may get less hand-holding and a smaller selection of frames. The choices—and the trade-offs—can be overwhelming.

That's why we surveyed more than 91,000 readers and also shopped for glasses ourselves, online and in walk-in stores, to discover the pros and cons of different vendors. We interviewed eyeglass experts and eye doctors to get their best advice, too. What we learned is that where you get your glasses should depend on whether your priority is convenience, service, selection, or a rock-bottom price.

Doctors' offices and independent eyeglass shops. Nearly 40 percent of survey respondents bought their glasses from one of these sources. They gave these sellers high marks for lens and frame fitting, employee knowledge, and follow-up service. But frames and lenses tended to cost more than elsewhere: Our readers shelled out a median of around \$400, two to three times what you might pay online or at a discount store.

Major eyewear chains. Since it has many locations to help you if there's a problem with your glasses, an eyeglass chain can be convenient. Our readers



reported good follow-up service from most chains, too. But in other areas, survey ratings varied depending on the company.

Warby Parker and Zenni Optical.

Each of these stores sells only its own brand of glasses. Warby Parker retails both online (they'll mail you up to five frames to try at home for free) and in brick-and-mortar locations in 18 states, the District of Columbia, and Ontario, Canada. In the seven years since it launched, Warby Parker has become a major player, offering glasses with single-vision lenses for \$95, including an anti-reflective coating. But if you order progressive lenses, those prices can rocket to nearly \$300—far more than the prices we found at some other retailers. And Warby Parker's warranty on frames is only 30 days, compared with a full year at some other stores.

As for all-online retailer Zenni Optical, you can only try on frames virtually, by uploading a photo of yourself. And it, too, has a 30-day warranty. Still, Zenni's frames with basic single-vision lenses start at less than \$10, and upgrading to progressives

begins at just \$28. Survey respondents who bought from Zenni spent a median of just \$69 for a complete pair of glasses, making them our survey's lowest-cost retailer.

Large discount chains. Costco and Walmart are low-cost one-stop spots for glasses where you can do everything from having your eyes examined to getting your finished glasses adjusted for fit. Frames can be inexpensive at these stores. At Walmart and Sam's Club, we found basic, plastic progressive lenses for as little as \$79. Costco charges \$130 for high-definition progressive lenses, which, as with all Costco lenses, include an anti-reflective coating. That's about half what you'd pay at many walk-in stores. But if you need basic, plastic single-vision lenses, you can pay as little as \$29 at Walmart, about half as much as at Costco.

These retailers got high marks from readers, with Costco, our top-rated eyeglass retailer, edging out Walmart in several areas, including the quality of frames and lenses and follow-up

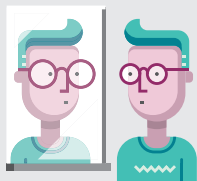
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The material used to make your lenses can affect how well you see, how good you look—and how much you'll pay. Find out the pros and cons of each kind at [CR.org/materials0217](https://www.consumerreports.org/materials0217).

8 Great Ways to Save on Eyewear

Here's how to shop smarter at every step of the process—without skimping on quality.



1) Study up. It's smart to research your choices, even before you have your eyes examined, so that you will know what to ask, understand your options better, and avoid being oversold on extras you don't need.

There are many good online resources you can use to find information, including AllAboutVision.com, Eyeglasses.com, and LensesRx.com. Look for advice on choosing lenses, frames, and add-ons, such as anti-reflective coatings.

2) Talk to your eye doctor. If your prescription is more than a year old, you'll need a new eye exam, says James Wachter, an optometrist at Clarkson Eyecare in St. Louis. While at the doctor's, ask for recommendations about which lenses and frames are right for you. For example, your ophthalmologist may recommend a certain type of progressive lens or a specific material for your lenses. Or he or she may advise you to avoid frames that can't properly accommodate your prescription—rimless models that won't look right with thick lenses, for instance, or frames that are too narrow to handle the multiple vision fields in progressive and other multifocal lenses.

Ask the doctor to measure what's called your pupillary distance or PD (the distance between the center of each of your pupils) and include it on your prescription. You'll

need the PD (two for multifocal lenses) if you decide to order lenses online. Some eyewear websites give you instructions on how to measure it yourself, but Adam Gordon, O.D., a clinical associate professor of optometry at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, says that a professional will be able to do it more accurately. At least five states—Alaska, Arizona, Kansas, Massachusetts and New Mexico—require that doctors provide you with your PD. So when you book your exam, verify that your eye doctor will give it to you, advises Gordon. Some doctors charge extra for this service unless you're ordering glasses from them. If your doctor won't provide your PD or charges for it, consider going elsewhere. If you decide to pay for a PD measurement, Warby Parker will reimburse you up to \$50 as long as you buy glasses from one of its outlets.



3) Explore frames. If your doctor sells frames, start by trying on some from his or her selection. Make note of the brand, model, and size of the frames you like. (You'll need the information in order to comparison shop.) Also record prices and details about the seller's return policies and warranty.

4) Compare your options.

Once you've narrowed the frame choices, use a web search to find and price your favorite pairs, which in most cases you're likely to find online. Get the prices on lenses, too, so that you can compare the whole package. One potential shortcut: If your eye exam was at Costco, Sam's Club, or Walmart and you find a frame you like at the same store, our survey results suggest that you'll likely be satisfied if you simply go ahead and order your lenses there. The same goes for Warby Parker if you have a simple, single-vision prescription. If you don't, you can probably find less expensive lenses elsewhere.

5) Negotiate. If you find better prices as you search, call or visit the store where you originally discovered your favorite frames and ask it to match your best deal. It's only fair to give it the chance, especially if the staff spent time answering your questions. It may be worth paying more to deal with a professional in person, especially if you're ordering multifocal lenses or have a strong prescription. And it's good to support a local business you may need for frame adjustments later on. Finally, if you're haggle-averse, you're not alone. Relatively few of our survey respondents tried negotiating for a discount. But of those who did, nearly half were successful, and more than a quarter of them saved \$100 or more.

6) Divide and conquer. If a single retailer doesn't provide everything you need, consider splitting up the process. You might have your eyes examined at your doctor's office, take advantage of the savings you can get buying frames online, and have the lenses made at Costco or Walmart, for example.



7) Don't pay for add-ons that don't add up. In our reader survey, half the respondents said they paid extra for scratch-resistant coatings, and 22 percent shelled out for coatings that offer ultraviolet protection.

But all plastic lenses already have an anti-scratch coating on the front of the lens, says Karl Citek, an optometry professor at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Ore. And most lenses nowadays completely protect wearers from harmful UV light from the sun without any add-ons. One more to skip: coatings that block blue light. The science connecting long-term exposure to blue light to damage to part of the retina is weak, says James Sheedy, Pacific University professor emeritus of optometry, who has studied the effect of blue light on the eyes. One add-on that he does say may be worth paying for is an anti-reflective coating. It reduces glare on the front and back of the lenses, making them easier to look through—especially at night—and also lets other people see your eyes better, he explains.

8) Consider buying a second pair. It's a good idea to order a backup in case your primary glasses break or are lost and you don't want to be forced to pay extra to get another pair quickly.

service. But readers were not impressed by the selection of frames, especially at Costco. One workaround: You can usually have a discount store put lenses into frames you purchased elsewhere. Walmart charges an extra \$10 and Costco \$18 to do this. They'll also adjust the frames while you're there.

Online retailers. While only about 5 percent of our respondents bought their glasses online, nearly twice as many browsed online before purchasing at a walk-in store. Even if you don't plan to buy from a website, the price information you get might help you negotiate your way to a

discount from a walk-in store. For instance, in a web search, we found a Dolce & Gabbana men's frame that was \$190 at LensCrafters on sale for \$99 at LensesRx Optical and \$89 at Amazon.com.

But no matter how good an online retailer's tools, prices, and return policies, getting your glasses by mail can be a hassle, especially if you have to send them back.

The Best Choice?

Once you know the pros and cons, your decision may be easy. If you have a simple prescription, you might consider

shopping at Warby Parker. If you're covered by insurance, you'll probably want to choose a provider that accepts your plan. If your heart is set on pricey designer frames, online retailers may be a great option.

If no one retailer has the service, selection, convenience, and prices you want, however, think about splitting up the process. You might have your eyes examined by your doctor, search for frames online, and get your lenses from Costco. One eyeglass vendor doesn't necessarily fit all—but knowing what each retailer offers will let you buy your glasses with your eyes wide open.

Your Guide to Shopping for Glasses Online

The number of people buying glasses from websites is small—but growing. We asked experts about what goes right, what goes wrong, and how to get what you want.



THERE'S NO SHORTAGE of eye-care professionals who are skeptical about buying frames and lenses online. "These are custom-made devices. It's not like buying a box of Cheerios," explains Dr. Andrea Thau, an optometrist and president of the American Optometric Association. Prescription glasses, according to this camp, are complex medical devices—especially for people who need progressives or other multifocal lenses, which require complicated measurements best taken while patients are wearing the frames they've selected. And once a pair of glasses is delivered, they say, the lenses should be checked to make sure the prescription is correct and the frames adjusted for fit.

But Stefanie Rodrigues, director of operations for

Eyeglasses.com, thinks the main objection isn't really about the quality of glasses sold by online vendors but about the competition these vendors present to traditional eyeglass retailers. Most lenses, including progressives, are "not a big technical challenge for our lab," she claims. When there is a problem, her company will remake the lenses at no extra charge. And, she adds, that doesn't happen very often. "People think if they pay more, that means better vision. It doesn't," Rodrigues says.

But to make sure you're really looking out for yourself online, follow these tips.

➤ **Research the website.**

Some online retailers, such as Warby Parker, Zenni Optical, and EyeBuyDirect, have top marks from the Better Business Bureau. Others don't do so well, including EZContacts.com and GlassesUSA.com. Look for a report online at the Better Business Bureau (bbb.org). Also, see what others are saying by using a web

search with the name of the company and terms like "reviews" and "complaints."

➤ **Resist buying frames you can't try on.** Many websites offer tools that let you test frames virtually by uploading a photo of your face. But trying on frames in the real, nonvirtual world is the only way to tell whether they're comfortable and may give you a clue that they're poorly made, says Adam Gordon, clinical professor of optometry at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. You can find frames locally or use a website that will let you try them on at home, like Glasses.com, which sells designer frames and will send you one pair of glasses to try for 15 days, complete with prescription lenses (single vision only).

➤ **Examine the return policy and warranty.** A retailer's policies are especially important when buying online, where typically you must pay for your glasses before you receive them. Find out if the online seller will remake your lenses if there's a problem or error.

➤ **Enter your prescription**

carefully. All those numbers and unfamiliar terminology, such as "axis," "sphere," and "cylinder," can make prescriptions complicated. It's easy to blunder when transferring the data to a website form. Some retailers may ask you to upload an image of the prescription to avoid potential errors.

➤ **Check your vision.** If you have difficulty seeing with your new glasses, ask the online retailer to verify that the lenses were created using the proper prescription. If that checks out, go back to your doctor, who can recheck the lenses and make sure a mistake wasn't made during your examination.

➤ **Know when you need a pro.** If the frames need adjustment, many websites provide instructions on doing the job yourself. But Gordon says it's less risky to have a professional do it. Many walk-in retailers will adjust glasses purchased elsewhere, though you may have to pay for this service.

Ratings > **Masters of Specs** Readers told us how satisfied they were with retailers based on a range of factors including price and selection.



Rank	Retailer	Price	Reader Score	Survey Results						
				Quality of Frames and Lenses	Frame Selection	Care Taken to Fit Frames and Lenses Correctly	Employees' Knowledge	Follow-Up Service	Chose Retailer for Low Prices/Sale (%)	Difficulty With Eyeglasses (%)
1	Costco Optical	\$184	88	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	77	22
2	Independent eyeglass shop	\$414	87	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	6	23
3	Warby Parker	\$141	86	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	69	28
4	Private doctor's office	\$396	86	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	2	23
5	ZenniOptical.com	\$69	85	▲	▲	▲	—	▼	94	18
6	Kaiser Permanente	\$308	84	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	12	25
7	Opticare Eye Health & Vision Centers	—	84	▲	▲	▲	▲	—	6	18
8	EyeBuyDirect.com	\$85	84	▲	▲	▲	—	▼	92	19
9	Sam's Club Optical	\$240	83	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	67	27
10	Walmart Vision Center	\$210	83	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	60	26
11	Shopko Eyecare Center	\$279	83	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	26	27
12	39DollarGlasses.com	\$91	82	▼	▲	▼	—	—	92	20
13	For Eyes Optical	\$224	82	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	45	25
14	Henry Ford OptimEyes	—	82	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	3	32
15	Doctors Vision Center	—	82	▲	▲	▲	▲	—	4	27
16	Vision Source	—	81	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	5	27
17	Eye Care Associates	\$415	81	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	7	29
18	Target Optical	\$268	81	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	37	30
19	Sears Optical	\$232	80	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	48	31
20	LensCrafters	\$369	80	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	14	28
21	Vision World	—	80	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	28	25
22	Pearle Vision	\$381	80	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	14	30
23	Eye-Mart	\$174	79	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	57	29
24	Empire Vision Centers	—	79	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	11	29
25	Texas State Optical	—	78	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	3	27
26	Clarkson Eyecare	—	78	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	6	32
27	Sterling Optical	—	78	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	14	20
28	JCPenney Optical	\$210	78	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	72	32
29	EyeMasters	—	78	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	32	31
30	Davis Vision	—	77	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	5	27
31	Eyeglass World	\$216	77	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	54	31
32	Cohen's Fashion Optical	—	77	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	17	29
33	Visionworks	\$300	76	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	36	33
34	Optical Outlets	—	76	▼	▼	▲	▲	▲	43	36
35	Glasses.com	—	76	▲	▲	▲	—	—	69	40
36	Eye Express	—	76	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	33	37
37	SVS Vision	—	75	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	12	39
38	America's Best Contacts & Eyeglasses	\$172	75	▼	▼	▲	▲	▲	75	34
39	GlassesUSA.com	\$138	74	▲	▲	▼	—	—	82	28

HOW WE SURVEY: Ratings are based on a 2016 survey of 91,419 subscribers. Price reflects the median out-of-pocket cost for prescription

eyeglasses without insurance coverage. Reader Score represents shoppers' overall satisfaction with retailers. A score of 100 means all

respondents are completely satisfied; 80, "very satisfied" on average; 60, "fairly well satisfied." Differences of less than 5 points are not meaningful.

The next five attributes reflect average scores on a scale from "very poor" to "excellent." Dashes indicate insufficient sample size.

Insights

Notable news and smart solutions

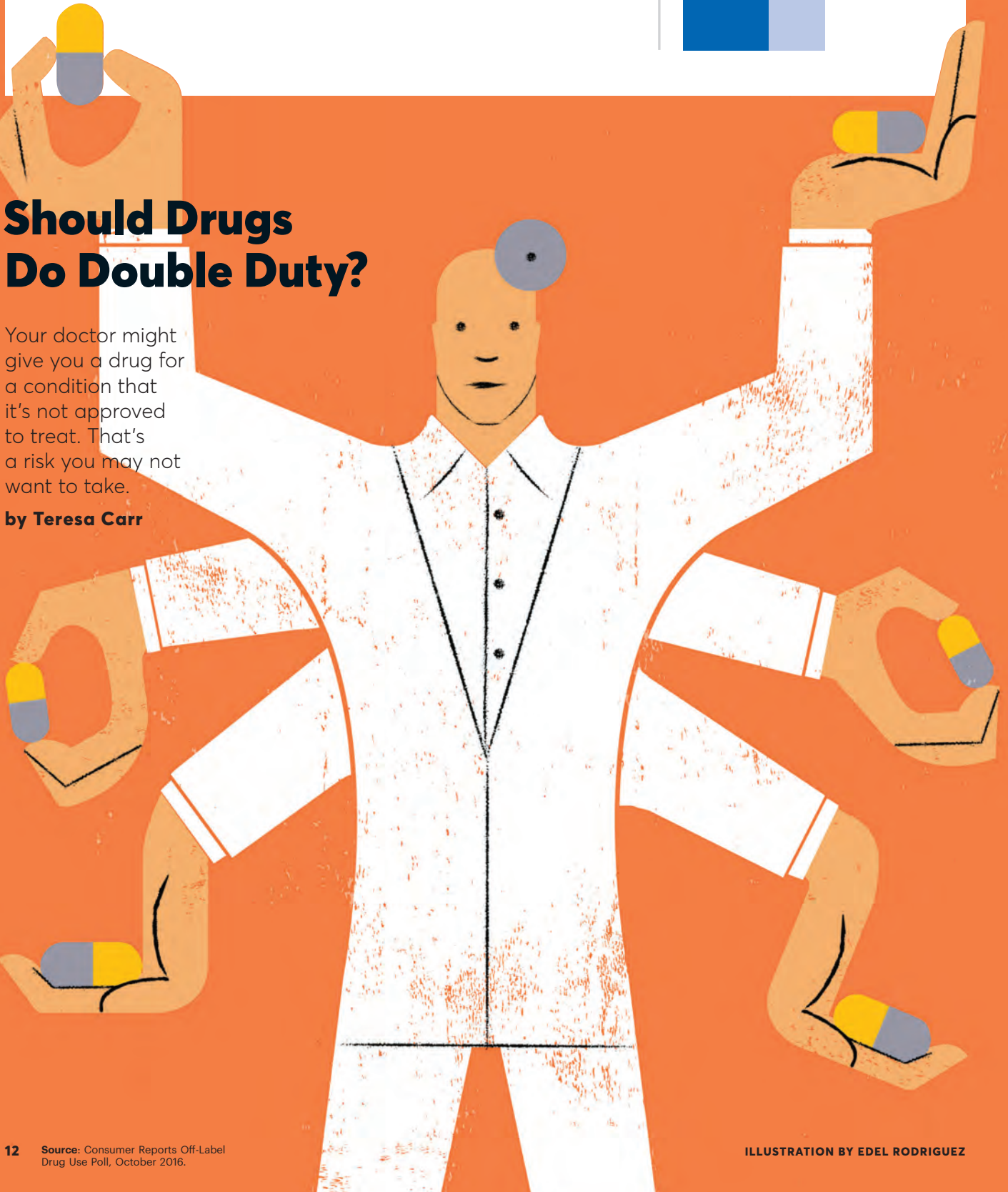
PERCENTAGE OF AMERICANS WHO SAY THE FDA SHOULDN'T ALLOW DRUG ADS FOR UNAPPROVED USES

84%

Should Drugs Do Double Duty?

Your doctor might give you a drug for a condition that it's not approved to treat. That's a risk you may not want to take.

by **Teresa Carr**



NERVOUS ABOUT giving a big presentation? Your doctor might prescribe a blood pressure drug like generic propranolol to calm you. Can't sleep? You might leave the doctor's office with a prescription for generic trazodone, an antidepressant often used for insomnia. But neither drug is approved by the Food and Drug Administration to solve these problems.

Doctors routinely (and legally) prescribe drugs "off label"—that is, for conditions not approved by the FDA—for any use they see fit. Most don't tell their patients.

The results of this practice are alarming. A recent analysis in the journal *JAMA Internal Medicine* revealed that more than 80 percent of off-label prescribing by doctors lacked strong scientific evidence. And patients were 54 percent more likely to experience some kind of harm as a result, compared with those taking the same drug for an approved use.

"Surprisingly, many doctors may not even realize a drug is not approved for the condition they're prescribing it for," says Lisa McGiffert, director of Consumer Reports' Safe Patient Project. "It's no wonder so many people are harmed."

Drug companies have been forbidden to promote drugs to consumers (and doctors) for non-FDA-approved uses since 1962. That's when Congress strengthened the agency's regulatory power after the thalidomide tragedy, when samples of the unapproved drug were given to pregnant women in the U.S. to treat morning sickness—leading to birth defects.

But FDA rules prohibiting advertising on TV, in magazines, and elsewhere for unapproved, off-label uses could soon change. Last November the agency held a two-day hearing to gather input on whether to give drug and medical-device companies more leeway in promoting off-label use of their products. It was prompted by two recent federal district

court rulings that found truthful promoting of off-label use to be a form of protected free speech.

The pharmaceutical industry is lobbying to lift the off-label marketing ban. But a new nationally representative survey of 1,011 adults by Consumer Reports found that 84 percent of people don't want drug companies to be allowed to advertise drugs for a use that hasn't been approved by the FDA.

"Relaxing the current rules would dismantle a legal firewall that has protected Americans from false and misleading drug advertising for more than half a century," McGiffert says. "The consequences could be deadly."

Why Doctors Prescribe Medications Off-Label

One in five prescriptions is written for off-label use, according to a 2006 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. "In some cases, that off-label prescribing makes sense," says Gordon Schiff, M.D., associate director at the Center for Patient Safety Research and Practice at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

On occasion, a new use for a drug may be supported by good evidence even though the drug hasn't been approved yet for that use, Schiff explains. For example, a recent review by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality found strong evidence that using the antiseizure drug topiramate was helpful in treating alcohol dependence. And the antidepressant amitriptyline is recognized by the American College of Rheumatology as a useful therapy for fibromyalgia. Neither drug has been approved by the FDA for those uses.

Or for practical reasons, a drug may be given off-label to children, pregnant women, or the elderly even though its effectiveness hasn't been studied in those groups.

Ultimately, though, "you have to be cautious," Schiff says. "Unapproved uses are typically

DRUGS THAT ARE OFTEN PRESCRIBED OFF-LABEL

Only 6 percent of Americans say they were told that a drug they were prescribed was for a use not approved by the FDA. But research shows that one of every five prescriptions is written that way.

● FOR AN FDA-APPROVED CONDITION ● FOR OFF-LABEL USE

KLONOPIN

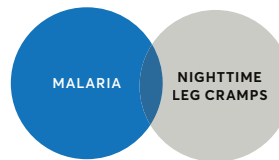
clonazepam



- ▶ There's insufficient evidence that it's effective for RLS or insomnia.
- ▶ Poses a risk of birth defects during pregnancy and to breast-feeding babies.
- ▶ Poses addiction risk.

QUALAQUIN

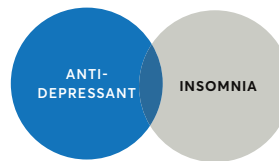
quinine sulfate



- ▶ Not found to relieve nighttime leg cramps.
- ▶ Poses a risk of severe kidney injury and organ damage. The FDA has issued "black box" warnings about using it for night leg cramps.

TRAZODONE

generic only



- ▶ Studies show it aids sleep for those with depression. But a black box warning says it increases suicidal thinking in children, teens, and young adults.

not as well-studied and may not bring hoped-for benefits, or may increase the risk of adverse effects."

Take the use of powerful antipsychotic drugs like aripiprazole (Abilify) and quetiapine (Seroquel). Both are approved to treat schizophrenia but may be given off-label to people in nursing homes who suffer from dementia as a way to control agitation. Analysis from the FDA shows this off-label use ups the risk of death, most often from heart failure or an infection like pneumonia. The agency has repeatedly warned doctors about this practice. But there's no universal mechanism to stop the prescribing of any drug for any use.

