

# **What to Look For When Buying a New Laptop**

## [Watch Videos Related to this Article](#)

*The price of laptops has gone down tremendously over the last few years. Not too long ago a decent laptop would easily have set you back a few thousand dollars. These days, you can pick up a good laptop for as low as \$500.00 at your local Wal-Mart. But with thousands of laptops to choose from, and more coming out every week, how do you pick the one that's right for you? Below are 5 tips to help you make the right decision when looking to buy a new laptop.*

### *1). Determine Your Needs*

*The first step in figuring out which laptop is right for you is to determine your unique needs. Most students for example would place the emphasis on price, portability, and battery life. In that situation you should look for a laptop with a 14- or 15-inch display. A larger screen means a heavier and bulkier laptop, making it more uncomfortable to carry around. Larger screens also deplete the battery at a much faster rate.*

*Home users on the other hand should look for laptops with much larger displays than the traditional 14- or 15-inch screens. As these systems typically stay anchored to your desk, table, or kitchen – perhaps occasionally being moved from room to room, the emphasis should be placed on improving the overall visual experience and performance. A larger number of USB ports (3-4) would also be helpful in order to plug-in, for example, a mouse, digital camera, printer, and external hard drive.*

*Business users often need something more rugged; able to withstand the stresses of constant travel. Because of this, a longer warranty plan is much more important. Security is also a concern so a laptop with extra security features is more ideal.*

*Determining your unique needs will help narrow down your choices considerably and help make the decision of which laptop to buy much easier.*

### *2). A Good CPU Is Key*

*The CPU is the most important component of any laptop. Not cutting corners in*

*this department is important if you want a good laptop and a good overall experience. For most users, a dual core processor is the best option. It offers excellent speed and multitasking capabilities with good power consumption. If you're planning to use your laptop to play video games, edit video, or play HD movies, it would be wise to invest in a more powerful processor such as the Intel Core i7.*

*Picking the right CPU can be difficult, so do research on the individual processors available to get a better idea of how they will perform with what you're intending to use the laptop for. When it comes to CPUs, you get what you pay for, so use the price as a guide to help you make the decision but keep in mind that the more powerful processors also consume more battery life as well.*

### *3). Memory Is Very Important*

*As operating systems and programs continue to use more and more memory; this is not an area you want to overlook. If the laptop is running Windows Vista or Windows 7, then 2GB of memory or more is required for good performance. The 32-bit version of Windows XP, Windows Vista, or Windows 7, can only detect up to 4GB of memory and it's recommended that you look for a laptop with that much.*

*However, RAM is cheap and easy to install. You can simply buy less in the beginning and add more if you find that the performance is not adequate. Just make sure that the laptop has a slot available to upgrade. For example, a 2GB laptop with 2 DIMM slots might have two 1GB memory sticks. In that situation you would need to throw one of the memory sticks out in order to add more.*

### *4). Touch It Before You Buy It*

*These days you tend to find the best prices and deals online. However, before you make the purchase you should try and find a store with the same laptop on display. As with most products, what you see in the advertisement and what you get can be a little different. See if you like the look, shape, and feel in real life as much as in the photos. Do the keys feel nice? Does the screen have problems with glare? Is it heavier or lighter than you expected? Does it feel solid or cheap? You won't be able to answer these questions by looking at a professionally edited advertisement picture so you need to see the product for yourself first hand whenever possible.*

## *5). Read Reviews Online*

*This is the most important step. Whatever it is that you're looking to buy, you should always get a few opinions from other sources, and the internet is the best place to go. Read a few reviews by going to Google and typing in "[laptop name] review" and to see what people have to say. Check out customer reviews from the popular online computer retailers like TigerDirect.com, NewEgg.Com, NCIX.com, etc.*

*If the reviews give you the green light, then go ahead with the purchase. If you see warning signs then consider yourself lucky to have found out sooner rather than later, and look for something different. Finding little to no information or reviews on a specific laptop is one of the biggest warning signs of all. Unless you like to gamble with your money, you should look for a laptop with some reputation. The last thing you want to do is test out new products at your own expense.*