

I-Robot Roomba vacuum cleaner

Can a robot really do the vacuuming and let you put your feet up for a change? We find out

by Stuart Miles published on 9 April 2006

Can a robot really do the vacuuming and let you put your feet up for a change? We find out. We are a lazy bunch really - ok so we might like sports and fitness, but when it comes to cleaning most people fall into two camps. The first bunch are manic cleaners and furiously clean their house every Saturday morning if not more regularly. Then there is the rest of us that get around to doing in once a month if we are lucky, and normally only because the Mother-in-Law is coming around. The Roomba iRobot is for the second lot here. Why? Because it professes to be the domestic help that won't chat back and you can't be blamed for having an affair with. That's right it's a vacuum cleaner and a robot in one, which means that you can get away with putting your feet up and let it get on with the work. So what's the catch? Well it's not very powerful, it will take an age to do any vacuuming and if you've got pets, not only will it not be able to get the pet hair off the carpet, but it will also send them berserk - Doom style. Get past this small set back and once powered-up the £180 hoover will get to work cleaning your flat or house. In the box comes a virtual wall device that fires a beam across stairs or rooms you don't want it to enter - failure to do so will result in it performing a suicidal dive lemmings style, and although the Roomba doesn't have the same impressive automation element to it as the Electrolux Trilobite it's a fifth of the price.



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VERDICT

While there is something calming about seeing a machine clean up your dirt, the reality is that this is more gimmick than help. With a dirt box the size of an apple and the sucking power of a goldfish you shouldn't expect too much from your new robotic friend. This product was kindly loaned to us by Empire direct

At a glance

What is it?

Robotic vacuum cleaner

Good

You won't have to lift a finger

Bad

This is for people who don't create dirt

Verdict

While there is something calming about seeing a machine clean up your dirt, the reality is that this is more gimmick than help

Price £180

Our score

5/10

Your score

10/10