What's in It for Drug Companies

Drug manufacturers and industry groups argue that easing the rules will allow them to communicate research findings about off-label drug use without going through the sometimes lengthy and expensive process of an FDA review.

"As the U.S. healthcare system evolves to become increasingly focused on value, patients, payers, and providers seek more science-based safety, effectiveness, and economic information about existing and emerging treatments for patients," says Stephen J. Ubl, president and CEO of Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, an industry group. "The market for medicines is changing rapidly," he adds, and "the FDA's current federal regulations have not kept up."

But Nitin Damle, M.D., president of the American College of Physicians, argues that healthcare professionals don't need more information from the pharmaceutical industry. He says they already have access to reliable, nonpromotional sources of information on new research, such as peer-reviewed medical journals. And allowing drug

Continued on page 14

companies to distribute off-label marketing materials to doctors or patients isn't helpful because it's likely to be biased. "Their ultimate aim is not to inform patients and providers," Damle says. "It's to sell products."

Consumers want the FDA involved. In our survey, more than three quarters of respondents said it was "extremely" or "very" important that the FDA fully vet the safety and effectiveness of medication for a particular use. A majority (83 percent) also said that when it comes to drug ads, it was "highly important" to know how well a medication could be expected to work; 86 percent said it was "highly important" they were told of a medication's possible side effects or other risks.

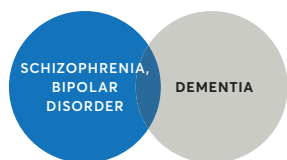
Ads targeting consumers about benefits and risks can be particularly misleading. "They may overstate benefits, downplay risks, or omit information on other options," Damle says.

In fact, the AMA and other medical and consumer organizations (including Consumers Union) have called for a ban on all forms of direct-to-consumer advertising, including those for FDA-approved and off-label drug treatments.

When Off-Label Promotions Are Illegal

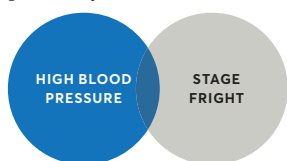
One reason drug companies may want more freedom to market or advertise drugs for unapproved uses is to eliminate financial penalties for off-label promotions. Take Johnson & Johnson, for example. In 2013 it agreed to pay more than \$2.2 billion in criminal and civil fines to resolve charges that it illegally promoted several drugs, including the antipsychotic drug risperidone (Risperdal), approved for use by people with schizophrenia. It was also marketed to doctors for off-label use for older adults with dementia, children, and

SEROQUEL *quetiapine*



- Studies show it offers little help controlling agitation in elderly people with dementia.
- There's strong evidence that it increases the risk of death for them.
- The FDA has issued black box warnings about its use by people with dementia.

PROPRANOLOL *generic only*



- It helps maintain a steady heartbeat to blunt anxiety, but there's no strong evidence that it combats stage fright.
- People report feeling less nervous physically (no racing heart, dry mouth, etc.), but it doesn't stop fearful thoughts.

people with developmental disabilities. (No federal or medical agency routinely checks promotional claims before they appear.) Federal officials said the company knew the drug posed greater risks for those people, such as an increased risk of strokes in older adults.

In 2012 the drug company GlaxoSmithKline paid a record \$3 billion and pleaded guilty to promoting the antidepressant paroxetine (Paxil) off-label to treat depression in children and adolescents, an unapproved use. The drug failed to demonstrate efficacy in patients under age 18 and was linked to dangerous side effects, including an increased risk of suicidal thoughts and behavior.

"If you can market a drug off-label for a condition, then why spend all the time and money on testing required to earn FDA approval for that use?" asks Joshua Sharfstein, M.D., an associate dean at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health and a former principal deputy commissioner of the FDA.

Sharfstein also worries that relaxing restrictions on off-label drug advertising will

discourage rigorous research: "Ultimately, that will undermine everyone's access to safe, effective healthcare."

How You Can Make a Difference

When considering new medication, ask your doctor whether it's been approved for your condition, suggests Consumer Reports' medical director, Orly Avitzur, M.D. "If not, ask why he or she recommends it."

Here are some other tips:

- Go to the National Institute of Health's DailyMed website (dailymed.nlm.nih.gov), search for the drug, then click "Indications & Usage" to see whether your condition is listed.

- If it's an off-label use, ask whether good research supports using it for your condition.
- Find out whether your health insurer covers payment for off-label use. Some may require evidence of effectiveness or failure with conventional treatments, especially if the drug is expensive.

"Always make sure someone has thoroughly explained the risks and benefits of a medication to you, as well as other options," Avitzur says.



SPEAK UP IN DEFENSE OF YOUR SAFETY

LAST NOVEMBER, in a bid to urge the Food and Drug Administration to maintain its restrictions on off-label advertising, Doris Peter, Ph.D., director of the Health Ratings Center at Consumer Reports, shared the results of our survey of more than 1,000 U.S. adults. It revealed that most respondents didn't want drug companies to advertise medications for off-label uses.

In addition, through our Safe Patient Project, CR included the testimony of three consumers whose family members had suffered severe or permanent injury or

death as a result of off-label prescriptions.

Want your opinion to be heard on the practice of off-label prescribing and the relaxing of rules for advertising these drugs? Tell the FDA that lifting the ban on drug ads for treatments that haven't been tested and approved by regulators could expose consumers to risky, ineffective, or unsafe treatments.

Go to ConsumersUnion.org/unsafe drug marketing to sign our petition, and we will deliver it to the FDA in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 9, 2017.



My home insurer is offering identity-theft coverage. Is it worth buying?

Certain insurance companies, including major insurers such as Allstate, Liberty Mutual, State Farm, and Travelers, offer identity-theft coverage through an add-on “rider” or “endorsement” to homeowners or renters policies, says money editor Jeff Blyskal. Most coverage, which tends to cost between \$25 and \$50 per year, won’t prevent or even alert you to identity theft but will reimburse you for losses or expenses (up to \$25,000 in most cases) that you may incur as a result of the crime. That might sound good, but banks and credit card companies already cover most or all losses due to fraud. According to the Department of Justice’s

statistics, 88 percent of identity-fraud victims suffered no out-of-pocket loss in 2014, the latest year for which data are available. Of those who did lose money, the median loss was \$70. The dollar amount is so low in part because of the aforementioned bank and credit card company coverage.

Insurance company coverage usually includes assistance in straightening out the aftermath of identity theft (canceling unauthorized accounts and so forth), which is generally easy when the fraud involves credit cards—the most common type—but can be more time-consuming for accounts at banks and other institutions. The assistance can vary from simple advice to a dedicated case manager who will make the calls on your behalf.

If you purchase protection, make sure you know what it provides. For tips to prevent crooks from getting your information in the first place, go to CR.org/privacytuneup.

I thought doctors weren’t supposed to dole out antibiotics for viruses? Mine just prescribed one for my chest cold.

Doctors prescribe tons of antibiotics for respiratory infections such as colds, sinusitis, and bronchitis every year, though studies indicate that half the time those drugs aren’t needed, says Marvin M. Lipman, M.D., CR’s chief medical adviser. “Most of those infections are caused by viruses, against which antibiotics have no effect,” he says. “Antibiotics fight only infections caused by bacteria.” In addition to being inappropriate and ineffective, such overprescribing has encouraged the emergence of superbugs, strains of bacteria such as MRSA (methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus) that are resistant to several antibiotics. That’s why Consumers Union, CR’s policy and mobilization arm, has made opposing antibiotic overuse a priority.

That said, there are cases in which your doctor may believe that you have a bacterial infection, and that may well be the case for you. Don’t hesitate to ask him or her to

clarify. It is appropriate to consider antibiotics if a cough persists longer than 14 days or for a sore throat caused by strep, Lipman says. If you have a simple viral respiratory infection, inhale steam and keep yourself hydrated to loosen up secretions. Gargling with salt water can soothe the pain of a sore throat, and acetaminophen (Tylenol or generic) or ibuprofen (Advil or generic) can quell aches.

How long should a vacuum last? Mine died after only two years!

According to our recent reliability survey, vacuums last a median of eight years, though that number varies widely by brand. “Before you toss your vacuum, make sure the problem isn’t a broken belt or something else simple you can fix,” says Dave Trezza, CR senior test project leader. If you need a new upright vacuum, consider a Shark or Kirby, which are among the more reliable brands. Miele and Panasonic are among the less trouble-prone canister vacs. Whether your vac is new or old, follow Dave’s tips make it last longer: 1. Don’t let the bag or bin get filled to the brim, which can clog the machine. 2. Clean or replace the filter whenever it’s dirty. 3. Every few weeks, clear the motorized brush of tangled hair, string, and other fibers, which can stress the motor. 4. Check the hose for clogs occasionally.



LEARN

We have more than 140 in-house experts who research, test, and compare! Send your questions to: CR.org/askourexperts ... and watch for the answers.

Secrets to a **Great Night's**



You spend a third of your life in bed, so why settle for a mattress that leaves you cranky or in pain? We test and rate 74 mattresses in the ways that matter most. Plus, discover what's best for people in pain, how to pick the perfect pillow, and warnings you need to heed about over-the-counter sleep aids.

by Mary H.J. Farrell



O sleep! O gentle sleep! ...

The promise of a sound and peaceful rest has inspired people to wax poetic for centuries. The trouble is, assembling the dreamiest combination of mattress and pillow is something closer to a nightmare for a lot of consumers. And there are plenty of reasons why.

For starters, if you want to replace your old mattress with the same brand—as 1 in 5 respondents to our new survey of nearly 62,000 Consumer Reports subscribers has done—you probably won't be able to get the same model. That's because manufacturers regularly discontinue or rename their products. Names and claims on mattresses range from the ethereal to the incomprehensible. Salespeople invariably hint at nocturnal disappointment unless you buy the priciest pick in the place. And trying to approximate the intimacy of sleep by lying down on a mattress in a fluorescent-lit public space can be awkward at best.

On the plus side, mattress makers are experimenting with new methods of construction, rearranging the layers of foam as well as the placement of coils in innerspring models in a bid to improve comfort. Meanwhile, savvy online retailers are trying to improve the shopping experience by removing the store from the equation altogether. And they're doing a good job: The highest satisfaction scores from our survey went to two of the newer mattress brands in America—online outfits Casper and Tuft & Needle. They'll ship a foam bed-in-a-box to your front door for a very competitive price. As for performance, Casper took the top overall score among foam models.

Innersprings, however, are still the most common type of mattress sold, although that seems ripe for consumer reconsideration. In our survey, 65 percent of respondents said they were highly satisfied with innersprings, vs. 75 percent of memory foam owners and 80 percent of adjustable air owners. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, memory foam mattresses are growing in popularity. And adjustable air mattresses, such as those sold at Sleep Number stores, rate very well in both our mattress tests and reader survey, especially among those who report neck pain, back pain, sleep apnea, and other health problems.

Whether you already have an idea of what you want or are starting from scratch, we think you should give your mattress choice at least as much consideration as a new car. True, it's only a fraction of the price, but you spend nearly a third of your life in a prone position, so making the wrong

choice has consequences. "If your mattress is uncomfortable, it could disturb your sleep, exacerbate orthopedic problems, or possibly have a negative impact on your long-term health," says Michael H. Bonnet, Ph.D., a neurology professor and sleep expert at the Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine.

That's why we put every model we purchase through rigorous tests utilizing actual people as well as use sophisticated equipment to measure support and firmness. These machines pummel and abuse the mattresses to gauge how they'll hold up over time. Then we tear them apart to expose what's inside—springs, layers of foam, gel-infused foam—to determine which materials improve performance. This year, we've introduced some methodology improvements, including a way to matchmake a mattress for you and your honey (see "Odd Couples Can Find Happiness, Too," on page 26).

Here, seven steps to shopping for, choosing, and buying a mattress you'll love, and that loves you back:

STEP 1 Learn Lessons From Your Old Bed

Do you twist and turn and grit your teeth trying to find your mattress' sweet spot? Do you wake up feeling drained or achy? Do you find that, curiously, you sleep better in a hotel? If not, you will eventually. "Younger people can sleep just fine on almost any surface, including a piece of plywood," says Bonnet. "We all become lighter sleepers as we age, and pain and other medical problems make this worse."

There's no set rule for when to replace a mattress—we test them to approximate 8 to 10 years of use—but there are some telltale signs that you should. Some you can plainly see, such as rips, divots, or stains (your old dog is sleeping with you, isn't he?). Others you can feel, for example if your hips and shoulders now sink deeply into the mattress. Still other signs you can't see at all: Your mattress and bedding provide an ideal environment for dust mites that can trigger allergies or even asthma. So if you wake up sniffing every morning, your mattress may be to blame.

You can use other observations to guide your choice in something new. If you feel lumps or sharp points, that could indicate damage to the inside of your mattress, so look for a model with a high durability score in our ratings. If you and your partner wake each other up while tossing and turning, look for a high stabilization rating.

STEP 2 Master the Mattress Store

If it seems like mattress showrooms are on every block these days, that's because they are. There are more than 12,000 bed and specialty mattress stores nationwide, and the number is growing. If you can't find something you like at Mattress Firm, you can wander next door to Sleepy's (which, by the way, is now owned by Mattress Firm).

Not that having more choice helps, given how fruitless it

Rest for Success

The longer you lie on a mattress in a store before you buy, the more satisfied you'll be with your purchase, our reader survey shows.



is to compare a mattress sold at one store with one sold at another. A “Blissful Featherweight” here may be nothing like the “Delightful Featherlite” there. And because manufacturers’ descriptions of firmness are so fanciful and sometimes fact-free, we suggest ignoring them altogether and instead checking the ratings in our charts. Firmness is now presented on a handy scale from 1 to 10; see pages 27 to 29.

As awkward as it can be, we stand by our longtime advice to try before you buy—meaning, kick off your shoes and lie down on a prospective pick for at least 15 minutes in the position you usually sleep in. In our survey, nearly 20,000 readers bought a mattress in the last three years. Among those who tried it out in the store, the more time they spent testing it before buying, the higher their satisfaction: 77 percent of respondents who spent more than 15 minutes were especially happy with their purchase. Fewer than 1 in 5 people actually do that, our survey shows, though 28 percent do lie down for a few minutes.

If you want to minimize some of the weirdness of publicly test-driving a mattress, consider visiting one of the more well-regarded mattress or furniture specialty stores in our survey. The Original Mattress Factory was the top-rated store, followed by several regional chains, including Nebraska Furniture Mart, Havertys, Jordan’s Furniture, and Bob’s Discount Furniture.

Macy’s, a traditional department store, received only middling scores for price and selection. Costco—where you can’t try a mattress in the store because they’re standing

upright—got a top mark for price but fared poorly on selection. That might be just fine, given that the warehouse club makes one of our top-rated mattresses, the Novaform 14” Serafina Pearl Gel. And it may be a sign of where the market is heading that 57 percent of readers who bought a mattress from Costco did so online.

STEP 3 Consider Buying Online

For those who want the ultimate convenience of buying online and skipping retail stores altogether, there are more options than ever before. Startups like Casper and Tuft & Needle are getting a lot of attention for their high-performing bed-in-a-box foam mattresses, but the fact is that you can buy almost any mattress online, innersprings included.

It might seem risky to buy a mattress without trying it, but consider that Amazon, which sells all types of mattresses, topped our retailer ratings among all sellers. It’s excellent on price as well as on-time delivery. The limitation is that should you want to try a mattress in a store before purchasing it online—a practice known as showrooming—you wouldn’t be able to. That’s because you won’t find the mattress you tried at, say, Ethan Allen on Amazon because it’s exclusive to that store.

You can try the mattress in the flesh but then buy it virtually, although you might need to stick to that retailer’s website.

If you have no qualms about buying a mattress sight unseen, try a bed-in-a-box. The foam mattresses are compressed, packed into a box less than 4 feet tall, and delivered

What’s Best for Neck and Back Pain

Mattress strategies to ease your body aches

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM has been that a firmer mattress is best for neck and back pain. In fact, people in acute pain find that lying on the floor can give them some relief. According to our 2016 survey of almost 62,000 subscribers, people with arthritis, back pain, and neck pain were happiest when they slept on an adjustable air mattress like a Sleep Number, which lets users precisely control the firmness.

According to Joel Press, M.D., physiatrist-in-chief at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York, that preference may be because people in pain

benefit from being able to adjust a mattress to match the level and type of pain they are experiencing on any given night. Jeffrey Goldstein, M.D., chief of spine service—education at NYU Langone’s Spine Center, says that a customizable mattress might let patients arrive by trial-and-error to the level of firmness that works best.

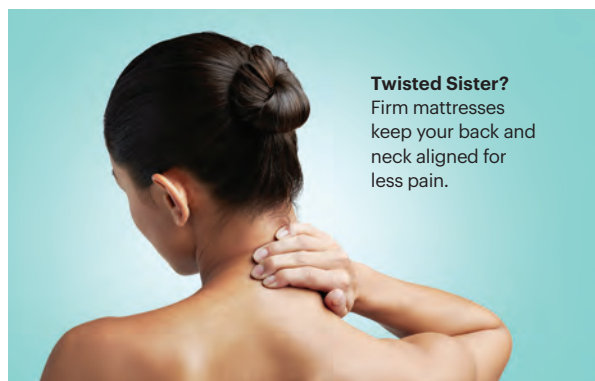
Though both doctors emphasized that no one mattress is guaranteed to soothe an aching spine, their general advice is indeed to opt for a firmer mattress, or to adjust your mattress to a firmer setting. Research supports that approach.

Another benefit is that a firmer mattress gives you instant feedback, says Press, so you will register exactly where your pain points are and make adjustments. Keep in mind that a mattress that’s more than 10 years old generally can’t offer sufficient support.

A firmer mattress also helps

keep your body aligned, something your pillow can help with, too. Your neck should not be bent or twisted: It should form a straight line with your spine. “You wouldn’t walk around all day with your neck at a 45-degree angle,” Press says, so you probably don’t want to sleep that way, either.

—Lauren F. Friedman



Twisted Sister?

Firm mattresses keep your back and neck aligned for less pain.

to your doorstep by UPS or FedEx. These foam mattresses can be heavy—100 pounds or more for a queen-size—so you may need a friend to help you move it to an upstairs bedroom. Once you get it there, carefully slice open the packaging to let the mattress return to its original shape; it's actually fun to watch.

When buying a mattress online, don't assume you can't haggle—you can, and you may actually do better because you can maintain a true poker face when you're virtual. Open the chat window, and when the customer-service rep responds, start the bidding.

STEP 4 Never Pay Full Price

You'll see mattress sales in the run-up to most holiday weekends, but you don't have to wait for an official sale to get the best price. Mattresses have a huge markup, so don't be afraid to negotiate with gusto. More than half of the readers in our survey paid \$500 to \$1,750 for a mattress; those shoppers who haggled saved a median of \$205. Hagglers were most successful at the mattress specialty stores Mattress Firm, Mattress Warehouse, Mattress King, Sleep Train, and Sleepy's. And shoppers often walked away with something free, such as a mattress protector or bed frame.

Start by asking for a price that's 50 percent off the list price, and ask for free delivery and haul-away, to boot. If that doesn't work, then try one of these questions:

1. What's the lowest price this mattress has sold for?
2. Can I have a price guarantee? If the mattress goes on sale within, say, 30 days, will you refund the difference?
3. Will you give me a discount if I pay cash? (This allows the merchant to avoid paying credit card fees.)

If you get a no to any of these, you can just say goodbye and walk out the door. After all, there's another mattress store right down the block.

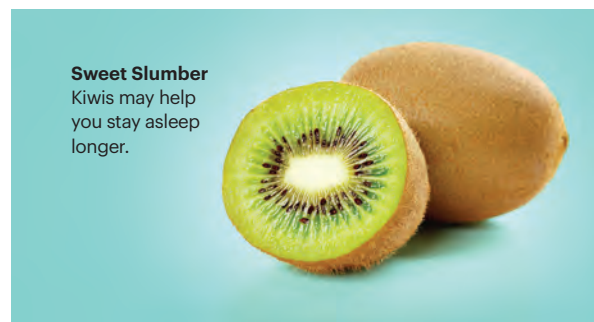
STEP 5 Make Good Use of the Trial Period

When your new mattress arrives, prepare to be patient. Bear in mind that your old mattress is familiar to you, flaws and all. Mattress sellers typically offer anywhere from three weeks to three months for you to try out your purchase. Others offer what they call a comfort guarantee. So before you buy, study the small print for the trial-period terms and ask whether and how you can return the mattress if you discover you don't like it.

Give yourself at least two weeks to make up your mind. During that time, focus on the mattress and not your bedding—you want to limit the number of variables. "Stick with the same pillow for a while, so you can tell better whether it's the mattress or the pillow that may be disturbing your sleep," says Steven Scharf, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Sleep Disorders Center at the University of Maryland

Can You Snack Your Way to Sounder Sleep?

Some surprising late-night snacks are showing promise in helping insomniacs



WARM MILK HAS long been considered the ultimate sleep inducer (a cookie chaser notwithstanding), but research has yet to bear that out. A recent review of studies on diet and sleep in the journal *Advances in Nutrition* suggests that a few other foods may actually be more effective—notably kiwi fruit, malted milk, and tart cherry juice. The studies were small, and it's far too early for definitive conclusions, says the review's lead author, Marie-Pierre St-Onge, Ph.D., an associate professor of nutritional medicine at Columbia University's department of medicine. But findings to date hint at some benefits.

Eating two kiwis one hour before bedtime was found to help adults with self-reported insomnia fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer. In two other studies, people (especially older adults) who had 1 to 1½ cups of warm Horlicks malted milk beverage—a concoction of dairy, malted barley, and wheat flour sold in powdered form online—30 minutes before bedtime were less restless during sleep. Additionally, drinking 1 cup of tart cherry juice in the morning and at night quelled insomnia and

reduced midnight awakenings in two small studies, one with healthy adults and another with people with chronic insomnia.

How or why might those foods work? None of the studies investigated the mechanisms, but in her review St-Onge notes that cherries and kiwis have antioxidants that may protect against cell damage and inflammation, characteristics often found in people with sleep disorders. The melatonin in cherries and the serotonin in kiwis may improve sleep. What's more, kiwis are rich in folate, a vitamin that helps synthesize brain chemicals involved in sleep, such as dopamine and serotonin. Deficiencies in folate have been linked to insomnia and restless leg syndrome. As for Horlicks milk, it contains B and D vitamins; deficiencies in those vitamins have been linked to sleep disruptions.

Even though the findings are not definitive, St-Onge says there's no harm in giving any one of these dietary remedies a try. They easily fit into a healthy diet and, in fact, are a much safer choice than prescription and over-the-counter sleep aids or supplements (see pages 24 and 25).

—Julia Calderone

School of Medicine. On the other hand, if you didn't buy a new box spring or frame for your new mattress, which some manufacturers recommend, you may not be giving it a fair shake.

To increase your odds of getting a good night's sleep on your new mattress, power down your gadgets 2 hours before you turn in and avoid eating a heavy dinner right before bedtime. Then, an hour before you hit the sack, dim the lights, read a physical book, listen to music, or otherwise relax.

STEP 6 Have Many Happy Returns

Make sure you know in advance what the store's return policies are before you buy a new mattress. Some retailers charge various fees, restocking and otherwise. Mattress Firm advertises a 120-night Sleep Happy Guarantee and charges a \$149 fee for an exchange or return. At the other end of the spectrum is the Original Mattress Factory, which accepts no returns or exchanges on upholstered bedding products. And that's why it's prudent to keep your old mattress during your trial period, as inconvenient as that can be.

Returning a bed-in-a-box is another matter. For starters, it's not realistic to think you can wrestle the bed back into the box. That's why these retailers have developed a variety of ways for consumers to return mattresses, usually free of charge and with a full refund within 100 days.

Then there's the matter of getting rid of an old mattress. At least 20 million mattresses and box springs are thrown away each year—and one queen-size mattress can take up to 40 cubic feet in a landfill. That's a shame given that 80 percent of the components in a mattress can be recycled. Some municipalities have restrictions on donating or reselling used mattresses, however, so check with your town.

STEP 7 Make Your Mattress Last

With innersprings, our recommended cleaning routine has always been to flip and rotate them twice a year and to clean them at the same time. But many of today's mattresses, such as pillowtops, can't be flipped because they have a dedicated top and bottom. Still, you'll want to clean all mattresses twice a year.

To do that, strip the bed to vacuum the fabric covering of the entire mattress with an upholstery attachment and spot clean any stains with an enzyme-based detergent or a mild dish detergent and water. Once the spots dry, sprinkle baking soda over the entire mattress and leave it for 24 hours. Then remove the baking soda with the vacuum. And of course replace with nice clean bedding.

Adding a mattress protector and a mattress pad will protect the mattress and extend its life, promoting many more restful nights of sleep.



Pillow Talk

We decode pillow packaging so that you can decide which filler material is best for you.

SQUEEZING A PLASTIC-WRAPPED pillow in the store for a few seconds is not a scientific method. Some sleep experts go so far as to say you need to sleep on a pillow for a week to know whether it's right for you. That's because a poorly chosen pillow can have a negative effect on neck pain, says Joel Press, M.D., physiatrist-in-chief at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City.

It's the rare retailer that will stick you with an unsuitable choice, but return policies do vary widely, so be sure to check before you buy. You can narrow your choices by looking for a pillow designed for your sleep position; some now come with clearly marked labels for side sleepers, back sleepers, and stomach sleepers. What's inside counts for a lot, too, so here's a guide to the choices in materials:

Down and Feather Pillows

The fill power of a down pillow is the measure of the amount of space that an ounce of down occupies. The higher the number, the longer the pillow retains its firmness. Down, which is made from the fluffy undercoat of ducks or geese, usually makes for a soft pillow that flattens easily. This is happy news for stomach sleepers, who like their pillows to melt into the mattress. Feathers are a different breed because the intact quill creates a firmer pillow. The trade-off—depending on the quality of the encasing fabric—is that those quills can push through and poke you.

How to clean. It's best to hand-wash down and feather pillows. Fill a basin with warm water and add a small amount of powder detergent or a product designed to clean down. Submerge the pillow completely and knead gently. Drain the basin and press



Dream Weaver
The right pillow complements a good mattress choice.

on the pillow to expel the water before rolling it in a dry towel. Then put the pillow in your washer and run the slowest possible spin cycle to gently extract water before drying. Use the no-heat air-dry setting of your dryer (it can take hours for the interior to thoroughly dry) and toss in a couple of clean tennis balls to break up clumps.

Down Alternative

These soft and pliable pillows are filled with polyester microfibers meant to feel as soft as down without causing a reaction in people allergic to nature's version. Firmness and loft—the pillow's height as it lies flat on the bed—vary by brand. If you sleep on your back, choose a down alternative pillow with medium firmness and loft. Stomach sleepers may want a less firm version.

How to clean. Follow our instructions for natural down.

Memory Foam

Most memory foam pillows are made of polyurethane foam that conforms to the shape of your head when you are lying on it. The material is slow to bounce back,

so these pillows maintain their loft well and are very supportive. Foam pillows tend to be pretty flat and blocky, unless they have a contour molded into them, because they're formed by machines. To determine firmness, check the weight: Firmer pillows are usually heavier. Bear in mind that some people complain that memory foam pillows trap heat, so if you love a cool pillow, this option might not be for you. Foam pillows are good for side sleepers because they maintain the proper alignment or curve of the neck, keeping the head about 4 inches off the mattress.

How to clean. Foam pillows, including latex, shouldn't be washed or steamed because they are very difficult to dry thoroughly. The best bet is to dab at any stains with a damp cloth and a mild detergent. And use a cover to extend the pillow's life.

Latex Foam

Soft yet supportive, this natural rubber product is the most like memory foam, minus the heat-retention complaints. It's also antimicrobial and mildewproof. Latex can have a rubbery odor at first.

Despite being on the heavy side, firmness and loft can vary. It's not a good choice for anyone allergic to latex, obviously. Pillows made of this material work well for both back and side sleepers.

How to clean. Follow our instructions for memory foam.

Polyester

These pillows with hypoallergenic fibers come in a range of heights and densities, but they tend toward the softer side. They often flatten or develop hollow spots, though you can easily fluff one up by hand or by tossing it into a dryer and running it on no-heat. They're a good choice for stomach sleepers who like to smush their pillows.

How to clean. Wash with warm water on the gentle cycle, preferably a few at a time to balance the load. Be sparing with the detergent—use about 1 tablespoon. Machine dry on the low-heat setting with dryer balls or clean tennis balls to fluff the pillows back up.

Buckwheat Hulls

Pillows stuffed with buckwheat hulls are supportive and firm, tend to be heavy, and retain their loft well. The hulls shift

when you move, and some users complain that they are noisy; others say they trigger allergies. They're a good choice if you're a sleeper who shifts between your back and side, because you can easily create low and high spots to suit your position.

How to clean. Open the pillow casing and empty the buckwheat filling onto a large cookie sheet or into a wide, shallow bowl. Set the buckwheat out in the sun, which will eliminate odors, and wash the pillow cover using cold water and a mild detergent.

Multiple Materials

Some pillows contain a combination of materials, such as memory foam or latex, plus shredded foam, and a gel insert. The best pillows for quick re-fluffing are filled with foam or a combination of fiber and foam. They're another good choice for combination sleepers who like high and low spots in their pillow.

How to clean. Much depends on the materials, so check the manufacturer's instructions.
—Celia Kuperszmid Lehrman

Can You Get Hooked on OTC Sleep Aids?

Too many people with insomnia take over-the-counter products daily. Here, the facts about the risks.



Dazed and Confused
Sleep aids can result in next-day drowsiness.

IN YOUR SEARCH for a good night's sleep, you might think the easy solution is to reach for one of those sleep drugs on store shelves—Advil PM, Nytol, Simply Sleep, Sominex, Tylenol PM, Unisom SleepMinis, or perhaps the popular ZzzQuil, from the makers of NyQuil. These drugs contain diphenhydramine, a decades-old antihistamine often used as a remedy for seasonal allergies. It works by blocking the histamine receptors in your brain that also control wakefulness—so drowsiness is a side effect for some people. Over-the-counter sleep aids that contain this drug (as well as doxylamine) might help you get to sleep. And what's more, their packaging suggests that they are "non-habit-forming."

Side Effects to Take Seriously

The Food and Drug Administration requires instructions on OTC sleep med packages to tell consumers to see their doctor if insomnia persists for more than two weeks. But a 2015 Consumer Reports national survey of

4,023 adults found a troubling trend: Of the 20 percent who took an OTC medication within the past year to improve sleep, almost 1 in 5 respondents, or 18 percent, said they took it on a daily basis. Most concerning: 41 percent told us they used the drugs for a year or longer.

That's a problem because diphenhydramine can cause constipation, confusion, dizziness, and next-day drowsiness, according to the drug's FDA labeling. Another concern is the "hangover effect"—impaired balance, coordination, and driving performance the day after you've taken the drug, heightening the risk for falls and accidents. And in a January 2015 study in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, the frequent, long-term use of first-generation antihistamines, including diphenhydramine, was linked to an increased risk of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease.

The Meaning of 'Habit-Forming'

Diphenhydramine can create a psychological dependence,

says Carl W. Bazil, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Epilepsy and Sleep Division at Columbia University's Department of Neurology. "The pills are not 'addictive' in the physical sense," he says, "but there can certainly be a risk for a psychological dependency."

That was the case for Jerry Bell, 43, of Atlanta. For more than a decade, he relied almost nightly on diphenhydramine—and he struggled to get to sleep without the pills. "If I didn't take them, it became a very desperate situation," Bell says. In fact, sometimes he took additional pills when the initial dose didn't work right away. (That's a bad idea because it can increase side effects such as next-day drowsiness.)

Drug manufacturers are able to use the non-habit-forming claim because the FDA permits that term on products containing diphenhydramine or doxylamine. The drugs were used as antihistamines prior to the 1962 passage of an amendment to the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act that required a drug to be evaluated for safety, quality, and effectiveness before being marketed. At the time of their approval as OTC sleep aids, there wasn't enough evidence to show that the drugs caused dependence, so the term remains even now on packages of OTC sleep aids.

In fact, an FDA spokesperson told us that "if a consumer uses an OTC sleep aid for two weeks or less at the labeled OTC dose, it is very unlikely that the consumer will become dependent on it."

We asked the FDA for specific studies to support the non-habit-forming claim; the agency did not send information we requested.

Indeed, case reports and surveys have linked

diphenhydramine to recreational abuse and dependence. And a 2008 study on rats found that diphenhydramine might be habit-forming: The study concludes that the drug enhanced the release of dopamine in the brain—resulting in a sensation similar to that produced by cocaine.

What to Try Instead

Should sleep problems persist beyond 14 days, it's time to see your doctor. Insomnia can be due to an underlying condition, such as heartburn, depression, or heart disease. When Jerry Bell finally did go to a doctor in spring 2015, he was diagnosed with anxiety disorder. He learned relaxation techniques and cut out caffeine completely. He is no longer taking any drug to help him sleep.

For those whose chronic insomnia is not so easily fixed, a new analysis by Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs recommends cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) instead of any sleeping pills as a first-choice treatment. With CBT, you work with a licensed sleep therapist, learning about habits or attitudes that may compromise your sleep. CBT also uses techniques like journaling to help you feel more optimistic about sleep. Studies suggest that CBT helps 70 to 80 percent of people with chronic insomnia, and effects are long-lasting, with few—if any—downsides.

If you still decide to take insomnia drugs, do so for only a few days at a time, at the lowest recommended dose. Never drink alcohol while taking them, and don't take an extra pill to get back to sleep—doing either can worsen the drug's side effects. Pay close attention to sleeping pill labels and avoid mixing them with other sleep drugs or supplements, including OTC nighttime pain relievers and antihistamines. Use caution if you drive the next day; you might still be drowsy.

—Ginger Skinner

'Natural' Sleep Supplements Carry Serious Safety Concerns

MILLIONS OF AMERICANS per year use supplements such as melatonin and valerian as a nondrug way to help them sleep, but there's little evidence that they are effective.

According to the American Academy of Sleep medicine, there is not enough research to clearly demonstrate they work—more is needed. What's worse, there are significant safety concerns associated with them.

Though some individual studies suggest that melatonin and valerian might be better than a placebo at helping people fall asleep or stay asleep, large reviews evaluating such studies found that the sleep-inducing benefits of the products are minimal at best. A 2013 analysis in the journal *Plos One* found that people who took melatonin fell asleep only an average 7 minutes faster and slept 8 minutes longer than those taking a

placebo. But the risks involved with long-term use of the products have not been well-studied.

Risks Outweigh Benefits

For most people, the risks, according to Shelby F. Harris, Psy.D., director of the Behavioral Sleep Medicine Program at Montefiore Medical Center in New York City, far outweigh any small benefit. "Just because you can buy it without a prescription doesn't mean these supplements are without any side effects," Harris advises. She says she commonly sees patients complaining of dizziness, nausea, vivid dreaming, and sleepiness while taking melatonin. About 20 percent of melatonin users in a 2015 Consumer Reports survey reported next-day grogginess. Melatonin can undermine the effectiveness of blood

pressure drugs and diabetes medications.

Furthermore, as supplements, these products are not closely regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, so there's little assurance of the quality and purity of the products. For instance, a 2013 analysis of ingredients in 10 valerian products found wide variation in both the list of ingredients in those pills and the amount of the herb in each. More concerning: Two of the products were found to be contaminated with lead.

Some Help for the Jet-Lagged

Melatonin might, in fact, be useful for those with jet lag or those who do shift work. In an American Academy of Sleep Medicine analysis, the majority of studies suggested an improvement in jet-lag symptoms for people who took melatonin at bedtime

starting on the evening of arrival compared with those who took a placebo. Studies have also suggested that melatonin may help reset the internal clock of shift workers, suppressing their brain's production of melatonin, which regulates the sleep-wake cycle.

If you try sleep supplements, look for products with the "USP Verified" mark, which indicates that the products meet U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention standards for how much active ingredient the pills contain and that they are clear of harmful substances. Stick with low doses, too, especially if you're trying melatonin for the first time. Research suggests that 1 to 3 milligrams is enough for most people, and as little as 0.1 to 0.3 milligrams may be effective.

—Ginger Skinner

Sweet Talk on TV Ads

We compare our mattress test results with manufacturers' advertised claims

Beautyrest Black (innerspring)

CLAIM "Sleep that's so completely restorative and inspiring, it borders on the sacred."

CHECK We didn't control for spiritual epiphanies, but the four Beautyrest Black mattresses we rated earned scores ranging from 59 to 71 in our tests. Some were just so-so for tall or large sleepers (the size of pitcher Tom Brady). In fact, 10 other innerspring mattresses got higher scores. Feeling deflated? You decide.

Casper (foam)

CLAIM "The Casper's sleep surface is universally comfortable—it contours to your body to relieve pressure while retaining a healthy bounce and cool temperature."

CHECK The Casper garnered the top spot in our ratings of memory foam mattresses. It earned a very good score for support and is breathable, and its improved resistance to sagging snagged it an excellent durability rating.

Helix (foam)

CLAIM "Each side is personalized. ... Even a few small adjustments ... can make all the difference for a good night's sleep, for both of you."

CHECK We ordered one mattress configured with one side for a small woman and the other for a large man. Testing revealed minute differences in the two sides that were barely perceptible. The Helix did not make our top picks based on Overall Score.

Luxi (foam)

CLAIM "We believe in a mattress that grows and adapts to your changing lifestyle. That's why the Luxi is fully customizable ... for soft, medium, and firm."

CHECK The Luxi indeed has four layers of foam that can be arranged for different levels of firmness. But we found that the "soft" configuration yielded the firmest result and got the best score. The other configurations didn't perform particularly well.

Tuft & Needle (foam)

CLAIM "Our proprietary foam was painstakingly perfected through customer feedback. ... It's T&N Adaptive Foam. And because it adapts to every individual's body, you'll always sleep on the ideal firmness for you."

CHECK Tuft & Needle's revamped mattress aced our tests that simulate eight years of use, so you can expect less change in support over time.



Soft Landing

Two people but one mattress can lead to comfort compromises, so make a choice that suits you both.

Odd Couples Can Find Happiness, Too

Our new ratings help you make the perfect choice of one mattress for two different sleepers

SAY YOU'RE A petite 5 feet tall, and your partner is a robust 6 feet 2 inches. You sleep on your side, and your partner is a back sleeper. Now, thanks to our newly expanded mattress ratings (see pages 27 to 29), you can drill down past the overall score and zero in on only those that suit you both.

The key to comfort in a mattress is support. A mattress for people who sleep on their sides should keep the alignment of the spine fairly parallel to the bed. For back sleepers, we measure how well it maintains the natural curvature of the spine in that position. But, as you may already know from painful years of experience, the same mattress doesn't necessarily offer the same level of support for people of different statures. So we

use test subjects that represent the lower and upper 5 percent of the population by size. For each of them, we measured support while on their sides and on their backs, then averaged those scores to get the result for a midsized person.

That's how we came up with six columns for support: petite, medium, and large/tall side sleepers; and petite, medium, and large/tall back sleepers.

The petite side sleeper will find only one mattress that scores excellent for his or her stature, the Sealy Posturepedic Hybrid Trust Cushion, a \$1,275 innerspring. For all the other body sizes, it scores very good but not excellent. If you prioritize the large/tall back sleeper's comfort, the Charles

P. Rogers Powercore Estate 5000 has excellent back support and very good side support. It scores one point higher overall and costs \$1,500. (Online subscribers can sort the ratings by columns, making this exercise even easier.)

Support isn't the only factor for couples. A healthy person shifts positions 40 to 60 times per night. Double that for a couple, and that's a lot of tossing and turning for any mattress to cope with. That's why we also test for stabilization, which is essentially a gauge of bounciness. It provides a very good indicator of whether your movements will disturb your partner, or vice versa.

Only four of our 74 rated mattresses aced the stabilization test. Of those, the highest-rated

overall is the Sleep Number c2, \$800, one of two adjustable air mattresses we tested. The other three stability stalwarts are innerspring models, the best of which is the Sealy Posturepedic Hybrid Elite Kelburn, \$1,350.

None of the memory foam mattresses earned excellent scores for stabilization, so steer clear of that type if this is a big concern for you and your partner. That said, plenty of foam mattresses have very good stability, so it becomes a matter of priorities.

And while you may have to make a few compromises when shopping for a mattress for you and your partner, we hope our new ratings will bring you that much closer to somnolent bliss.

Ratings > **We've Got Your Slumber** Choose a mattress type, plus the factors that most matter to you.

⬇️ POOR
 ⬇️ FAIR
 ⬇️ GOOD
 ⬆️ VERY GOOD
 ⬆️ EXCELLENT
\$ CR BEST BUY
 ✔️ RECOMMENDED

Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Overall Score	Test Results							
					Support						Durability	Stabilization
Petite Side Sleeper	Average Side Sleeper	Large/Tall Side Sleeper	Petite Back Sleeper	Average Back Sleeper	Large/Tall Back Sleeper							

ADJUSTABLE AIR A favorite of people in our survey who suffer from back and neck pain, adjustable air mattresses feature an air bladder in each half of the bed. You inflate yours using an electric pump, which means you and your partner can set your

individual sides to different levels of firmness if you like. These mattresses typically include additional layers of foam and fabric on top of the air bladders. These beds tend to isolate movements from one side to the other. One drawback is that the noise

of the pump bothers some people. And if you want to adjust the bed during the night, the sound may disturb your other half.

✔️	1	Sleep Number i8 Bed ¹	\$3,000	84	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	3
\$	2	Sleep Number c2 Bed	\$800	81	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	9

Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Overall Score	Test Results							
					Support						Durability	Stabilization
Petite Side Sleeper	Average Side Sleeper	Large/Tall Side Sleeper	Petite Back Sleeper	Average Back Sleeper	Large/Tall Back Sleeper							

MEMORY FOAM Most memory foam mattresses are made of polyurethane. Other foam mattresses are made of latex, claimed to be hypoallergenic. Latex foam can be all natural, all synthetic, or a combination of the two. Memory foam softens

when you lie on it due to your body heat and quickly molds to your body. Once you get up, it springs back to its original shape. Some owners feel that it "sleeps hot," however, and it can take extra effort to change positions on some foam

mattresses. (Check our scores for Stabilization.) Some mattresses have a layer of gel-infused foam that's supposed to provide a cooling effect. But that layer is sometimes buried beneath other layers of foam.

\$	1	Casper The Casper ²	\$850	79	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	4
\$	2	Novaform 14" Serafina Pearl Gel (Costco) ³	\$800	78	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	5
\$	3	Tuft & Needle T&N Mattress ^{1,3}	\$600	74	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	5
✔️	4	Serta iComfort Savant EverFeel ³	\$1,575	74	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	4
✔️	5	Spring Air Back Supporter Natalie (Costco) ²	\$1,100	71	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	7
\$	6	Ikea Morgongåva ^{1,2}	\$1,000	70	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	5
✔️	7	Luxi The Luxi Soft ²	\$1,000	69	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	4
✔️	8	Yogabed Luxury Foam Y10 ¹	\$850	69	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	6
✔️	9	Novaform Altabella (Costco) ³	\$1,300	69	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	4
\$	10	Sleep Innovations Taylor 12 inch Gel Swirl ³	\$470	68	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	6
✔️	11	Novaform Comfort Grande (Costco) ³	\$600	68	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	6
✔️	12	Wright 1.27 Luxury Memory Foam ³	\$1,785	68	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	4
✔️	13	Leesa Leesa Medium Firm ¹	\$890	68	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	5
✔️	14	Ikea Myrbacka ^{2,4}	\$550	68	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	7
	15	The Original Mattress Factory Serenity Latex ^{1,2}	\$1,540	67	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	4
	16	Therapedic Eco-Gel2 Oceanfront ³	\$2,500	66	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	2
	17	Brooklyn Bedding Queen Med. Firm ^{1,2}	\$750	65	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	4
	18	Luxi The Luxi Medium Firm ²	\$1,000	64	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	3
	19	Spa Sensations 10" Memory Foam SPA-1000Q	\$360	64	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	6
	20	Ikea Matrand ^{2,4}	\$400	63	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	6

¹ Made of foam but not memory foam. ² Includes a latex-foam layer. ³ Includes a layer of gel-infused foam. ⁴ Firm models are memory foam; medium-firm models have latex foam. ⁵ Includes a layer of microcoils inside the foam.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Overall Score	Test Results								
					Support						Durability	Stabilization	Firmness Rating
Petite Side Sleeper	Average Side Sleeper	Large/Tall Side Sleeper	Petite Back Sleeper	Average Back Sleeper	Large/Tall Back Sleeper								
MEMORY FOAM (Continued)													
	21	Serta iComfort Directions Acumen ³	\$2,220	62	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	3
	22	Cocoon by Sealy Cocoon Firm	\$850	61	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	6
	23	Helix Sleep Personalized 10" Queen ^{1 2 5}	\$1,000	61	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	4
	24	Dream Bed The Dream Original Mattress ²	\$830	61	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	5
	25	Loom & Leaf Luxury Relaxed Firm ³	\$1,000	60	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	4
	26	Sealy Posturepedic Optimum Inspiration ³	\$1,775	60	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	2
	27	Serta Perfect Sleeper Kelloway ^{3 6}	\$1,500	59	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	4
	28	Serta iComfort Guidance Firm ³	\$1,475	58	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	5
	29	Optimum by Sealy Posturepedic Gel Memory Foam Series Radiance Gold ³	\$1,475	55	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	3
	30	Ara 13" 100% Visco Memory Foam (Costco)	\$1,100	55	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	2
	31	Palmpring Colva PP-4W-003Q ^{1 2 6}	\$3,400	54	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	8
	32	Luxi The Luxi Firm ²	\$1,000	54	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	3
	33	Tempur-Pedic Cloud Supreme	\$2,400	42	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	2

Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Overall Score	Test Results							
					Support						Durability	Stabilization
Petite Side Sleeper	Average Side Sleeper	Large/Tall Side Sleeper	Petite Back Sleeper	Average Back Sleeper	Large/Tall Back Sleeper							

INNERSPRING These traditional mattresses are composed of steel coils in any number of configurations. Variations can include layers of cushioning over the coils, an extra pillowtop, and a layer of gel-infused foam. Shifting positions tends to be easy, but on some models the springiness that assists your movement translates

into an annoying bounce for your partner. More innerspring mattresses now include a layer of foam on top and are called hybrids. The better innerspring models we tested had 600 to 1,000 coils, but we found that counting coils isn't necessarily an indicator of quality or comfort. One mattress may have more coils than another,

but those coils may be made of thinner-gauge metal, reducing their support. You'll also hear about coil variations such as Bonnell (hourglass shaped), continuous wire, and individually pocketed springs. None of these is inherently superior, according to our testing.

✓	1	Charles P. Rogers Powercore Estate 5000 ²	\$1,500	80	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	6
✓	2	Sealy Posturepedic Hybrid Elite Kelburn ³	\$1,350	79	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	4
Ⓢ	3	Sealy Posturepedic Hybrid Trust Cushion ³	\$1,275	79	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	2
Ⓢ	4	Denver Mattress Doctor's Choice	\$500	76	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	3
Ⓢ	5	Charles P. Rogers St. Regis Pillowtop	\$1,100	75	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	6
Ⓢ	6	Sealy Posturepedic Grant Park Cushion Firm Euro Pillow Top	\$775	75	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	6
✓	7	Sealy Posturepedic Posturepedic Plus Deveraux ³	\$1,050	75	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	5
✓	8	Ethan Allen EA Signature Firm ³	\$2,000	74	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	7
✓	9	Stearns & Foster Estate Easingwold Luxury Cushion Firm ³	\$1,420	73	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	3
✓	10	Beautyrest World Class Bridgewater	\$1,550	72	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	6
✓	11	Beautyrest Black Ava Plush	\$2,050	71	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑	4

Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Overall Score	Test Results							
					Support			Durability	Stabilization	Firmness Rating		
Petite Side Sleeper	Average Side Sleeper	Large/Tall Side Sleeper	Petite Back Sleeper	Average Back Sleeper	Large/Tall Back Sleeper							
INNERSPRING (Continued)												
✔️	12	Duxiana Dux 515 ²	\$7,595	71	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	3
✔️	13	Tempur-Pedic Tempur-Flex Prima Firm	\$2,100	71	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	4
	14	Sealy Posturepedic Premier Hybrid Copper Cushion Firm ³	\$1,275	70	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	4
	15	The Original Mattress Factory Orthopedic Luxury Firm	\$540	70	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	4
	16	Beautyrest Black Whitten Luxury Firm Pillowtop	\$2,600	70	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	2
	17	Bob-O-Pedic Hybrid Queen Cushion Firm ³	\$800	69	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	3
	18	Night Therapy 12" Euro Box Top Spring	\$248	69	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	3
	19	Charles P. Rogers Estate Nano ²	\$2,400	68	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	5
	20	Naturepedic Genesis Organic MQ51G ⁶	\$2,000	68	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	3
	21	Beautyrest Recharge Shakespeare Collection Luxury Pillowtop	\$830	68	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	3
	22	Duxiana Dux 101 ²	\$4,800	68	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	3
	23	Beautyrest Black Hybrid Gladney ³	\$2,750	67	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	3
	24	Serta iSeries Vantage ³	\$1,075	66	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	4
	25	Spring Air Isabella	\$1,599	66	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	4
	26	Tempur-Pedic Tempur-Flex Flex Supreme	\$2,599	66	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	3
	27	Saatva Luxury Firm Euro Pillowtop	\$900	66	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	3
	28	Black Label Gel Queen Firm ^{2,3}	\$850	63	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	2
	29	Serta iSeries Profiles Prominence Super Pillow Top ³	\$2,275	62	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	2
	30	Shifman Handmade Original	\$3,500	61	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	8
	31	Beautyrest Recharge Hartfield	\$750	61	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	3
	32	Serta Perfect Sleeper Elegant Retreat Pillowtop ³	\$1,000	61	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	4
	33	My Green Mattress The Natural Escape ⁶	\$1,000	60	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	3
	34	Beautyrest Black Katarina Lux-Firm Pillowtop	\$2,350	59	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	2
	35	Serta iComfort Expertise Super Pillowtop ³	\$1,775	58	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	2
	36	Serta iSeries Honoree Hybrid ³	\$1,775	53	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	2
	37	Hotel Collection Vitagenic Cushion Firm HL ²	\$2,800	53	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	2
	38	Beautyrest Recharge Messala ³	\$1,465	51	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	2
	39	Serta Perfect Sleeper Eastport Super Pillowtop ³	\$880	50	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	2

HOW WE TEST: We calculate the Overall Score primarily by evaluating a mattress's side and back support, durability, and stabilization. For adjustable air mattresses, we use an average of firmness levels. Support for Side Sleeper is the ability to keep a side sleeper's spine relatively horizontal. Support for Back Sleeper

is the ability to maintain the natural curve of a back sleeper's spine. In our Support tests, we use a woman 4 feet 11½ inches to 5 feet 1½ inches and 110 to 127.5 pounds for the Petite Sleeper scores and a man 6 feet 2 inches to 6 feet 4 inches and 220 to 242 pounds for the Large/Tall Sleeper scores. The Average

Sleeper is an average of the other two. Durability gauges a mattress's ability to keep its original shape, height, firmness, and support after a simulated eight to 10 years of use, including our passing a 308-pound roller over each mattress 30,000 times. A high score for Stabilization indicates little or no

bouncing or vibration transferred for innersprings, and ease of movement and changing positions for foam. We rate Firmness on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the firmest. Price is approximate retail for a queen-size mattress without a box spring.



Best TVs for Your Buck

Looking to buy a big-screen set for the big game? We'll help you pick a television in your price range that suits your needs and buy it at the exact moment when the price is best.

by **James K. Willcox**



From left:

Top-Tier

LG
OLED65G6P 65"
\$8,000

86

OVERALL
SCORE

Midlevel

SAMSUNG
UN55KU6500 55"
\$900

73

OVERALL
SCORE

Budget

PHILIPS
43PFL4609 43"
\$280

61

OVERALL
SCORE

A 50-inch TV can cost \$1,100 when it first hits the market, drop to \$880 a few months later, and cost as little as \$650 when stores are trying to clear out stock to make room for next year's models. That leaves plenty of opportunity for buyer's remorse, but it also means that a well-timed TV purchase can save you hundreds of dollars.

The even better news is that the discounts are entirely predictable. Consumer Reports has teamed up with Gap Intelligence, a retail and e-commerce market research company, to run an analysis of television pricing to determine the best times of the year to buy a new set.

Research shows that Black Friday, that bacchanal of preholiday bargains, is indeed the time for the deepest discounts. The numbers also show that the second-best discounts come two weeks before the Super Bowl, which will be played on Feb. 5 this year. Before the big game, stores will be trying to clear out 2016 sets in anticipation of 2017 models that start arriving a month or two later. In our analysis of two years of pricing data, Super Bowl sales have pushed down prices by an average of 22 percent, and those deals tend to favor crowd-pleasing large-screen sets. What's more, those discounts are sometimes on top of the natural decline in pricing that happens over the shelf life of a TV.

But that doesn't mean you should just grab your wallet and head out to a store (or go online) uninformed. We've put together some general guidelines to help you understand what features to expect within three budgets. And we've combed through our ratings to highlight high-performing large-screen TVs in every price range.

Budget TVs

40" to 43"	\$170-\$400
49" to 55"	\$250-\$700
60" & up	\$500-\$1,100



Don't need a super-fancy TV loaded with features? You can still get a basic set that delivers great picture quality at a surprisingly low price. The key with an entry-level set is to focus on the few features you care about and understand what you can live without.

What you get. Unless you're shopping for the largest screen sizes, you'll probably be choosing a regular 1080p high-definition screen rather than a higher-resolution 4K Ultra High Definition (UHD) TV. Which is fine, because that extra resolution isn't really noticeable until you get into the jumbo

sizes—65 inches or larger. Also, expect a set with 60Hz refresh rates rather than one with a claim of 120Hz or higher. (Higher refresh rates can help reduce the motion blur that can occur during fast-motion scenes.) And the TV will likely come with a basic remote and one or two HDMI ports.

What you don't get. If you do manage to score a 4K TV at a budget price, its performance will probably be lower than that of a higher-priced set. Entry-level televisions may also lack the more advanced color- and picture-processing technologies found in more sophisticated sets. And some don't come with smart TV capability.

Is it for you? If your main priority is to have a decent-sized screen to watch sports, TV shows, and an occasional movie, you may not need all the fancy features you get with higher-priced sets. Check our ratings, pick out a few models in your desired screen size with at least very good picture quality, then shop around for the best deal. You can always add smart TV capability later with a streaming player.

Midlevel TVs

40" to 43"	\$350-\$550
49" to 55"	\$650-\$1,200
60" & up	\$950-\$2,300



Midpriced sets almost by definition represent the sweet spot of the market. These models usually offer the best balance of price, performance, and features.

What you get. High-resolution 4K screens are now common on mainstream sets. You can also expect some level of high dynamic range (HDR) capability, technology that boosts the contrast between the lightest and darkest images a TV can produce with HDR-enabled content. On pricier sets, our testers have found that HDR can reveal richer detail and more dramatic highlights, but the results aren't always so impressive in this price tier.

Most TVs 40 inches and larger are now smart TVs and come with built-in WiFi for connecting to home networks. You'll also probably get a faster 120Hz refresh rate plus local dimming, a feature that can turn off some zones of a TV's backlight to create deeper blacks and better contrast. And you can probably count on at least three, maybe four, HDMI inputs for connecting your gear.

What you don't get. Companies reserve their highest performance features for top-of-the-line models. Why else would you spend more? So sets in this range usually don't have very effective HDR performance, precise local dimming, or the most advanced video processing.

Is it for you? Midlevel models are the best option for most people, especially if the TV will be the main set. Getting a 4K model may also help future-proof your purchase.

Top-Tier TVs

40" to 43"	\$400-\$800
49" to 55"	\$750-\$3,000
60" & up	\$1,600-\$6,000



78
OVERALL SCORE

SAMSUNG UN65KS9800 \$3,500

These TVs are the priciest in a company's lineup and offer the best performance and all the latest features. Many also have slim profiles and designs with ultra-thin bezels. (You'll also see a lot of curved TVs in this price range, though that's no longer exclusively a top-tier feature.) The most fully featured sets are typically available only in larger screen sizes.

What you get. This year, sets from major manufacturers are all 4K models with 120Hz refresh rates and bright

screens that highlight HDR content. You'll also get more of those contrast-enriching local dimming zones as well as the brand's most sophisticated video processing, which can produce sharper images and better results when upconverting lower-resolution 1080p content to 4K resolution. Top-tier sets are where manufacturers roll out their most sophisticated smart TV systems and more advanced remote controls. These remotes often have built-in microphones for voice-controlled searches ("play 'Stranger Things'").

What you don't get. You get everything except a low price. **Is it for you?** Top-of-the-line models guarantee the latest technology manufacturers have to offer, as well as the top level of performance. Just be aware that the higher-end features found in this year's top-level TVs will often be available on next year's midlevel sets at far lower prices.

When to Get the Lowest Price on Your Next TV

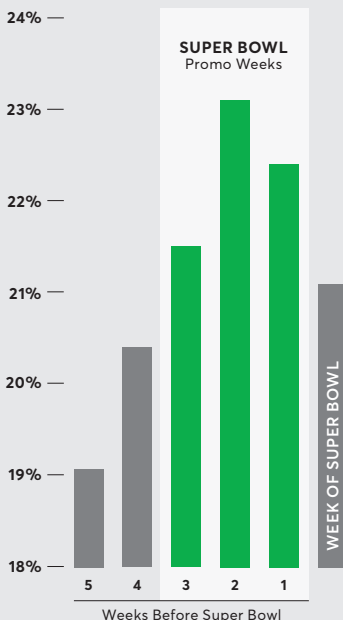
Consumer Reports teamed up with the market research company Gap Intelligence to determine the best time to buy a TV. The data from our

two-year analysis of 500+ sets show that the week of Black Friday is when retailers offer the most aggressive sales. But

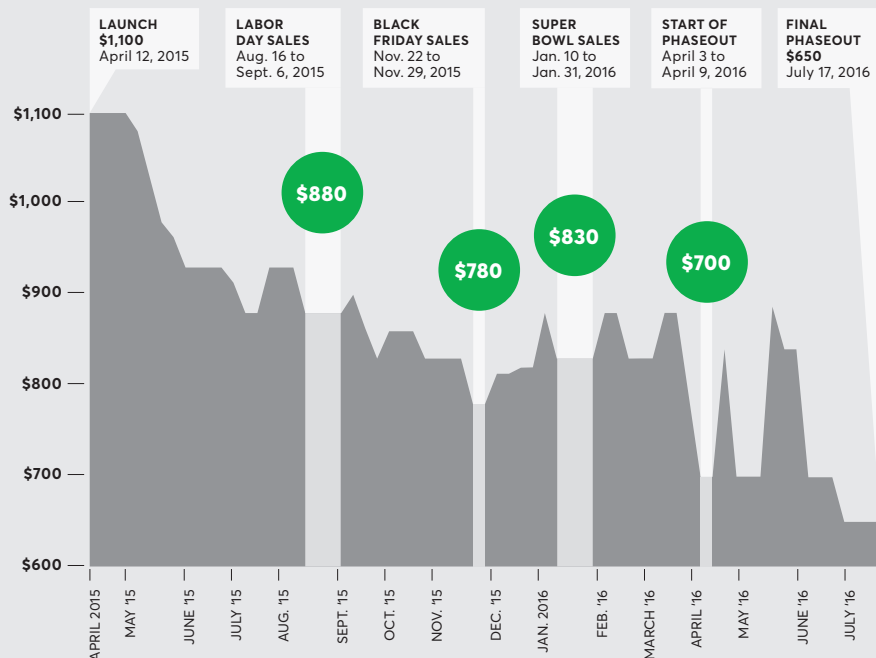
the weeks before the Super Bowl are a close second, with an average discount of 22 percent. We also tracked the average price of a TV at

two retailers over the course of its shelf life—from introduction to liquidation—to see how its price eroded over time.

AVERAGE DISCOUNT ON TVs DURING SUPER BOWL SALES



THE EVER-CHANGING PRICE OF A SINGLE TV*



Source: Gap Intelligence.

*Price of Samsung UN50JU650D after instant savings (immediate price discount) and mail-in rebates. Note: Prices are rounded.

Ratings > **Get the Biggest Bang for Your Buck** Use the previous pages to find the features you need, then consult our curated ratings below to find the right TV in the price range that most suits your budget.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Overall Score	TV Resolution Type	Display Type (Backlight)	Screen Size (in.)	Test Results						Smart TV	HDR
								HD Picture Quality	Ultra HD Performance	Viewing Angle	Sound Quality	Motion Blur			
60-INCH AND LARGER															
BUDGET															
\$	1	LG 65UH615A	\$1,100	71	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	•	•	
\$	2	Samsung UN60KU6300	\$1,000	71	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	60	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	•	•	
\$	3	LG 65UH5500	\$850	70	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	•	•	
\$	4	LG 60UH6150	\$1,000	68	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	60	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	•	•	
✓	5	LG 65UH6150	\$1,200	66	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	•	•	
	6	Vizio E65u-D3	\$900	62	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	•	•	
MIDLEVEL															
\$	1	LG 65UH7650	\$1,300	75	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	•	•	
✓	2	LG 65UH7700	\$1,500	74	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	•	•	
✓	3	Samsung UN65KU7500	\$1,500	73	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	•	•	
✓	4	LG 60UH6550	\$1,500	72	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	60	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	•	•	
✓	5	Samsung UN65KU630D	\$1,150	70	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	↑	↑	↓	↓	↓	•	•	
✓	6	Samsung UN65KU7000	\$1,400	70	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	•	•	
✓	7	Sony XBR-65X750D	\$1,300	67	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	•	•	
	8	Vizio M60-D1	\$980	64	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	60	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	•	•	
	9	Sony XBR-65X850D	\$1,500	62	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	•	•	
TOP-TIER															
✓	1	LG OLED65G6P	\$8,000	86	Ultra HD	OLED	65	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	•	•	
✓	2	LG OLED65E6P	\$5,000	85	Ultra HD	OLED	65	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	•	•	
✓	3	LG OLED65C6P	\$3,770	82	Ultra HD	OLED	65	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	•	•	

Note: TV prices can fluctuate significantly this time of year. So the prices you see in these ratings may differ from what you see in stores or in the TV ratings on CR.org.

Shopping Tips to Snag More Savings

> **Don't buy pricey cables.**

Avoid the markup when you're in a store. Shop online at sites such as Amazon or Monoprice, where 6-foot HDMI cables go for less than \$10.

> **Skip the extended warranty.**

Most major-brand TVs are fairly reliable. Instead, buy with a credit card or from a retailer such as Costco that automatically extends a manufacturer's warranty.

> **Ask for a 30-day price-match guarantee.** Then spend the next month eagerly watching for price drops.

> **Get social.** The Facebook pages and Twitter feeds of your favorite retailers are a great way to find out about deals and promotions. Those retailers might even reward customers who "like" or follow them.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Overall Score	TV Resolution Type	Display Type (Backlight)	Screen Size (in.)	Test Results					Smart TV	HDR
								HD Picture Quality	Ultra HD Performance	Viewing Angle	Sound Quality	Motion Blur		
60-INCH AND LARGER														
TOP-TIER (Continued)														
✓	4	Samsung UN65KS9800	\$3,500	78	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•
✓	5	Samsung UN65KS8500	\$1,900	77	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•
✓	6	Samsung UN65KS800D	\$1,780	76	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•
✓	7	Samsung UN65KS8000	\$1,800	76	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•
✓	8	Samsung UN65KS850D	\$1,880	76	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•
✓	9	LG 60UH8500	\$1,600	75	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	60	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	•	•
✓	10	LG 65UH9500	\$2,500	75	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	•	•
✓	11	Samsung UN65KS9000	\$2,500	75	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•
✓	12	Sony XBR-65Z9D	\$5,500	72	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	•	•
✓	13	Sony XBR-65X930D	\$2,300	71	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	•	•
✓	14	Samsung UN60KS8000	\$2,300	71	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	60	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	•	•
	15	Vizio P65-C1	\$2,000	63	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	65	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
49- TO 55-INCH														
BUDGET														
💰	1	Samsung UN55KU630D	\$700	72	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
💰	2	Samsung UN55KU6300	\$750	72	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
💰	3	Samsung UN50KU6300	\$630	71	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	50	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
💰	4	LG 55UH6150	\$700	70	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
💰	5	Samsung UN55KU6290	\$700	70	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	•	•
✓	6	Sharp LC-50N7000U	\$550	66	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	50	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
✓	7	LG 49UH6100	\$550	66	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	49	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	8	Hisense 50H8C	\$475	63	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	50	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	9	Vizio D50u-D1	\$530	63	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	50	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	10	LG 55UH6090	\$600	63	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	11	LG 49UH6090	\$500	62	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	49	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	12	LG 55UH615A	\$550	62	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	13	TCL 55UP120	\$450	62	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	14	TCL 50UP120	\$400	62	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	50	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	15	LG 49LH5700	\$450	58	HD	LCD (LED)	49	⬆️	NA	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•

Ratings > Get the Biggest Bang For Your Buck *Continued*

Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Overall Score	TV Resolution Type	Display Type (Backlight)	Screen Size (In.)	Test Results					Smart TV	HDR
								HD Picture Quality	Ultra HD Performance	Viewing Angle	Sound Quality	Motion Blur		
49- TO 55-INCH (Continued)														
MIDLEVEL														
✓	1	Samsung UN55KU6500	\$900	73	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	•	•
	2	Samsung UN55KU750D	\$1,080	73	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	•	•
✓	3	LG 55UH6550	\$900	73	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
✓	4	LG 55UH7700	\$1,000	73	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	•	•
✓	5	Samsung UN49KU7500	\$900	72	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	49	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	6	Samsung UN55KU700D	\$980	71	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
✓	7	Samsung UN49KU6500	\$750	70	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	49	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
✓	8	Samsung UN49KU7000	\$1,100	69	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	49	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
✓	9	Sony XBR-55X850D	\$1,200	69	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	•	•
✓	10	Sony XBR-49X800D	\$800	66	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	49	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	11	Sony XBR-55X700D	\$800	63	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	12	Vizio M55-D0	\$850	61	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	•	•
TOP-TIER														
✓	1	LG OLED55E6P	\$3,165	83	Ultra HD	OLED	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•
✓	2	LG OLED55B6P	\$2,300	83	Ultra HD	OLED	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	•	•
✓	3	Samsung UN55KS8000	\$1,345	78	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•
✓	4	Samsung UN55KS800D	\$1,330	77	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•
✓	5	Samsung UN55KS9500	\$2,000	74	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	⬆️	•	•
✓	6	Samsung UN49KS8000	\$1,100	73	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	49	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	•	•
✓	7	Samsung UN49KS8500	\$1,300	72	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	49	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	•	•
✓	8	Sony XBR-55X930D	\$1,700	71	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	55	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬆️	•	•
	9	Vizio P50-C1	\$1,000	60	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	50	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
40- TO 43-INCH														
BUDGET														
	1	Vizio D40u-D1	\$400	63	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	40	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	2	Insignia NS-43DR710NA17	\$350	61	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	43	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	3	Vizio D43-D2	\$330	61	HD	LCD (LED)	43	⬆️	NA	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	4	Hisense 43H7C	\$350	61	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	43	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	5	Philips 43PFL4609	\$280	61	HD	LCD (LED)	43	⬆️	NA	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•

Rec.	Rank	Brand & Model	Price	Overall Score	TV Resolution Type	Display Type (Backlight)	Screen Size (in.)	HD Picture Quality	Ultra HD Performance	Viewing Angle	Sound Quality	Motion Blur	Smart TV	HDR
40- TO 43-INCH														
BUDGET (Continued)														
	6	Sharp LC-43N6100U	\$380	59	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	43	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	7	Hisense 40H4C1	\$260	58	HD	LCD (LED)	40	⬆️	NA	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	
	8	TCL 40FS3750	\$270	55	HD	LCD (LED)	40	⬆️	NA	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	
MIDLEVEL														
✔️	1	Samsung UN40KU6300	\$450	71	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	40	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
✔️	2	Samsung UN43KU6300	\$550	69	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	43	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
✔️	3	LG 43UH6500	\$500	66	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	43	⬆️	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	4	Sony KDL-40W650D	\$380	59	HD	LCD (LED)	40	⬆️	NA	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	
	5	Samsung UN40K6250	\$450	59	HD	LCD (LED)	40	⬆️	NA	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	
	6	LG 43LH5700	\$350	58	HD	LCD (LED)	43	⬆️	NA	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	•	
TOP-TIER														
✔️	1	Samsung UN40KU7000	\$850	69	Ultra HD	LCD (LED)	40	⬆️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	•	•
	>	CRO subscribers can go to CR.org for complete up-to-date ratings.												

HOW WE TEST The Overall Score is based on HD picture quality, UHD performance, sound quality, 3D performance (when that feature is present), viewing angle, motion-blur performance, ease of use, versatility, and power consumption. The displayed score is out of a total of 100 points. HD Picture Quality is based on objective tests and subjective evaluations by expert testers after a TV is adjusted using standard picture controls to achieve the highest fidelity image possible. Tested image attributes include detail, color accuracy, and contrast using signals from a Blu-ray player, a cable box, and professional broadcast equipment and meters. All

signals are routed through an HDMI input. The Ultra HD Performance rating represents a composite of observations relating to a TV's ability to reproduce full UHD image detail when presented with 4K content, how well it upconverts HD source material to the TV's higher native UHD resolution, and whether it's capable of playing 4K UHD content via its HDMI input, streaming from the internet, or stored on a USB flash drive. Viewing Angle is an evaluation of picture quality for clarity and color accuracy at various horizontal and vertical viewing angles. Excellent = Unlimited, Very Good = Wide, Good = Moderate, Fair = Narrow, and

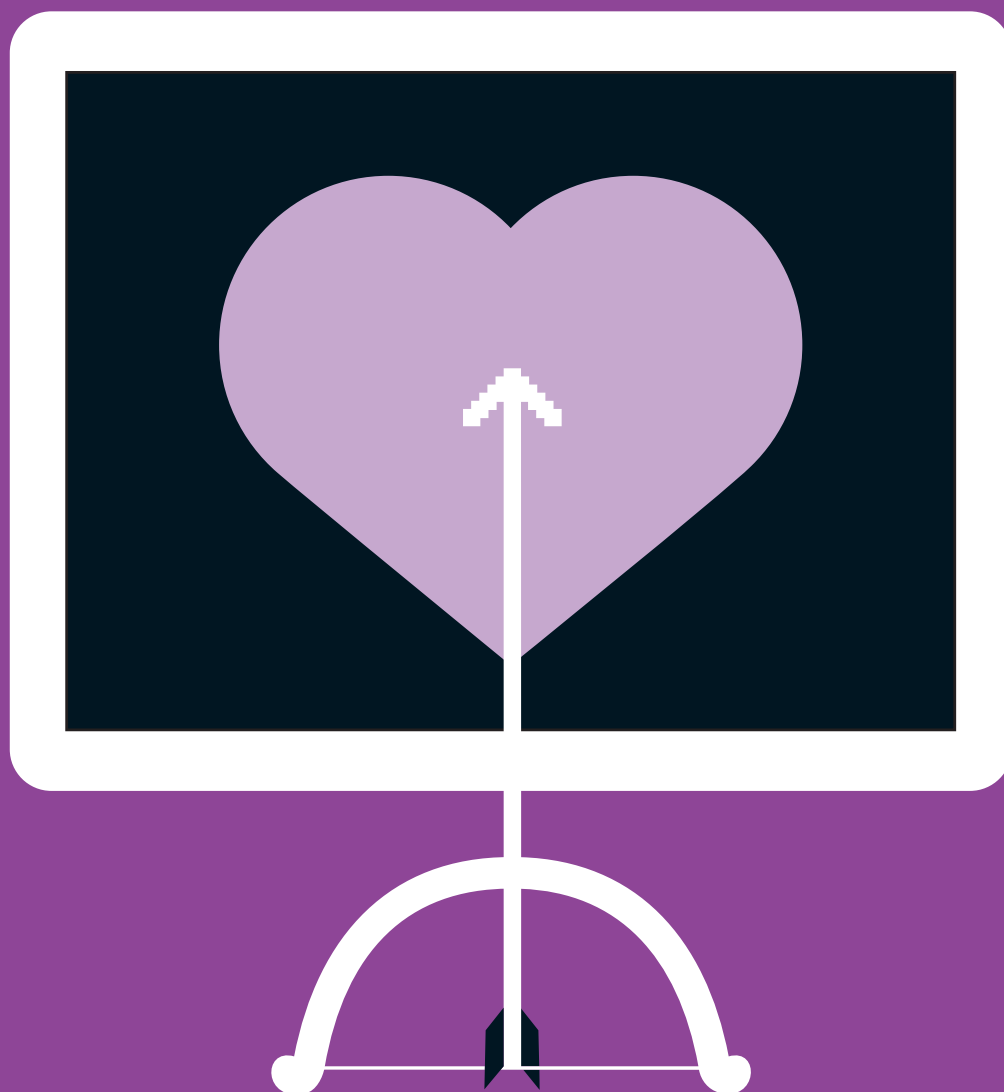
Poor = Very Narrow. Sound Quality is measured from the set's built-in speakers using audio test equipment, with additional subjective testing by a listening panel. We listen for overall clarity of sound, depth of bass, effective volume level, and audible distortion for dialog, music, and movie soundtrack content. The Motion-Blur score is an evaluation of how well the display can present a blur-free image during motion scenes. TVs with a 120Hz or 240Hz frame-rate feature generally perform better than TVs with a 60Hz frame rate. But if the blur-reduction feature also invoked a "smooth motion" effect, the feature was turned off for our test. 3D Performance is an

evaluation of the TV's ability to reproduce realistic 3D images. First-Time Setup relates to how easy it is to set up the product out of the box. Everyday Use relates to how easy it is to use on a daily or regular basis. Versatility indicates features that increase a TV's utility or capabilities. These include 3D capability, access to the internet (streaming services and/or web browsing), number of HD and USB inputs, support for various media, and other useful features. Energy Cost is evaluated with the TV optimized for the best picture quality not using any energy-saving technology included in the set.

Match Me If You Can

Dating in the digital age is now a huge business. Apps and sites are growing more popular, even among baby boomers. But can they really help you find someone special? We asked readers to rate them for effectiveness and value. Plus we offer advice on how to use them safely.

by **Marisa Meltzer**



You can do almost anything online these days:

Check a bank balance, buy shoes, choose a mattress, order a cab. So when Roberta Caploe was ready to start dating again after a divorce, she didn't ask her friends to fix her up or feel the need to frequent bars or health clubs. She signed up for JDate, an online dating site for Jewish singles. "All kinds of people are doing it," says Caploe, 54, a publisher who lives in New York City. "It was—unbelievably—not a crazy experience."

Online dating has certainly lost its lonely-hearts stigma. Just look at how many people seeking dates or mates are flocking to matchmaking sites and apps. According to a 2015 study by the Pew Research Center, 15 percent of American adults have used online dating sites (web-based platforms like Match.com) and/or dating apps (location-based smartphone apps like Tinder).

Participation by those 18 to 24 has almost tripled since 2013, and boomer enrollment has doubled. In fact, people over 50 are one of the fastest growing segments. "It's a product of the growing normalcy of using social media apps," says Moira Weigel, author of "Labor of Love: The Invention of Online Dating" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2016). "Our real-life and online identities are more and more interwoven."

Because of this cultural shift, online dating sites now have unprecedented reach into our lives. They are gatekeepers to a massive population of potential partners; they control who we meet and how. Collectively, we spend huge sums of money on matchmaking, not to mention all the time and substantial emotional investment.

But do these sites really work? Are they safe? Are some better than others? Reams have been written about online dating, but as far as we know, no one has put the sites to the test.

So Consumer Reports decided to survey almost 115,000 subscribers about online dating and their experiences with it. Given that we usually rate products (like refrigerators) and services (like banking), this is new and fairly unusual territory for us. But as we explored the possibility of taking on this investigation, we discovered that 20 percent of our subscribers are either divorced or have never married, and might benefit from what we found.

Our survey included many people who at some point had used a dating website or an app, as well as a subset of

9,600 respondents who used them in the past two years. The more recently active group rated specific sites.

Our findings tell an almost contradictory story. On the one hand, the numbers indicate that these sites are helping people find mates. A whopping 44 percent of respondents who tried online dating said the experience led to a serious long-term relationship or marriage. That kind of connection rate would shatter Hall of Fame records, at least in baseball.

But the responses from the more active group suggest they're highly frustrated. They gave online dating sites the lowest satisfaction scores Consumer Reports has ever seen for services rendered—lower even than for tech-support providers, notoriously poor performers in our ratings.

What's going on? Well, finding a mate can be arduous and exhausting. "I was on a date with a guy who turned out to be a convicted felon. Another guy claimed to be 38 but was at least 60," says Kate, a 33-year-old government analyst from Washington, D.C., who has used OKCupid, eHarmony, and Tinder. "Sometimes I will go on a date to see how bad it's going to be."

The fact is that online dating is, well, complicated. There's a whole range of difficult human emotions to contend with: insecurity, disappointment, rejection, maybe heartache. Not to mention it's a ton of work.

"Sometimes there is nothing that clicks whatsoever," says Julien Nguyen, a 30-year-old software designer from Austin, Texas, who has used Bumble and Tinder. "Sometimes whatever chemistry we had just fizzles out."

The Limitations of the Modern 'Meet' Market

Perhaps being in the market for a mate can't be compared with using other services. Michael Norton, Ph.D., a professor at the Harvard Business School who studies consumer behavior, thinks so. Online dating is different from shopping for, say, a sweater, he explains: "Once you decide on the sweater you want, you can get it. But with dating, the sweater has to agree, too."

Another reason for the low satisfaction scores may be that "most dating sites have some misalignment between profit model and user experience because they are financed through subscription fees or advertising," says Scott Kominers, Ph.D., a junior fellow in economics at Harvard University. In other words, there's no incentive for them to make the experience speedy. If you find your life partner on your first date, the site doesn't make much money off you. Our survey found that among respondents who stopped online dating, 20 percent of men and 40 percent of women said they did so because they didn't like the quality of their matches. Perhaps that's why, among those who said they had used multiple dating sites, 28 percent had tried four or more.

But our research also found that online dating, however painful and time-consuming, often does produce the intended result if you use it well—and persevere.

What Makes a Site Successful

You can find the right person more effectively by choosing the right site, which means determining the demographics it caters to and figuring out whether a large or niche site will best serve your needs. Our survey found that OkCupid and Tinder, both free, were more popular among millennials than Generation Xers and baby boomers, who were both more likely to use a paid subscription-based dating website or app. And we found that the free sites generally did marginally better than the paid ones,

presumably because they offer a better value.

“You’re generally going to be best off starting your search on the ‘Big 3’: Match.com, OkCupid, and Plenty of Fish,” says Scott Valdez, founder of Virtual Dating Assistants, which helps people write their profiles and then manages their accounts. “Those are among the most popular dating sites in the world, and when you’re fishing, it just makes sense to drop your line in the most crowded ponds.”

That’s generally true unless you have a particular guiding factor, such as religion, race, or politics, in which case you

Field Guide to Popular Dating Sites



SeniorPeopleMeet
Format: App and Website

Cost: \$15 per month for six months.

Audience: For singles 55 and older.

Methodology: You answer a standard personality questionnaire that emphasizes activities and interests. You can specify who can see your profile.

Pros: It’s simple to use, even for the tech-phobic. Setting who can see your profile is good if you’re looking to date in a specific age range.

Cons: There’s no option to search for matches within a certain distance or ZIP code, although you can search within a state.



eHarmony
Format: App and Website

Cost: \$20 per month for 12 months.

Audience: People who may want to take it slow and get to know each other.

Methodology: eHarmony’s founder, Neil Clark Warren, patented the site’s proprietary matchmaking system, which has a 155-question survey at its core.

Pros: The Guided Communication process encourages users to get to know each other gradually via prompts instead of more free-form messaging.

Cons: Users can’t search on their own; the site sends matches based on information in profiles.



Match.com
Format: App and Website

Cost: \$21 per month for six months.

Audience: Singles ages 30+ ready to settle down.

Methodology: Users fill out a questionnaire about themselves (their hair color, for example, or whether they have children) and what they’re looking for (say, someone of a particular religion).

Pros: It launched in 1995 and has lots of add-on services, including the ability to talk or text on your cell phone without revealing your phone number.

Cons: The questionnaire is on the long side, so signing up might feel arduous.



JDate
Format: App and Website

Cost: \$19 per month for six months.

Audience: Jewish singles (and those looking to meet them).

Methodology: Users fill out a questionnaire that includes questions about their Jewish identity, such as whether they keep kosher.

Pros: The site caters to Jews of all levels of observance.

Non-Jewish members are welcome but are asked about their willingness to convert.

Cons: The site’s open-arms policy may defeat the purpose of a site organized around religion.



OkCupid
Format: App and Website

Cost: Free.

Audience: The site has a reputation for attracting young, hip, tech-savvy users.

Methodology: Its motto is “We use math to find you dates.” The site was founded in 2004 by four math majors from Harvard.

Pros: Members generate unusual questions, such as “How often do you keep your promises?” You can rate how important the answers are to you.



Tinder
Format: App

Cost: Free.

Audience: This location-based app, which has a reputation for finding casual romance, attracts young adults.

Methodology: Tinder uses a member’s smartphone location to find fellow users in a set radius. Swipe left on photos of users you aren’t interested in and right on those you are. If you both swipe right, you’re matched and can message each other.

Pros: The swiping interface is very simple to use and is almost like a game. And the double opt-in system means you won’t get messages from anyone you aren’t initially interested in.

Cons: There’s very little information on fellow users beyond pictures, so matching can feel a little shallow for relationship-minded users.

can go to a niche site like JDate or BlackPeopleMeet. Kate, the government analyst, has started using Tastebuds, a site based on music preferences.

Many dating sites rely on matchmaking algorithms the same way that Netflix uses them to recommend movies. So if you live in the Denver area, you're a single heterosexual man in his 50s who loves to travel, and you don't believe in astrology, your matches may reflect women who have similar interests. Apps like Bumble, Grindr, or Tinder use things like your location and sexual preference. Tinder is set up more like a game, where you swipe left on photos of people you're not interested in and right on ones you are. If the interest is mutual, you can send messages to each other. Because these apps are based on proximity and users don't have to fill out lengthy profiles, many of them have a reputation for promoting hooking up rather than creating lasting relationships. But that can happen on any site, says Laurie Davis Edwards, a professional dating coach and founder of eFlirt in Los Angeles, which helps clients navigate the dating world. "It's a myth that some sites are better for relationships while others are more for hookups," she says. "There are people of different intentions on every platform. It's more important what your intention is, and approaching the technology with that mindset."

And even the best matches can't account for that most ineffable of things: chemistry. Joseph Lynn, 50, was matched with a woman who seemed perfect. "We met for dinner and there was no spark between us," he recalls. "She said, 'You're really a great guy. Don't take this the wrong way, but I feel like I'm having dinner with my brother.' I was about to say the same thing."

Disappointment, clearly, is almost unavoidable. Our survey found that among those reluctant to try online dating, 21 percent of women and 9 percent of men said it was because they knew someone who had a bad experience. Veteran online daters become adept at realizing when a match is going nowhere. When Marc Riolo, a retired 67-year-old in Washington State, started online dating in his late 50s, "a lot of the women seemed to be shopping for a husband, just sizing me up," he says. "I felt like I was being interviewed for the position of husband."

It's no wonder you often hear that people will do a few months of online dating, grow frustrated, then take a break for a few months. But persistence paid off for Riolo: He's been dating a woman he met on Yahoo Personals for the past 9 years.

"She didn't have an agenda; we both just wanted someone to do things with," he says. They live separately but spend about half of the week together. "Our friends

Craft a Profile With Polish



THE FIRST thing potential partners see about you is a few lines of text and some photos, so there's a lot riding on those words and pictures. This reality has spawned a cottage industry of professional online dating consultants who charge for helping you to create the most inviting online persona. We asked Jodi Manfredi of Dynamic Dating Profiles, based in San Diego, to share some of the tips she usually charges \$119 for.

► **The purpose of your profile is to get the reader's attention.** You want to make them laugh or at least smile. At the same time, you want to be brief. Keep your profile answers under 400 words, total.

► **To make a strong first impression, do more than use a string of adjectives describing yourself, like "I'm funny, I'm generous, I'm loyal." Instead, describe your best qualities using anecdotes.** Did you go to a developing country to build a water system? I'd write something like "You'll have to ask me about my trip to Haiti."

That indicates there's an interesting story and invites the reader to hear the rest.

► **Consider tone.** You don't want your profile to sound like a résumé or to come across as bragging about how wonderful you are. Show that you're human and humble through a joke, a self-effacing story, or a humorous anecdote.

► **I never recommend lying about your age.**

A woman I was working with kept telling me how much integrity she had, and how she once gave back an extra \$20 she got at an ATM. Later in the conversation, she said she was 56. I told her she had said she was 52. "Oh, I lied," she said. I told her we should leave the part about integrity off her profile.

► **I give a lot of advice on choosing photos.** Use recent pictures, something taken within the past 12 months—no older than that. Everyone needs at least one good headshot, close up. You can enlist a professional photographer, but in my opinion, the best photos are taken by loved ones: kids, parents, a friend. Be sure to include a photo where you're engaged in an activity you enjoy, maybe out with friends, maybe holding a glass of wine.

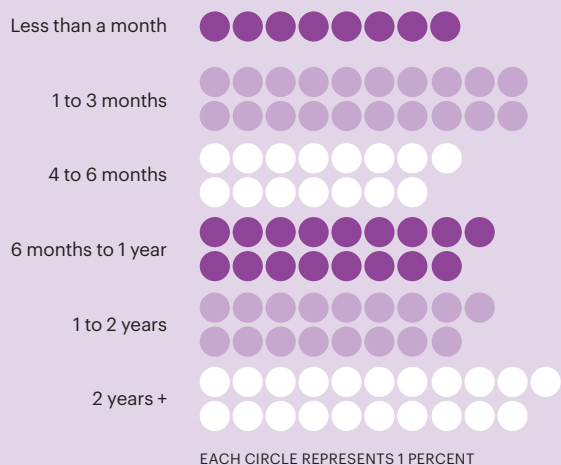
► **There are some things to avoid in photos.** For example, people like to see your eyes. So try not to include pictures with sunglasses. And be sure to upload one full-body standing shot that shows your body type, so there are no surprises once you meet up in person.

Continued on page 44 >

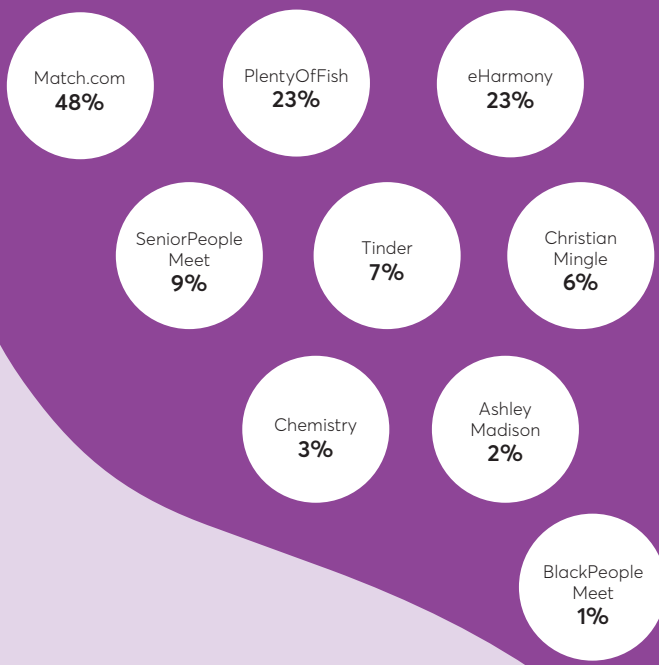
The New Dating Game

You can fall in love in a heartbeat. Finding your way to the right dating website or app, however, takes more time. The modern love landscape is tricky terrain, but here's how Consumer Reports subscribers are navigating it.

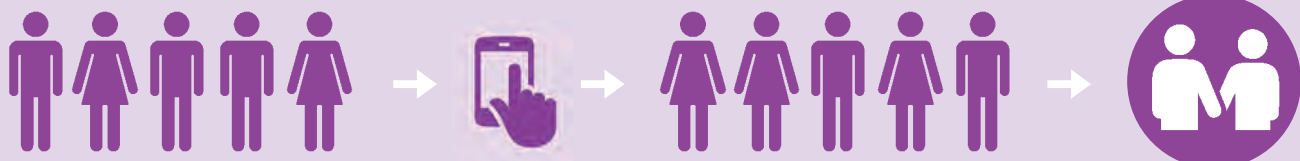
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN ONLINE DATING? ¹



In the past two years, where have you gone looking for love? ²



Lucky in Love? It's the Math That Matters



DATING SITES are only as good as their ability to make matches. And how they go about making those matches can be very different. Mike Norton, Ph.D., is a professor at the Harvard Business School who was on the scientific advisory board of OkCupid.

"They are all matching on obvious stuff, like age range," he says, "but they vary a good amount on how they consider other factors that might affect compatibility."

Sound vague? It is, intentionally. Online dating

companies keep their proprietary algorithms closely guarded. So it's difficult for academics to figure out which ones do best.

But here's what we do know: Companies like eHarmony and Match.com use algorithms based on information you provide (eHarmony's has a U.S. patent) similar to the way Amazon and Spotify use algorithms to make product recommendations for consumers. In a 2013 article in The New York Times, eHarmony's senior research

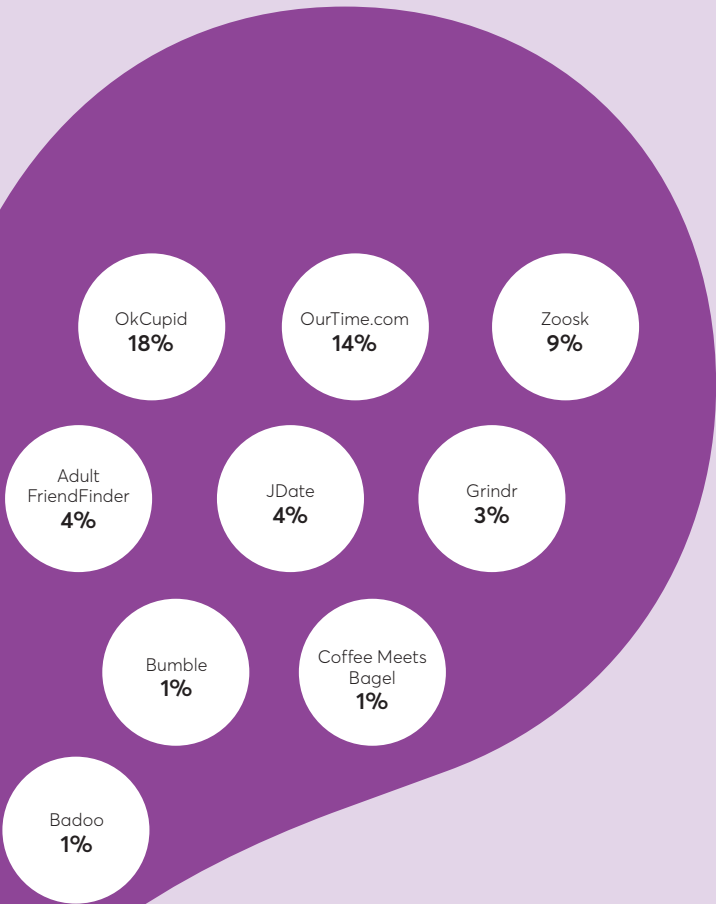
scientist at the time, Gian C. Gonzaga, said that the company focused on factors such as the degree of sexual and romantic passion, the level of extroversion, and the importance of spirituality in making matches.

OkCupid, which was founded by four Harvard math majors, uses its own questions and those generated by members to make compatible matches based on how much users have in common. The questions are often quirky and can be oddly

revealing, like "Do you often find yourself wanting to chuck it all and go live on a sailboat?"

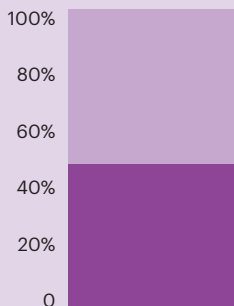
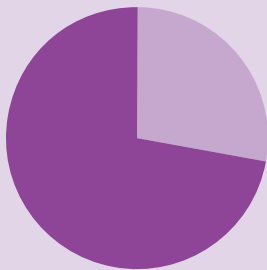
Location-based apps like Bumble, Grindr, and Tinder use a smartphone's GPS to find potential mates in a specific radius.

The bottom line. Don't try to game the system. Instead, choose a site or an app based on the approach that makes the most sense to you. And always answer questionnaires honestly.



28%

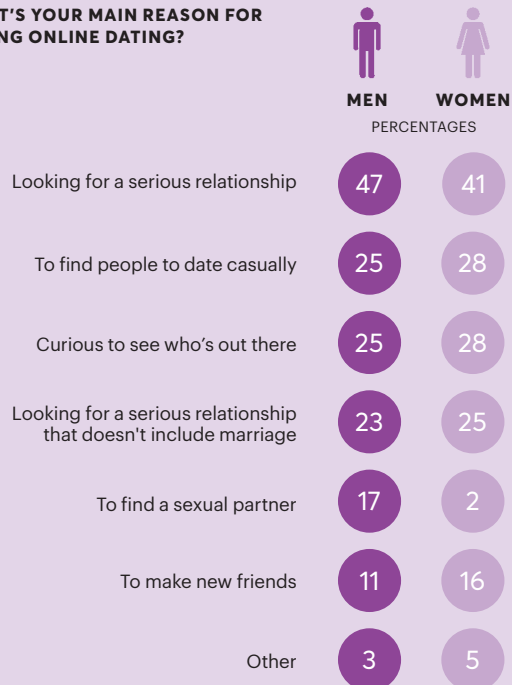
of online daters who used more than one service tried four or more.



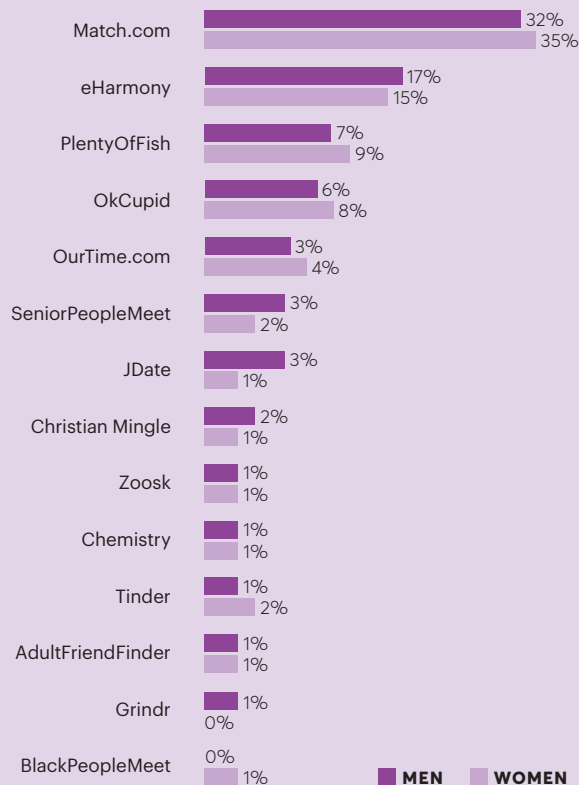
44%

say that as a result of online dating, they have had or are in a serious long-term relationship or have married.

WHAT'S YOUR MAIN REASON FOR TRYING ONLINE DATING?



WHERE DID YOU MEET YOUR CURRENT SPOUSE OR PARTNER? ²



²Based on respondents who met their current spouse or partner through an online dating service.

say we have the perfect relationship.”

Vince Manfredi, 61, who is divorced and works in marketing in San Diego, found that deception is all too common. “I went on a few dates with someone who claimed to be a professor,” he recalls. Where that person taught and what subject kept changing. “Finally I pressed it and found out it wasn’t truthful, and that bummed me out.”

Edwards has sensed a pattern of untruthfulness. “Baby boomers are most likely to lie about age,” she says, “while Gen Xers are most likely to fib about their income.”

Manfredi wishes the sites would offer verified information about users. But that runs counter to another user concern: privacy. Among those singles in our survey who hadn’t tried online dating, one in 10 said they’d like to give it a shot but had concerns, describing themselves as private people (50 percent), and worried about data and information security (48 percent) and scams (46 percent).

How to Protect Your Privacy

They’re not alone: Many of us are wary of the marriage of technology and our love lives. Weigel points to real-life concerns, like the data breach in 2015 of the extramarital affair site Ashley Madison, which revealed user details including email addresses. “Or I think of professor friends on Tinder who are afraid they’ll see their students,” she says. Most sites offer common-sense tips on how to protect yourself, including not sharing personal contact information right away and going on first dates in public places. And if someone asks for money, don’t send it. The FBI says Americans lost more than \$82 million to online dating fraud in the last six months of 2014. (See “Avoiding the Sweetheart Swindle,” at right.)

Success in online dating requires a realistic idea of what the sites can offer and the patience to go on lots of coffee dates. “They’re made for meeting people,” says Christian Rudder, a co-founder of OkCupid. “They should be called online introductions, not online dating.”

When Caploe got back into the dating game, she tried to keep the whole endeavor fun. “It wasn’t, ‘Now I need a man to make my life complete.’ Some people look at online dating as a second job. That was definitely not me.” Her first-date strategy was to pretend it was just a business meeting, “which made it easy to go and just see what happened.”

There was the time a man messaged her on JDate and she responded that she couldn’t get together because she was having lower back pain, “which is a total baby boomer problem,” she says now, with a laugh. When they eventually met in person, she thought he was 10 times more attractive than in his photos. “We went to a gallery. We hung around in Central Park and he bought me an ice cream,” she says. “And that was it.” Today, 15 months later, they’re still going strong.

Avoiding the Sweetheart Swindle



IT’S A CON as old as time. An impostor poses as the perfect suitor, lures a victim into a romance, then proceeds to loot his or her finances. And now, with the twist of modern technology, con artists are finding victims through online dating sites and apps.

“I know someone who ran into a scammer while online dating,” says Marc Riolo, a veteran of online dating who lives in Washington State. “My friend was messaging with this guy, who said he was an oil executive flying in and out of the country, stringing her along with excuses for not meeting up.”

When the suitor emailed her to say he was in jail and needed bail, the woman’s friends felt compelled to step in.

“We had to convince her the situation was suspicious. She really liked the guy, but she didn’t send the money,” Riolo recalls. “And then he just disappeared.”

But not everyone manages to escape an online romance scam unscathed. According to the FBI, in the last six months of 2014 Americans lost more than \$82 million to online dating fraud in situations similar to the one Riolo recounted.

What are some warning signs? When someone you haven’t met in person wants to quickly leave the dating site’s messaging apps—and the privacy they offer—to talk

by phone or send messages to your email address. Or once you’ve established an online relationship, the suitor gives multiple excuses to avoid meeting up. Or he or she cancels a date to finally meet at the last minute for outlandish reasons. An ensuing plea for money might involve expenses for family members, medical problems, or a business deal gone sour.

In our survey, more women than men (56 percent to 41 percent) reported hesitating to try online dating because of concerns about scams. Monica Whitty, a psychologist and the author of “Truth, Lies and Trust on the Internet” (Routledge, 2008), is working to develop new ways to detect and prevent online fraud, such as software with the potential to identify scammers through the language they use. And AARP is petitioning leading online dating sites such as Match.com and OkCupid to educate its members on how common and devastating—financially and emotionally—these scams can be.

In the meantime, there are a couple of easy things you can do to avoid falling victim to a romance scam. Don’t hesitate to search online, using a suitor’s full name, to see whether his or her photos and claims match his or her social media imprint. And take a good look at the photos. Often scammers will use glamorous pictures stolen from someone else with model looks.

At the end of the day, remember the old adage: If someone seems too good to be true, they probably are.

Ratings > **Love on the Line** The abysmal ratings here show how difficult dating can be. But our survey finds a silver lining: 44 percent of the time, the pain often pays off in a happy coupling.



Online Dating Service	Cost	Reader Score	Survey Results										
			Quantity of Matches	Quality of Matches	Amount of Information Provided About Potential Dates	Value	Ease of Sign-Up/Profile Setup	Ease of Making Changes	Search Features	Filter Features	Privacy Settings	Appearance	Messaging Features
OkCupid	Free	56	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️
Tinder	Free	52	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬆️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️
Grindr	Free	52	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️
PlentyOfFish	Free	50	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️
JDate	\$19 ³	49	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️
Match.com	\$21 ³	49	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️
AdultFriendFinder	\$20 ⁴	47	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️
SeniorPeopleMeet	\$15 ³	46	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️
eHarmony	\$20 ⁴	46	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️
OurTime.com	NA	46	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️
Christian Mingle	\$39 ⁵	44	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️
Zoosk	\$30 ⁵	40	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️
Chemistry	\$13 ³	38	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️
Ashley Madison	\$49/Free ⁶	37	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️	⬇️

GUIDE TO THE RATINGS: Ratings are based on 9,636 Consumer Reports subscribers who completed the 2016 Online Dating Survey. Respondents told us about their experience with one or two dating websites or apps

between 2014 and 2016. The survey reflects 13,532 ratings. Ratings show websites with sufficient data. Reader Score refers to how respondents rated their overall satisfaction with the online dating service and is not

limited to the factors listed under survey results. A score of 100 means all respondents were completely satisfied; 80 means very satisfied, on average; 60, fairly well-satisfied.

Differences in reader scores of fewer than 4 points are not meaningful. Scores for all ratings categories are relative and reflect averages on a scale from Completely Satisfied to Completely Dissatisfied.

Your Online Dating Dictionary

A guide to common terms used in online dating. If you adopt them in your own profile, you may risk sounding like a teenager.

DTE. "Down to earth."

DTR or **LTR.** "Define the relationship" or "Label the relationship."

Exclusive. Indicates relationship status where neither party is dating other people.

F2F. "Face to face," or meeting up in person.

FWB and **NSA.** "Friends with benefits" and "No strings

attached," ways of signaling a desire for a casual physical relationship without a commitment.

IRL. "In real life," i.e., not online.

Meet up for coffee. A short, informal date, often during the daytime.

Netflix and chill. An invitation to watch Netflix together, which has become slang for coming over to have sex.

No hookups. Hooking up is slang for any kind of casual sexual behavior, from kissing to intercourse, so "no hookups" indicates someone looking for a serious relationship.

Official and **FBO.** "Official" is when two people are publicly dating; "FBO" stands for "Facebook official," i.e., when the relationship

status on one's Facebook account has been changed to reflect that a person is no longer single.

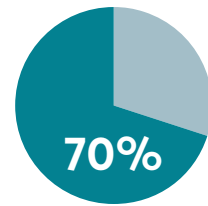
Sexting. Where sex meets texting; sending someone sexually explicit messages or photos.

Tinderella. A twist on Cinderella; popular with male Tinder users to describe the perfect match.

Road Report

Ratings from our test track plus expert car advice

OVERALL PERCENTAGE OF OWNERS WHO WOULD DEFINITELY BUY THEIR CAR AGAIN



Cars That Owners Love and Hate

Our Owner Satisfaction Survey reveals the cars, SUVs, and trucks that deliver performance and pleasure for the long haul.

by **Mike Monticello**



BUYING A CAR is a little bit like choosing a mate: You shop around a lot, seek opinions from family and friends, and maybe take a test drive or two before ultimately committing. That way, the relationship will hopefully be a happy one that lasts long after the new-car smell is gone.

Sometimes, though, a car turns out to be a disappointment, no matter how bright your future together seemed at the start. A few months—or even years—after you buy it, you realize that it's not living up to expectations. Maybe the car's not as luxurious or fuel-efficient as you thought it would be; perhaps it's always in the shop. Whatever the reason, it's not long before you have a bad case of buyer's remorse and you've lost that loving feeling.

Of course, car shoppers have a real advantage because they can consult our expert ratings at any time. Consumer Reports' Annual Owner Satisfaction Survey can also improve the chances of finding a compatible car match. How? Our survey data reveals whether, all things considered, owners would buy the same car again. The answer to that question is what determines our owner-satisfaction rating, which is a powerful piece of intel because it predicts how well a particular model will satisfy other owners.

In fact, the owner-satisfaction rating is so important that it's one of the pillars of the Overall Score we award each tested car—along with road-test performance, reliability, and safety. The rating is unique in that it reflects the opinions of owners, not the experts at Consumer Reports.

Usually the car owners and our experts agree. But not always. For example, we don't see eye to eye on the Chevrolet Volt. Our testers panned the car for its mediocre driving experience, but it ranked third overall in our survey, with owners praising its "peppy" around-town power and energy efficiency.

This year's survey offers the richest portrait of vehicles we've ever presented because, for the first time, it complements our traditional

owner-satisfaction rating with additional owner insights on several important factors: driving experience, comfort, value, and styling.

Satisfaction Highs and Lows

Among the most interesting findings this year's survey revealed:

Brands on the move. The Tesla, Porsche, Audi, and Subaru brands remained in the top four spots, respectively, again this year. But Lincoln climbed from 21st place last year to 12th this year, and Hyundai soared to 13th from 24th, based on the strength of new and recently redesigned models.



OVERALL SCORE EXPLAINED

OUR OVERALL SCORE accounts for a vehicle's performance in our road tests, results from our reliability and owner-satisfaction surveys, and safety, or how well it protects the driver and passengers. The score helps guide car buyers to the best purchase and holds the automotive industry to the highest possible standards.

➤ **Road Test** represents the final tally after we conduct more than 50 assessments on each vehicle. Some of the findings—such as fuel economy and acceleration—are objective; others, including fit and finish evaluations, are subjective.

➤ **Predicted Reliability** is our forecast of how well a new model is likely to hold up, based on CR's Annual Auto Survey.

➤ **Owner Satisfaction** comes from our annual survey in which we ask owners whether they would definitely buy or lease their particular vehicle again.

➤ **Safety** takes into account government and insurance-industry crash-test results and the availability of a frontal-crash prevention system.

Some of the mighty have fallen.

Ram, a brand that sells just pickup trucks and vans, took a huge tumble from last year's fifth place to 17th. Other brands that dropped include BMW (from sixth to 14th place) and Volkswagen (from 16th to a dismal 24th).

Hybrids were a hit. Toyota's Prius bested all compact cars; the Hyundai Sonata Hybrid was the top midsize car; Toyota's Avalon Hybrid took large car honors; and the Toyota RAV4 Hybrid beat out all other compact SUVs.

Affordable luxury is an oxymoron. Entry-level luxury cars and SUVs were two of the lowest-scoring categories.

Certain new models were misses. Although new or refreshed models tend to rate well with owners, the updated 2016 Acura ILX ranked dead last, with just 41 percent of owners saying they'd definitely purchase it again. The redesigned Toyota Tacoma also fizzled, with only 67 percent saying they'd definitely buy another one, compared with a high 86 percent of owners of the all-new Honda Ridgeline.

Problem-prone yet loved. Several vehicles with subpar reliability still ranked high in owner satisfaction. These tend to have unique character or special abilities. Those that stand out include the Chevrolet Suburban and GMC Yukon XL, Tesla Model X, Chevrolet Volt, Dodge Challenger, Ford Mustang, and Chevrolet and GMC's 3500 heavy-duty pickup trucks.

Profiles of Owner Favorites

We asked owners to describe their experiences with their cars in detail, and we include this feedback in the roundup of car profiles on the following pages. Although in most cases we highlight the top-ranked model among popular categories, we spotlighted two second-place models—the Buick Regal and Kia Optima—that stand out as compelling, value-driven choices in their categories. (There was a three-way tie for owner satisfaction in the full-sized pickup truck category; here, we focused on the best-selling Ford F-150.)

Road Report ➤ **Cars Owners Love** Readers say in their own words what they think of a dozen cars that deliver high owner satisfaction, alongside assessments by CR's own auto experts.

Compact Car

Toyota Prius

PRICE RANGE \$24,685-\$30,015 FUEL 52 MPG

81
OVERALL SCORE

- OWNER SATISFACTION
- ROAD TEST
- RELIABILITY

OWNERS SAY "Your glowing reports on this car vastly understate its attributes."

"Great improvement in handling, ride, [and] mpg over previous Prius."

"Performance, ride, handling, quietness, and especially mpg are beyond what I expected."

CR SAYS *Even after four generations, the Prius remains a unique breakthrough vehicle. The 52 mpg overall achieved by the redesigned 2016 Toyota Prius is a phenomenal accomplishment, especially viewed against the previous model's already impressive 44 mpg overall. In fact, it's the highest fuel economy we've ever recorded by a car that doesn't plug in. Stellar reliability is a bonus.*

TOYOTA RAV4 HYBRID



Satisfaction Standouts
These models were among the owner favorites this year.

KIA OPTIMA



FORD F-150 (SEE P. 50)

Luxury Compact

Buick Regal

PRICE RANGE \$27,065-\$36,540 FUEL 24 MPG

81
OVERALL SCORE

- OWNER SATISFACTION
- ROAD TEST
- RELIABILITY

OWNERS SAY "I abandoned GM in the Eighties for a Japanese brand, heard about GM improvements and value, and found it all to be true."

"To date this is the quietest car I have ever driven at this price point."

"Great car. I own the GS model and enjoy the heck out of driving it. Overall, the car is what I would consider the complete package for a sports-tuned sedan."

CR SAYS *A highly capable yet understated car, today's Regal contrasts starkly with the traditionally stodgy image that Buick is quickly shedding. The Regal stands out as the affordable domestic option in an import-dominated field. It's also a hit with its owners, and not just because it's American—only the Audi A4 scored better for owner satisfaction in the luxury compact segment. Regal owners were particularly impressed with its nimble handling and sporty driving character, comfort, and standard features for the price.*

Midsized Sedan

Kia Optima

PRICE RANGE \$22,140-\$30,990 FUEL 28 MPG

85
OVERALL SCORE

- OWNER SATISFACTION
- ROAD TEST
- RELIABILITY

OWNERS SAY "I am more satisfied with my Kia than any other vehicle that I have owned or driven."

"Love the car's looks and the options that it has. Great price for this car."

"The EX model I purchased came with heated/ventilated seats, blind-spot warning, and rear camera with cross-traffic warning, all of which I find very valuable. And it didn't require an overpriced additional package."

CR SAYS *Owners love the Optima because it does so many things so well: Few midsized sedans offer the Kia's feature set at this price. It drives nicely, with responsive, secure handling and a ride evocative of higher-priced European sedans. A choice of base, turbo, or hybrid engine only heightens its allure, and owners praise the Optima's sharp styling and long menu of available features. An impressive 82 percent of owners said they would definitely buy another, signaling higher satisfaction than sales champs Honda Accord and Toyota Camry.*

Luxury Midsized

Hyundai Genesis

PRICE RANGE \$41,400-\$54,550 FUEL 20 MPG

80
OVERALL SCORE

- OWNER SATISFACTION
- ROAD TEST
- RELIABILITY

OWNERS SAY "Best value, safety features, handling, style, etc. Why pay more for a 'badge' BMW, Mercedes, or Lexus? This car beats them. Let the must-have status lovers pay more for less!"

"I love everything about this car—the styling, the comfort, the power, and the control."

"One cannot beat the value. I compared Cadillac and Audi as alternatives. Neither was as comfortable, and both cost \$15,000 more to get the same level of tech advances."

CR SAYS *The Genesis delivers the sumptuous amenities of other luxury midsized sedans costing thousands more. Offered with a refined V6 or a potent V8, the Hyundai has responsive handling and a comfortable ride, though it doesn't quite match its German rivals. Still, there's no ignoring the car's luxury-for-the-money quotient: It not only got the highest owner-satisfaction score in its class but also was the only vehicle in the survey to earn top marks across all the satisfaction factors.*

Luxury Compact SUV
Porsche Macan

PRICE RANGE \$47,500-\$76,000 FUEL 19 MPG

74
OVERALL SCORE

- OWNER SATISFACTION
- 85 ROAD TEST
- 1 RELIABILITY

OWNERS SAY “A sports car in an SUV. Fits my need for driving experience, and easy access for my old bones.”

“Has been quite reliable, and the routine service experiences have been exemplary. Driving it puts a grin on my face every day, and I look forward to the commute.”

“Outstanding SUV performance. Build quality is superb.”

CR SAYS *Porsche’s Macan takes the “sport” in sport-utility vehicle to heart, wrapping the flavor, feel, and performance of Porsche’s sports cars in functional packaging. In testing, we were blown away by the Macan’s driving dynamics. If you love to drive for the sake of driving, the Macan lives up to the brand promise for excitement.*

Compact SUV
Toyota RAV4 Hybrid

PRICE RANGE \$29,030-\$34,030 FUEL 31 MPG

78
OVERALL SCORE

- OWNER SATISFACTION
- 74 ROAD TEST
- RELIABILITY

OWNERS SAY “Fuel economy, comfort, ride, handling, and acceleration are great. Safety features on the Hybrid Limited are unsurpassed.”

“Love the hybrid function—excellent mpg, fast off the line, very quiet.”

“It has a lot of cargo space. Comfortable for four adults to travel with their luggage. Gas mileage is excellent.”

CR SAYS *Our survey clearly indicates that owners love their hybrids. In the case of the RAV4, respondents were considerably more positive about the hybrid version of Toyota’s small SUV than the regular one. They were particularly smitten with its drivability in stop-and-go conditions and its fuel economy. At 31 mpg overall, the RAV4 Hybrid is the most fuel-efficient SUV we’ve tested. It’s like the Camry of compact SUVs: understated, well-rounded, practical, easy to drive, and competent in every way.*

Owner Satisfaction With Brands ...

These rankings represent owner sentiment across each brand’s model line. Even a brand with a low ranking can make a satisfying model—the Nissan Murano, for instance, is well-liked by its owners despite Nissan being ranked second to last.

Rank	Brand	Would Buy Again	Rank	Brand	Would Buy Again
1	Tesla	91%	16	Mini	71%
2	Porsche	84%	17	Ram	70%
3	Audi	77%	18	Kia	70%
4	Subaru	76%	19	Mercedes-Benz	69%
5	Toyota	76%	20	Volvo	69%
6	Honda	75%	21	Buick	68%
7	Mazda	74%	22	Cadillac	68%
8	Chrysler	73%	23	Dodge	66%
9	Chevrolet	73%	24	Volkswagen	64%
10	Lexus	73%	25	Jeep	60%
11	GMC	73%	26	Acura	58%
12	Lincoln	73%	27	Infiniti	58%
13	Hyundai	73%	28	Nissan	58%
14	BMW	72%	29	Fiat	53%
15	Ford	72%			

Each brand is based on at least two models.

... And Models

In general, the most satisfying models tend to be those that have a strong personality and deliver on a promise. The least satisfying models run the gamut, but all make a good first impression that they can’t live up to over time.

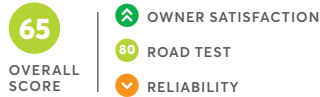
Rank	Make & Model	Would Buy Again	Car Type
MOST SATISFYING			
1	Tesla Model S	94%	Ultraluxury car
2	Chevrolet Corvette	91%	Sports/Sporty car
3	Chevrolet Volt*	90%	Electric Car/Plug-in Hybrid
4	Mazda MX-5 Miata*	89%	Sports/Sporty Car
5	Audi Q7*	89%	Luxury Midsized SUV
6	Toyota Prius*	89%	Compact Car
7	Porsche 911	88%	Sports/Sporty Car
8	Tesla Model X*	88%	Luxury Midsized SUV
9	Chevrolet Camaro*	87%	Sports/Sporty Car
10	Chrysler Pacifica*	87%	Minivan
LEAST SATISFYING			
1	Acura ILX*	41%	Luxury Entry-Level Car
2	Jeep Compass	42%	Compact SUV
3	Dodge Dart	42%	Compact Car
4	Infiniti Q50	48%	Luxury Compact Car
5	Nissan Pathfinder	49%	Midsized SUV
6	Nissan Versa Note	49%	Subcompact Car
7	Nissan Sentra	49%	Compact Car
8	Jeep Patriot	50%	Compact SUV
9	Acura RLX	50%	Luxury Midsized Car

*Based on one model year of data.

Full-Sized Pickup

Ford F-150

PRICE RANGE \$26,540-\$63,025 FUEL 16 MPG



OWNERS SAY “I especially like [the] blind-spot monitor, rearview camera, and cooled/heated leather seats. Interior looks like it belongs in a Lexus and not a truck.”

“The six-cylinder turbo engine is an amazing workhorse.”

“Very quiet cabin, smooth ride, comfortable seats, great acceleration.

For my wife to be happy riding in a truck ... amazing.”

CR SAYS Like the truck’s owners, our expert testers were effusive about the F-150’s powerful turbocharged V6 engines, as well as its comfy ride, quiet cabin, and plentiful features. Bottom line: Ford’s venerable F-150 hauls satisfaction by the truckload.

Compact Pickup

Honda Ridgeline

PRICE RANGE \$29,475-\$42,870 FUEL 20 MPG



OWNERS SAY “After testing several vehicles, this was hands-down the most comfortable, roomy, and easy-to-drive midsize truck.”

“Outstanding ride, comfort, and handling. Excellent versatility.”

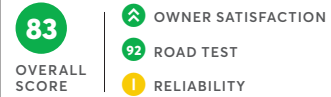
“Power and mileage are much improved over the previous model.”

CR SAYS After a two-year break, Honda has reintroduced an all-new Ridgeline. Although its bed is shallow and off-road abilities are limited, we were impressed with the Ridgeline’s carlike ride, comfy cabin, and clever cargo-toting features, which make it a great alternative to traditional pickups. And clearly, owners agree with us.

Sports Car

Chevrolet Corvette

PRICE RANGE \$55,450-\$83,450 FUEL 20 MPG



OWNERS SAY “The styling and performance are unmatched at this price point.”

“Excellent styling, handling, comfort, gas mileage at 30-plus mpg ... made in America!”

“This model is a significant step forward in making the driver feel confident and at ease both when driving normally, and when driving hard on a race track.”

CR SAYS When it comes to bang for the buck in the sports-car world, it’s hard to beat the Chevrolet Corvette. Whether in standard 455-hp form, or the 650-hp Z06, acceleration is blistering and handling is pinpoint. Corvette owners clearly love their car, ranking Chevy’s sleek two-seater second overall in our survey.

Midsized SUV

Kia Sorento

PRICE RANGE \$25,400-\$45,700 FUEL 21 MPG



OWNERS SAY “Design, features, quality, and drivability are all on par [with] the most expensive SUVs on the market. I consider it a best-kept secret.”

“Very comfortable to drive. Lots of standard features not found on other SUVs.”

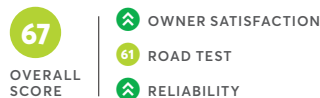
“Loads of cargo space and compartments to store items.”

CR SAYS A standout in our tests, the midsized Kia Sorento features the cargo room and passenger accommodations akin to larger, pricier vehicles. A comfortable ride, responsive handling, quiet cabin, and advanced safety features available on almost every trim make for an appealing package that resonated with our testers, as well as with owners. The Sorento’s pleasant driving experience and family-friendly functionality have placed it among our highest-scoring midsized SUVs. For many shoppers, this just-the-right-size Goldilocks package lands in the sweet spot.

Large SUV

Ford Expedition

PRICE RANGE \$46,225-\$68,996 FUEL 14 MPG



OWNERS SAY “The EcoBoost turbocharged engine is extremely strong and delivers decent fuel economy for such a large vehicle.”

“Excellent third-row seats. High off the ground and comfortable for large groups and long rides.”

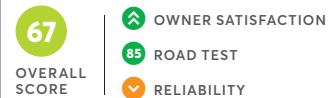
“For an eight-passenger truck, it is extremely quiet, with a very plush interior.”

CR SAYS Though it’s an older design, the Expedition continues to win the hearty approval of its owners, making it the most beloved among full-sized SUVs. The huge interior and warehouse-grade cargo space helped earn the Expedition top marks for comfort. Owners have also embraced the new-school, twin-turbo V6, awarding it the highest rating for driving experience. This workhorse equally fills the needs of big families and those who need to tow and haul cargo. Benefiting from years of quality improvements, the Expedition’s enviable reliability adds to its appeal.

Minivan

Chrysler Pacifica

PRICE RANGE \$28,595-\$42,495 FUEL 21 MPG



OWNERS SAY “The driving experience feels more like a sedan than a top-heavy minivan.”

“I had a 2012 Dodge Grand Caravan and this 2017 Pacifica is light years better, with a smooth and quiet ride.”

“I particularly like the Stow ’n Go seating and the Stow ’n Vac. Fit and finish are top notch.”

CR SAYS Proving Chrysler can still build a winning minivan, the all-new Pacifica is a breath of fresh air compared with the Town & Country it replaces. The Pacifica is quick and fuel-efficient, rides well, and has a comfy, well-thought-out interior. So far, owners are happy. It was easily the top-ranked minivan in our survey; the Dodge Grand Caravan, a mechanical twin to the Town & Country, tied for last with the Ford Transit Connect. Further, the Pacifica has the highest road-test score among minivans. Our only real concern lies with Chrysler’s unimpressive reliability track record.

Ratings > **Owner Satisfaction** This score is based on how likely car owners would be to buy the same vehicle again; they also weighed in on factors such as value and driving experience.



Make & Model	Ratings				
	Owner Satisfaction	Driving	Comfort	Value	Styling
SUBCOMPACT CARS					
Honda Fit	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑
Toyota Prius C	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓
Hyundai Accent	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Ford Fiesta	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Fiat 500	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Chevrolet Sonic	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Nissan Versa Note	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
COMPACT CARS					
Toyota Prius*	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Hyundai Elantra*	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Honda Civic*	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Ford C-Max	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓
Toyota Prius V	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
Mini Cooper	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑
Mazda3	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Kia Soul	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑
Toyota Corolla	↑	↓	↓	↑	↓
Volkswagen Golf	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Volkswagen Beetle	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
Chevrolet Cruze*	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑
Kia Forte	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Ford Focus	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Volkswagen Jetta	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓
Fiat 500L*	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Nissan Sentra	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Dodge Dart	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
MIDSIZED CARS					
Hyundai Sonata Hybrid*	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Kia Optima*	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Toyota Camry Hybrid	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Subaru Legacy	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Ford Fusion Hybrid	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Honda Accord	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Toyota Camry	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Chevrolet Malibu*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Mazda6	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Hyundai Sonata	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑
Ford Fusion	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Nissan Altima	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑

Make & Model	Ratings				
	Owner Satisfaction	Driving	Comfort	Value	Styling
MIDSIZED CARS (Continued)					
Volkswagen Passat	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Chrysler 200	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑
LARGE CARS					
Toyota Avalon Hybrid	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Chrysler 300	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Chevrolet Impala	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Dodge Charger	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Hyundai Azera	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Nissan Maxima*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Toyota Avalon	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑
Kia Cadenza	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑
Ford Taurus	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
ELECTRIC CARS/PLUG-IN HYBRIDS					
Tesla Model S	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Chevrolet Volt*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Tesla Model X*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
BMW i3	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓
Nissan Leaf	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓
LUXURY ENTRY-LEVEL CARS					
Audi A3	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
Buick Verano	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
Lexus CT 200h	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Mercedes-Benz CLA	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Acura ILX*	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑
LUXURY COMPACT CARS					
Audi A4*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Buick Regal	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
BMW 3 Series	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Mercedes-Benz C-Class	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Volvo S60	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Acura TLX	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Lexus IS	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
Cadillac ATS	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Infiniti Q50	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
LUXURY MIDSIZED CARS					
Hyundai Genesis	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Audi A7	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Lexus ES Hybrid	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Audi A6	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑

*Based on one model year of data.

Make & Model	Ratings				
	Owner Satisfaction	Driving	Comfort	Value	Styling
LUXURY MIDSIZED CARS (Continued)					
Lincoln MKZ Hybrid	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Lexus ES	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Mercedes-Benz E-Class	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Lexus GS	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
BMW 5 Series	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Infiniti Q70	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Buick LaCrosse	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Lincoln MKZ	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Cadillac CTS	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Cadillac XTS	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
Acura RLX	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
ULTRALUXURY CARS					
Tesla Model S	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Lexus LS	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Mercedes-Benz S-Class	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Audi A8	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
COUPES & CONVERTIBLES					
Audi S5	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Audi A5	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
BMW 4 Series	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
SPORTS/SPORTY CARS					
Chevrolet Corvette	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Mazda MX-5 Miata*	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Porsche 911	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Chevrolet Camaro*	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Dodge Challenger	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Ford Mustang	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Volkswagen GTI	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
BMW 2 Series	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Jaguar F-Type	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Audi S4	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Subaru Impreza WRX/STi	↑	↑	↓	↑	↑
Lexus RC	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
MINIVANS					
Chrysler Pacifica*	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Toyota Sienna	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓
Honda Odyssey	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓
Kia Sedona	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑
Dodge Grand Caravan	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Ford Transit Connect	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

Make & Model	Ratings				
	Owner Satisfaction	Driving	Comfort	Value	Styling
WAGONS					
Subaru Outback	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Volvo V60	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Volkswagen Golf SportWagen	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
SUBCOMPACT SUVs					
Subaru Crosstrek	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑
Honda HR-V*	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Mazda CX-3*	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
Jeep Renegade	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Nissan Juke	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
Chevrolet Trax	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Mitsubishi Outlander Sport	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
COMPACT SUVs					
Toyota RAV4 Hybrid*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Subaru Forester	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓
Kia Sportage*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Hyundai Tucson*	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑
Ford Escape	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Mazda CX-5	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
Honda CR-V	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Toyota RAV4	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Volkswagen Tiguan	↓	↑	↑	↓	↓
Jeep Cherokee	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Nissan Rogue	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Jeep Patriot	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Jeep Compass	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
MIDSIZED SUVs					
Kia Sorento*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Toyota Highlander	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Toyota 4Runner	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑
Honda Pilot*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Ford Edge	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Toyota Highlander Hybrid	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Nissan Murano	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Jeep Wrangler	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑
Jeep Grand Cherokee	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Hyundai Santa Fe	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Hyundai Santa Fe Sport	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑
Ford Explorer	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Chevrolet Equinox	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
GMC Terrain	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑

Make & Model	Ratings				
	Owner Satisfaction	Driving	Comfort	Value	Styling
MIDSIZED SUVs (Continued)					
Dodge Journey	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓
Nissan Pathfinder	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
LARGE SUVs					
Ford Expedition	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Ford Flex	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓
Dodge Durango	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Chevrolet Suburban	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
GMC Yukon XL	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Chevrolet Tahoe	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
GMC Yukon	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Toyota Sequoia	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓
Chevrolet Traverse	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
LUXURY ENTRY-LEVEL SUVs					
Audi Q3	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
BMW X1*	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
Mini Cooper Countryman	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑
Buick Encore	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Mercedes-Benz GLA	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
LUXURY COMPACT SUVs					
Porsche Macan	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Cadillac XT5*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Audi Q5	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Mercedes-Benz GLC*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
BMW X3	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Acura RDX	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Lexus NX	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Lincoln MKC	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Volvo XC60	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Infiniti QX50	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
LUXURY MIDSIZED & LARGE SUVs					
Audi Q7*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Tesla Model X*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Lexus RX*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑

Make & Model	Ratings				
	Owner Satisfaction	Driving	Comfort	Value	Styling
LUXURY MIDSIZED & LARGE SUVs (Continued)					
Lexus RX Hybrid*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Porsche Cayenne	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Lincoln MKX*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Lexus GX	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
BMW X5	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Mercedes-Benz GLE*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Volvo XC90*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Cadillac Escalade	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Buick Enclave	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Lexus LX	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Acura MDX*	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Volkswagen Touareg	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Infiniti QX60	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
COMPACT PICKUPS					
Honda Ridgeline*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Toyota Tacoma*	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Chevrolet Colorado	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
GMC Canyon	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑
Nissan Frontier	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
FULL-SIZED PICKUPS					
Chevrolet Silverado 3500HD	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
GMC Sierra 3500HD	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Ford F-150	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Toyota Tundra	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Chevrolet Silverado 2500HD	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
GMC Sierra 2500HD	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Ford F-350	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Ram 3500	↑	↑	↓	↓	↑
Ford F-250	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Ram 2500	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑
Chevrolet Silverado 1500	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
GMC Sierra 1500	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑
Ram 1500	↓	↑	↑	↓	↑

HOW WE SURVEY: Owners were asked questions on our 2016 Owner Satisfaction Survey about their cars ranging from model years 2014 to 2017. Data from the three newest years were used provided the vehicle wasn't significantly changed in that time. Some ratings might be based

on a single model year's data; those vehicles are marked with an asterisk (*). Satisfaction is based on the percentage of owners who responded "definitely yes" to the question of whether they would buy the same vehicle if they had it to do all over

again (considering price, performance, reliability, comfort, enjoyment, etc.). Factor scores were determined based on the percentage of owners who said they were "very satisfied" with their car with respect to the following four categories: Driving (which takes into account

acceleration and handling), Comfort (which includes seats, climate control, noise, and ride), Value (defined by whether an owner got what he or she wanted relative to price), and Styling (an owner's opinion about how the car looks inside and out).



Old Tricks for a New Dog

The updated **BMW 3 Series** turns the dial back toward driving engagement.

THOUGH HISTORICALLY THE perfect instrument to carve up ribbons of twisty roads, the recent iteration of the 3 Series had emphasized luxury and technology over sport. But with the very latest update, BMW has now rebalanced the luxury-to-sport ratio in favor of the enthusiast again.

Our 330i's 2.0-liter four-cylinder turbo provides punchy performance and a competitive 26 mpg, even with AWD. Complementing the engine is an excellent eight-speed

automatic that delivers smooth and timely shifts.

No matter the road, the BMW is a delight to drive, thanks to its agile, engaging handling. The suspension absorbs most bumps well, but the ride feels a bit nervous. Plus, the BMW's distinct engine sound and some road noise on coarse pavement creep into the cabin.

The interior features high-quality materials that are impeccably constructed and assembled. We found the front seats to be supremely comfortable and supportive. Relative to the class, the rear seat is livable for a few hours but not an all-day trip.

BMW continues to improve the iDrive infotainment system, but for the uninitiated it still takes practice to master.

Although advanced safety features such as forward-collision warning, automatic emergency braking, and a rearview camera are available, they cost more than \$4,500.

LUXURY COMPACT SEDANS

BMW 330i

OVERALL SCORE **78**

ROAD-TEST SCORE **86**

HIGHS

Handling, transmission, front-seat comfort, fit and finish, fuel economy

LOWS

Some controls, choppy ride

POWERTRAIN

248-hp, 2.0-liter 4-cylinder turbo; 8-speed automatic transmission; all-wheel drive

FUEL

26 mpg

PRICE AS TESTED

\$51,745



Performance Over Panache

Powerful and fun to drive, the revised **Infiniti Q50** still trails the segment's best in terms of fuel efficiency, refinement, and ergonomics.

INFINITI TRIES TO compete by bringing more power to the party for the same money. And this 300-hp six-cylinder 3.0t, with its effortless forward thrust, is far quicker than its four-cylinder rivals.

The downside to this gusto is a paltry 22 mpg overall with all-wheel drive. A more frugal—but far less powerful—turbo four-cylinder is also available.

Handling benefits from quick steering that feels natural, an improvement over the detached, video-game feel in

earlier Q50s. In cornering, the sedan boasts agility and confidence. The ride has an underlying firmness, but it's steady and composed.

The strong acceleration and enjoyable handling are assets, but the car's race-track attitude compromises the Q50's luxury-car intent. For instance, some \$30,000 midsize sedans are quieter inside than this Infiniti.

The interior is mundane but relatively roomy, with good outward visibility. The front seats are short on optimal thigh and lateral support, and the lack of four-way adjustable lumbar is inexcusable. Plus, the illogical infotainment system is a major irritation.

Forward-collision warning and automatic emergency braking are optional, and they require additional option packages that add thousands of dollars to the bottom line.

Last, below-average predicted reliability further hurts the Q50's standing.

LUXURY COMPACT SEDANS

Infiniti Q50

OVERALL SCORE **71**

ROAD-TEST SCORE **85**

HIGHS

Acceleration, agility, braking, visibility

LOWS

Cumbersome infotainment system, small trunk, reliability

POWERTRAIN

300-hp, 3.0-liter turbocharged V6 engine; 7-speed automatic transmission; all-wheel drive

FUEL

22 mpg

PRICE AS TESTED

\$48,775



Luxury With a Dose of Sport

Despite its beauty, nimble handling, and good fuel economy, the new **Mercedes-Benz E300** has room to improve.

OVER THE YEARS, the stately E-Class made even the worst roads feel like you were driving on velvet. But Mercedes-Benz has pivoted with the sedan's 2017 redesign, focusing on sporty handling and fuel efficiency, and dialing back on ride comfort.

Aiding efficiency is a four-cylinder engine that works in concert with a smooth transmission to return a commendable 24 mpg overall. Yes, off-the-line acceleration is a hair slower than with the previous V6, but nobody will

miss the larger engine's thirst.

Our E300's suspension tuning is of questionable merit. The ride is a letdown, with the E-Class challenged to absorb impacts from rough pavement. The available Luxury package should be better. Quick steering and composure in corners make handling athletic.

Inside the quiet, impeccably finished cabin are comfortable and supportive seats. The rear seat, however, is rather snug. The controls are diabolical, with too many buttons, dials, and touchpads vying for attention. Simple functions like adjusting lumbar support are multistep ordeals. Visibility and access also took steps back—sacrifices made for styling.

We like that forward-collision warning and automatic emergency braking are standard. The optional Drive Pilot semi-autonomous system can self-steer the car in some situations, but don't let yourself lose focus on driving. ▲

LUXURY MIDSIZED SEDANS

Mercedes-Benz E300

OVERALL SCORE **78**

ROAD-TEST SCORE **85**

HIGHS

Agility, braking, fuel economy, quietness, front-seat comfort, fit and finish

LOWS

Unintuitive controls, tight rear seat, rear access

POWERTRAIN

241-hp, 2.0-liter 4-cylinder turbocharged engine; 9-speed automatic transmission; all-wheel drive

FUEL

24 mpg

PRICE AS TESTED

\$69,585



A Diamond Still in the Rough

The **Volvo S90** sparkles like a gem, but it lacks sophistication common in this luxe segment.

THERE'S NO DENYING that the S90 makes a stylish statement, both inside and out. But to compete with the best luxury midsized sedans, it needs to match its European, Asian, and domestic rivals in refinement and performance. As it turns out, much of the Volvo's appeal is only skin-deep.

Whether in the daily grind or on long-distance trips, the S90 falls short. The gruff-sounding engine mars the driving experience, and the ride is stiff and unsettled—with constant

vibrations coming through to the cabin.

As for the car's handling, the best we can say is that it's competent and secure in corners, but uninspiring. Even with the most powerful engine, the S90 takes more than 7 seconds to complete the 0-60 mph dash, and the eight-speed automatic isn't particularly smooth. The iPad-like touch screen requires too much swiping and tapping, a major driving distraction.

On the positive side, the all-wheel-drive S90 got an admirable 23 mpg overall in our tests. The roomy cabin is inviting, with wood and aluminum trim, and buttery soft leather wrapping the supportive seats. To Volvo's credit, much of the advanced safety technology is standard.

The standard Pilot Assist semi-autonomous system can self-steer in some situations, but you still need to pay attention to the road. ▲

LUXURY MIDSIZED SEDANS

Volvo S90

OVERALL SCORE **62**

ROAD-TEST SCORE **73**

HIGHS

Seat comfort, fit and finish, standard advanced safety features

LOWS

Ride comfort, coarse engine noise, unintuitive controls

POWERTRAIN

316-hp, 2.0-liter 4-cylinder turbocharged/supercharged engine; 8-speed automatic transmission; all-wheel drive

FUEL

23 mpg

PRICE AS TESTED

\$61,855



Recommended	Rank	Make & Model	Price	Overall Score	Survey Results		Safety	Road-Test Results									
					Predicted Reliability	Owner Satisfaction		Road-Test Score	Overall MPG	Dry Braking, 60-0 MPH, Ft.	Acceleration, 0-60 MPH, Sec.	Avoidance Maneuver Speed, MPH	Routine Handling	Ride/Noise	Seat Comfort, Front/Rear	Controls	Luggage, Suitcases+Duffels
LUXURY COMPACT SEDANS																	
✓	1	Audi A4 Premium Plus	\$48,890	85	↑*	↑	Std./↑	88	27	135	6.3	53.5	↑	↑/↑	↑/↑	↑	2+2
✓	2	Buick Regal Premium I	\$34,485	81	↑	↑	Opt.	83	24	125	7.4	53.5	↑	↑/↑	↑/↑	↑	3+1
✓	3	BMW 328d xDrive	\$50,475	78	↓	↓	Opt.	86	35	132	8.5	54.0	↑	↑/↑	↑/↓	↓	2+1
✓	4	BMW 330i xDrive	\$51,745	78	↓	↓	Opt.	86	26	129	6.9	55.0	↑	↑/↑	↑/↓	↓	2+2
✓	5	Volvo S60 T5	\$39,925	73	↓	↓	Std./↓	80	25	128	7.9	54.0	↑	↓/↑	↑/↓	↑	3+0
	6	Mercedes-Benz C300 (4MATIC) ⚠	\$47,560	71	↓	↓	Std./↑	85	26	136	6.8	55.5	↑	↑/↑	↑/↓	↓	2+1
	7	Infiniti Q50 3.0t Premium (AWD)	\$48,775	71	↓	↓	Opt.	85	22	126	5.7	56.0	↑	↑/↑	↑/↓	↓	2+1
	8	Lexus IS 300 (AWD)	\$48,149	66	↑	↓	Std./↑	56	20	139	6.5	53.0	↑	↓/↑	↑/↓	↓	2+1
	9	Cadillac ATS Luxury (2.0T)**	\$43,295	60	↓	↓	Opt.	79	23	125	6.5	57.5	↑	↑/↑	↑/↓	↓	2+1
	10	Acura TLX SH-AWD	\$42,345	55	↓	↓	Opt.	75	25	129	6.5	55.0	↑	↑/↑	↑/↓	↓	2+2
LUXURY MIDSIZED SEDANS																	
✓	1	Infiniti Q70 (V6)	\$53,825	88	↑	↓	Opt.	90	21	128	5.8	54.5	↑	↑/↑	↑/↑	↑	3+2
✓	2	Lexus GS 350**	\$58,858	85	↑	↑	Std./↑	83	21	137	6.2	53.5	↑	↑/↑	↑/↑	↓	3+1
✓	3	Audi A6 3.0 Premium Plus Quattro	\$56,295	84	↑	↑	Opt.	90	22	132	5.7	52.5	↑	↑/↑	↑/↑	↓	3+1
✓	4	Cadillac CT6 Luxury (3.6L, AWD)	\$64,485	81	↓*	↑*	Opt.	95	22	125	6.5	52.0	↑	↑/↑	↑/↑	↓	3+2
✓	5	Genesis G80 3.8 (AWD)	\$52,450	80	↓	↑	Std./↑	89	20	129	7.2	53.0	↑	↑/↑	↑/↑	↑	3+1
✓	6	Mercedes-Benz E300 (4MATIC) ⚠	\$69,585	78	↓*	↑*	Std./↑	85	24	128	7.1	54.5	↑	↑/↑	↑/↓	↓	2+2
✓	7	Cadillac XTS Premium	\$57,200	77	↑	↓	Opt.	82	22	128	7.2	53.0	↑	↑/↑	↑/↑	↓	4+1
	8	Acura RLX Tech	\$55,345	75	↑	↓	Std./↑	75	23	128	6.5	51.5	↓	↓/↑	↑/↑	↓	2+3
	9	BMW 535i	\$58,375	73	↓	↑	Opt.	81	23	137	6.1	51.5	↑	↑/↑	↑/↑	↓	3+1
	10	Cadillac CTS Luxury (3.6L, AWD)	\$58,780	71	↓	↓	Opt.	83	22	127	6.5	54.5	↑	↑/↑	↑/↓	↓	2+2
	11	Jaguar XF Prestige (V6, AWD)	\$66,586	66	↓*	↑*	Opt.	83	21	128	5.8	51.0	↑	↑/↑	↑/↑	↓	2+1
	12	Volvo S90 T6 Momentum (AWD) ⚠	\$61,855	62	↓*	↑*	Std./↑	73	23	130	7.2	52.5	↑	↓/↑	↑/↑	↓	2+2

SCORES IN CONTEXT: Recommended models did well in our Overall Score, which factors in Road-Test results, Predicted Reliability, Owner Satisfaction, and Safety performance,

which includes crash-test results and the availability of front-crash prevention features, such as forward-collision warning and automatic

emergency braking at city or highway speeds. For these systems, NA means no such system is offered; Opt. means it's available on some versions but not necessarily the one we tested; and

models with standard systems are rated from 1 to 3 based on how many of these features are standard. For full ratings, go to [CR.org/cars](https://www.cars.com).

*Based on limited data. **Powertrain has changed since last test.

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Lost in Translation

Take these ads, please! Read literally—and let the laughter begin.

• Swedish Massage • Chinese Meridian Massage
 • Deep Tissue Massage • **Benefits of Foot Reflexology:**
 • Trigger Point Massage • Improves Circulation
 • Sports Massage • Detoxification
 • Aromatherapy • Relieves Stress & Reduces Pain
 • Hot Stone Massage • Lowers Blood Pressure

\$40 for a one-hour massage
Includes any of the listed massages.

\$29 for a one-hour foot massage
Includes neck, shoulders, and back massage. Reserve 24 hours advance appointment.

\$70 for a 90-hour massage
Includes any of the listed massages.

\$45 for a one-hour combo massage
30 minute foot & 30 minute back massage.

Open Daily 10am-10pm
 Accepting Appointments (Walk-ins Welcome)

\$70
 for a 90-hour massage
Includes any of the

Massage Marathon
 Nearly four days of hands-on time? "What a deal if you can survive it!" writes John Gearheart of Chesterfield, Mo.

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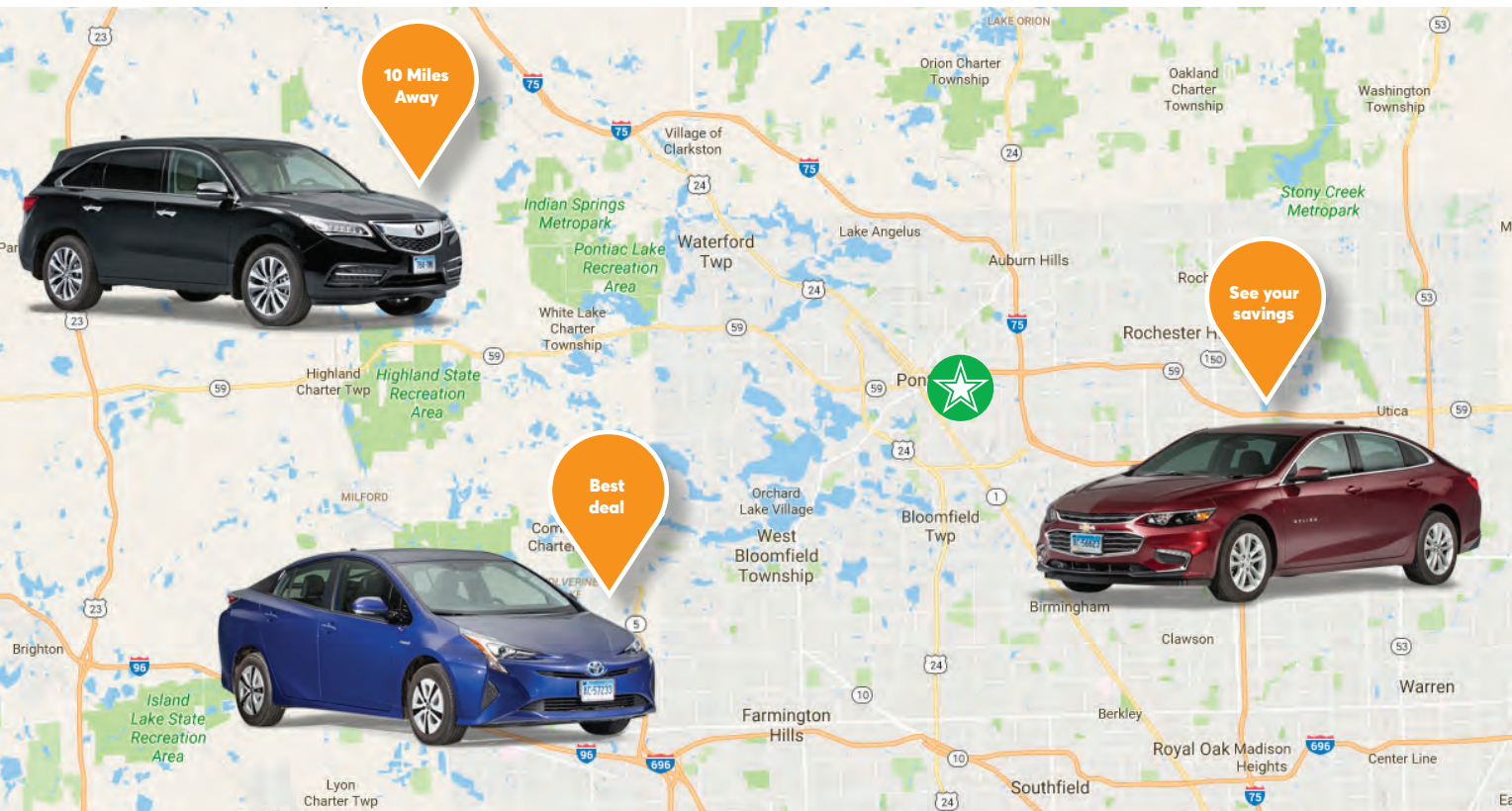
Cut and Dried
 You get exactly what you pay for with these posies. Submitted by Carol and George Rasmussen of Merced, Calif.



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You can use this section in either of two ways: Start with the main report, read about the products that interest you, and turn to this section to find whether they're sold—and for what price—in Canada. Or start here, find products sold

in Canada whose price and overall score appear promising, and read more about them in the main report and full ratings chart; page numbers appear with each Canadian report. (For some products, the Canadian model designation differs slightly from the one used in the U.S.)

In most cases, the prices we list here are the approximate retail in Canadian dollars; manufacturers' list prices are indicated by an asterisk (*). Check marks identify CR Best Buys or recommended

products in the U.S. ratings. "NA" in a chart means that information wasn't available from the manufacturer.

We include, in the Contact Info list on page 30d, the manufacturer's phone number and web address in Canada so that you can call or go online to get information on a model you can't find in the stores. (Many products that aren't available in Canadian stores can be bought online.)

We appreciate your support, but we don't take it for granted. Please write to

CanadaExtra@cu.consumer.org and tell us what you think. We can't reply to every email or implement every suggestion, but with your help we'll try to keep growing to serve your needs.

\$ CR Best Buy Products

with this icon offer the best combination of performance and price. All are recommended.

✓ Recommended Models

with this designation perform well and stand out for reasons we note.

Autos

All of the tested vehicles are available in Canada. **Report and Ratings, pages 54-56**

Make & Model	Price Range	Acceleration (Sec.)				Fuel Economy (Liters per 100 km)		
		0-50 km/h	0-100 km/h	80-100 km/h	500 Meters	City Driving	Highway Driving	Overall
LUXURY COMPACT SEDANS								
BMW 3 Series	\$39,990-\$55,250	2.9	7.2	3.4	17.4	14.3	6.1	9.2
Infiniti Q50	\$39,900-\$56,400	2.5	6.1	3.2	16.3	16.3	7.3	10.7
LUXURY MIDSIZED SEDANS								
Mercedes-Benz E-Class	\$61,200-\$79,900	2.9	7.5	3.7	17.8	15.5	6.6	9.9
Volvo S90	\$56,900-\$63,000	3.0	7.5	3.4	17.5	16.3	6.8	10.4

BMW 330i
 PRICE AS TESTED
 \$51,745 (U.S.)

78
 OVERALL
 SCORE



MERCEDES-BENZ E300
 PRICE AS TESTED
 \$69,585 (U.S.)

78
 OVERALL
 SCORE



TVs

Fifty-four of the tested TVs are available, including 41 of the recommended models. **Report and Ratings, pages 30-37**

		Brand & Model	Price	Overall Score
Rec.	Rank			
60-INCH AND LARGER				
BUDGET				
Ⓢ	2	Samsung UN60KU6300	\$1,500	71
Ⓢ	3	LG 65UH5500	\$2,500	70
Ⓢ	4	LG 60UH6150	\$1,200	68
✓	5	LG 65UH6150	\$1,750	66
	6	Vizio E65u-D3	\$1,300	62
MIDLEVEL				
Ⓢ	1	LG 65UH7650	\$1,800	75
✓	2	LG 65UH7700	\$3,500	74
✓	3	Samsung UN65KU7500	\$3,000	73
✓	4	LG 60UH6550	\$2,200	72
✓	6	Samsung UN65KU7000	\$2,100	70
✓	7	Sony XBR-65X750D	\$1,500	67
	9	Sony XBR-65X850D	\$2,900	62
TOP-TIER				
✓	1	LG OLED65G6P	\$10,000	86
✓	2	LG OLED65E6P	\$5,000	85
✓	4	Samsung UN65KS9800	\$6,100	78
✓	5	Samsung UN65KS8500	\$3,000	77
✓	7	Samsung UN65KS8000	\$2,800	76
✓	9	LG 60UH8500	\$3,500	75
✓	10	LG 65UH9500	\$2,500	75
✓	11	Samsung UN65KS9000	\$4,200	75
✓	12	Sony XBR-65Z9D	\$7,000	72
✓	13	Sony XBR-65X930D	\$3,800	71
49- TO 55-INCH				
BUDGET				
Ⓢ	2	Samsung UN55KU6300	\$1,000	72
Ⓢ	3	Samsung UN50KU6300	\$1,600	71
Ⓢ	4	LG 55UH6150	\$900	70
Ⓢ	5	Samsung UN55KU6290	\$1,000	70
✓	7	LG 49UH6100	\$700	66
	9	Vizio D50u-D1	\$790	63
	12	LG 55UH6150	\$900	62
	15	LG 49LH5700	\$650	58

		Brand & Model	Price	Overall Score
Rec.	Rank			
49- TO 55-INCH (Continued)				
MIDLEVEL				
✓	1	Samsung UN55KU6500	\$1,800	73
✓	3	LG 55UH6550	\$1,700	73
✓	4	LG 55UH7700	\$2,500	73
✓	5	Samsung UN49KU7500	\$1,700	72
✓	7	Samsung UN49KU6500	\$1,330	70
✓	8	Samsung UN49KU7000	\$1,400	69
✓	9	Sony XBR-55X850D	\$1,600	69
✓	10	Sony XBR-49X800D	\$1,100	66
	11	Sony XBR-55X700D	\$1,200	63
TOP-TIER				
✓	1	LG OLED55E6P	\$5,000	83
✓	3	Samsung UN55KS8000	\$2,200	78
✓	5	Samsung UN55KS9500	\$3,400	74
✓	6	Samsung UN49KS8000	\$2,150	73
✓	7	Samsung UN49KS8500	\$2,200	72
✓	8	Sony XBR-55X930D	\$2,800	71
40- TO 43-INCH				
BUDGET				
	1	Vizio D40u-D1	\$550	63
	3	Vizio D43-D2	\$950	61
	4	Hisense 43H7C	\$800	61
	7	Hisense 40H4C1	\$730	58
MIDLEVEL				
✓	3	LG 43UH6500	\$1,000	66
	4	Sony KDL-40W650D	\$630	59
	5	Samsung UN40K6250	\$800	59
	6	LG 43LH5700	\$500	58
TOP-TIER				
✓	1	Samsung UN40KU7000	\$1,000	69

SAMSUNG
UN60KU6300
PRICE
\$1,000 (U.S.)

71
OVERALL
SCORE



LG
OLED55E6P
PRICE
\$3,165 (U.S.)

83
OVERALL
SCORE





RECALLS

2007-2012 BMW models

On certain vehicles, the wires going to the in-tank fuel pump may not have been crimped correctly; this could potentially result in a buildup of heat, causing the surrounding plastic to melt and the fuel pump to stop working. The vehicle could stall without warning. Also, in a very rare case, a fuel leak combined with an external ignition source could increase the risk of fire.

MODELS 16,663 2007-2011 BMW X5, 2008-2011 X6, 2010-2011 5 Series, and 2012 6 Series vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer replace the fuel delivery module.

2007-2013 Mitsubishi Outlander models

On certain vehicles, water may drain from the windshield cowl area onto the front wiper link ball joint and over time this could result in corrosion and/or wear to the joint and potential separation of the wiper link ball. That could cause the windshield wipers to become inoperative.

MODELS 42,283 vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer replace the rubber boot that covers the ball joint with a countermeasure one. The wiper motor crank arm should also be inspected and replaced as necessary.

2007-2014 Dodge and Ram models

On certain vehicles equipped

with a 220-amp alternator, frequent load cycling—particularly in hot ambient conditions—could cause the alternator to develop a short, increasing the risk of an engine compartment fire. It could also result in the engine stalling, causing a loss of motive power.

MODELS 10,077 2007-2013 Ram 3500, 2008-2013 4500 and 5500, and 2013 2500; and 2011-2014 Dodge Charger police vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer replace the alternator.

2007-2014 Subaru models

On certain turbocharged vehicles, the relay that controls the secondary air injection pump may have been manufactured incorrectly, causing the relay to allow the pump to operate continuously. The pump could overheat and melt, causing a burning smell or smoke and possibly resulting in a fire.

MODELS 15,378 2007-2009 Legacy and Outback, 2008-2014 Impreza WRX/STI, and 2009-2013 Forester vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer install a revised relay.

2008-2009 Kia Sportage models

On certain vehicles, the connector pins within the hydraulic electronic control unit (HECU) assembly can corrode due to improper sealing of the HECU wire harness cover. Electrical

short circuits may occur, increasing the risk of an underhood fire.

MODELS 10,115 vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer inspect the connector pins of the HECU for corrosion. If no corrosion is identified, the dealer will replace the connector cover with a new one. If corrosion is present, the dealer will replace the HECU assembly and connector cover with new ones. Note: The presence of salt water in the HECU does not affect brake performance.

2010-2012 Ford Escape models

On certain vehicles, the thickness of the port wall of the fuel delivery module (FDM) may be below specification and could result in the supply port cracking, which could cause a fuel leak and potentially a fire.

MODELS 69,570 vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer replace the FDM flange with a flange that has a redesigned fuel supply port.

2010-2013 Subaru models

Due to a manufacturing defect on certain vehicles, if an obstruction (such as snow or ice in the cowl area of the windshield) prevents the wipers from returning to the “park” position when the wipers are turned off, the wiper arms will continuously attempt to return to the normal park position, generating an

excessive amount of electrical current in the wiper motor bottom cover and causing overheating. This could result in the windshield wipers becoming inoperable or cause a fire in the bottom cover area of the wiper motor.

MODELS 38,629 2010-2013 Legacy and Outback vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer replace the front wiper motor bottom cover assembly with a countermeasure one.

2010-2016 Hyundai Genesis Coupe models

On certain vehicles, objects or debris located under the front-passenger seat could contact the electrical connector of the occupant classification system (OCS) and disconnect the connector if the seat is moved, disabling the OCS and illuminating the instrument cluster airbag warning lamp. The first-stage front-passenger airbag would deploy in a frontal collision, regardless of the weight and size of the occupant in the front-passenger seat (even if the seat were to be occupied by a child seat or a small-statured occupant). Additionally, this condition could cause the second stage of the front-passenger airbag to fail to deploy.

MODELS 15,756 vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer secure the OCS connector to prevent it from being disconnected.

2010
SUBARU
LEGACY



2016
FORD
FOCUS



2010
HYUNDAI
GENESIS
COUPE



2015
HYUNDAI
SONATA





RECALLS

2014
MAZDA3



2011-2015 Mitsubishi RVR models

On certain vehicles, water may drain from the windshield cowl area and potentially collect in the area of the wiper motor breathing hole, possibly entering the wiper motor. Over time corrosion and/or an electrical conduction failure could result in the wiper motor not operating, which could cause the windshield wipers to become inoperative.

MODELS 27,982 vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer replace the wiper motor with an upgraded wiper motor that will prevent water intrusion.

2013-2017 Ford Focus models

Certain vehicles equipped with a manual transmission fail to conform to Canada Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (CMVSS) 206: "Door Lock and Door Retention Components." The rear hatchback can be unlocked and unlatched with a single press of the interior latch release control button while the vehicle is in motion (less than 7 km/h).

MODELS 9,877 vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer

reprogram the body control module with updated software.

2014-2016 Mazda3 models

On certain vehicles, the fuel tank may contain a defect that could allow a weld to break, potentially resulting in a fuel leak that could result in a fire.

MODELS 21,672 vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer inspect the fuel tank and replace it if necessary.

2015-2016 Hyundai Sonata models

On certain vehicles equipped with a panoramic sunroof, the wind deflector anchor plate of the sunroof may have insufficient bonding and could become partially detached from its mounting points after the sunroof is opened. It can interfere with the moveable sunroof panel as it's being closed and could allow the glass panel to separate from the vehicle while driving, creating a road hazard.

MODELS 11,114 vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer repair the wind deflector anchor plate.

2016 Dodge and Jeep models

On vehicles equipped with certain 3.6L V6 gasoline engines, the fuel rail crossover tube may be damaged. Over time this could result in a fuel leak, increasing the risk of a vehicle fire.

MODELS 2,534 Dodge Durango and Jeep Grand Cherokee vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer inspect the fuel rail crossover tube for damage. The fuel rail assembly and the lower intake manifold will be replaced on vehicles that have the damage.

may not have been punched correctly during manufacturing, which could cause a separation between the buckle and the seat-belt bracket, resulting in the belt not adequately restraining the seat occupant in a crash.

MODELS 5,084 2016-2017 S60, V60, XC60, and XC90; and 2017 S90 vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer inspect the front-passenger seat-belt buckle stud and replace the seat-belt buckle as necessary.

2016-2017 Jeep Wrangler models

On certain vehicles, the headlamps could rotate during a crash, which could cause the wiring to the front-impact sensor to detach prior to a signal being recorded by the occupant restraint controller (ORC). This could result in nondeployment of airbags and pretensioners.

MODELS 18,110 vehicles.

WHAT TO DO To be determined.

2016-2017 Volvo models

On certain vehicles, the front-passenger seat-belt buckle stud

2016-2017 Volvo models

On certain vehicles, the air-conditioning drain hose may leak into the passenger compartment due to incorrect installation during the manufacturing process.

Over time an accumulation of moisture in the passenger cabin could affect the SRS system (airbags), engine management systems, and/or other systems.

MODELS 3,848 2016-2017 XC 90 and 2017 S90 vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Have the dealer inspect the air-conditioning drain hose to ensure correct installation and replace the drain hose if necessary.

2016
VOLVO
XC60



Contact Info

How to reach manufacturers in Canada.

Hisense

855-344-7367
hisense-canada.com

LG

888-542-2623
lg.ca

Samsung

800-726-7864
samsung.com/ca

Sony

877-899-7669
sony.ca

Vizio

855-833-3221
vizio.com/en-ca