



An Extended Guide · No. 1873

Bags, Filters, Brushes & Batteries — What a Robot Really Costs Each Year

A plain maintenance calendar
and where to buy genuine parts

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What a robot really costs after you buy it

The price on the box isn't quite the whole story. A robot vacuum uses a few small wear-and-tear parts over the years — and the good news is they're modest, predictable, and easy to plan for once you know what they are.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. In 30+ years I've found that folks don't mind the small ongoing costs — they mind being surprised by them. So this guide lays them out plainly, with a simple calendar, so nothing sneaks up on you.

I'm not going to quote you dollar figures, because prices change constantly and vary by model. What I'll give you instead is the honest shape of it — what wears out, when, and roughly how much it matters — plus how to buy the right parts without getting burned.

★ Want the numbers for your exact robot?

Tell me the model you own or are weighing, and I'll help you check what its parts actually cost today and whether they're easy to get. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 — I don't sell parts, so it's just honest advice.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, the yearly cost of a robot holds no surprises.

- ❑ The wear parts are small: filters, side brush, main brush, dock bags, and eventually a battery.
- ❑ All told, keeping a robot running is a modest yearly sum — parts cost far less than the robot.
- ❑ Empty and wipe the bin often; wash or replace the filter on a schedule; swap brushes as they wear.
- ❑ Self-emptying docks use dust bags you replace every few weeks.
- ❑ The battery lasts a few years and is usually replaceable.
- ❑ Buy genuine or quality-compatible parts — and check they'll still be sold for your model down the road.

✓ One rule to hold onto

Don't guess at prices from this guide — check the current price of the parts for your own model. What matters is knowing which parts exist and keeping a couple of spares in the drawer.

The handful of parts that wear

A robot vacuum has only a few parts that wear with use. Know these five and you know the whole cost picture.

- **The filter** — catches fine dust; it clogs over time and is washed, then eventually replaced. The most frequent small cost.
- **The side brush** — the little spinning star that sweeps edges; it bends and frays and is cheap to swap.
- **The main brush** — the central roller; it lasts longer but eventually wears and is replaced.
- **Dock dust bags** — only on self-emptying docks; a bag fills over a few weeks and is replaced.
- **The battery** — lasts a few years, then holds less charge; on most robots it's a replaceable part.

✓ None of it is dear

Every one of these parts costs a small fraction of the robot. Spread over a year, the whole lot adds up to a modest sum — think of it like the bags and belts a regular vacuum has always needed.

The bin and filter: your most frequent chore

The dust bin and the filter are the parts you'll touch most often. Keeping up with them is most of what keeps a robot cleaning well.

If your robot doesn't have a self-emptying dock, you'll empty the bin every run or two — more in a hairy or dusty home. It takes a few seconds. Give the bin a wipe or a rinse now and then too, so dust doesn't cake up inside it.

The filter behind the bin catches the fine dust. Many can be tapped out or rinsed and dried between changes, but a filter doesn't last forever — it gradually clogs and loses suction, so it's replaced every few months. Keeping a spare on hand means you're never cleaning with a tired filter.

! Let a washed filter dry completely

If your filter is the washable kind, rinse it in plain water and let it dry fully — a day is safest — before it goes back in. A damp filter can grow musty and won't filter well. Never put a paper-only filter under the tap; check which kind yours is.

The brushes: clear often, swap occasionally

The side brush and main brush do the sweeping, and both want clearing often and replacing once in a while.

The side brush — the small star near the edge — flicks debris out of corners. Its thin arms bend and fray over time, especially if they snag on cords or rug fringe, and a bent side brush sweeps poorly. It's one of the cheapest parts, so swap it the moment it looks tired.

The main brush — the long roller underneath — lasts a good while but eventually wears down and matters more to the clean, so plan to replace it less often but do replace it. In a pet home, both brushes want a regular check for wound hair, which our pets guide covers in detail.

✓ Clearing is free; replacing is cheap

Most brush trouble is solved by clearing wound hair, which costs nothing. Actually replacing a brush is occasional and inexpensive. Keep a spare side brush in the drawer — it's the part that wears fastest.

Dock dust bags: the self-empty trade-off

If you chose a self-emptying dock, the dust bag is the one extra running cost that comes with the comfort.

A self-emptying dock sucks the robot's bin into a large bag so you deal with the dirt only every few weeks instead of every run. That bag fills up and is replaced — how often depends on how much your home and pets shed. It's the price of not touching the dust daily, and most folks happily pay it.

Bags are a modest, repeating cost, a bit like the bags an old upright vacuum used. Some docks also take a filter of their own. If you don't have a self-emptying dock, you skip this cost entirely — one more thing to weigh when deciding whether that dock is worth it for your home.

✓ Buy bags a few at a time

Dock bags are cheaper by the multi-pack and you'll always need more, so there's no harm stocking up. Just make sure they're the right bag for your dock — and, as always, check the current price before you buy.

The battery: every few years

The battery is the one bigger part, and the one that lasts longest — usually several years before it needs attention.

Like the battery in a phone, a robot's battery holds a little less each year. After a few years of regular cleaning you may notice it doesn't finish the whole house before needing the dock. That's normal wear, not a fault, and on most robots the battery is a part you can buy and swap — sometimes yourself, sometimes with a little help.

A fresh battery brings the run time right back, so it's often worth it rather than replacing the whole robot. The catch is availability: a genuine battery has to still be made for your model, which is why buying from a well-supported brand matters — more on that shortly.

✓ Rule out the simple things first

Before you blame the battery, clear the brushes and wheels of hair and clean the dock contacts — a choked or poorly-charging robot drains fast and mimics a dead battery. Our fix-list guide walks through it.

A plain maintenance calendar

Here's the whole routine as a simple calendar. Timings are general — a hairy, busy home needs the shorter end, a tidy one the longer — so adjust to your own place and always follow your model's guidance.

How often	What to do
Every run or two	Empty the bin; a quick look at the brush
Weekly-ish	Clear hair from brushes and wheels; wipe sensors
Monthly-ish	Wash or tap out the filter; wipe the dock contacts
Every few weeks	Replace the dock dust bag (self-empty docks)
Every few months	Replace the filter; swap a worn side brush
Yearly-ish	Replace the main brush if worn; deep-clean the robot
Every few years	Replace the battery when run time drops

✓ Pin it where you'll see it

Stick this calendar near the dock or inside a cupboard door. A routine you can see is a routine you'll actually keep — and it's the whole secret to a robot that lasts.

Adding it up, honestly

So what does a year of this really cost? I won't give you a figure, but I'll give you the honest shape of it.

In a typical year you'll likely buy a filter or two, a side brush, and — if you have a self-emptying dock — a handful of dust bags. Every so often, a main brush. Those are small, inexpensive parts, and added together they come to a modest yearly sum. The battery is an occasional, larger one spread across several years.

The honest takeaway: the parts to keep a robot running cost far less than the robot itself, and far less than most folks fear. A robot is a buy-it-once machine with small, predictable keep-up costs — not a money pit. Just check the current price of the parts for your model so your own budget is based on real numbers, not a guess.

! Why I won't quote you a dollar figure

Part prices swing with sales, brand, and model, and a number I gave today could be wrong next month. Anyone who quotes a firm yearly cost for 'a robot' is guessing — check the actual parts for your actual model.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

What a robot costs to keep up depends a lot on the home it works in. A simple robot in a tidy home costs very little; a feature-packed one in a busy, hairy home costs a bit more. Picture your own.

A simple robot in a tidy home

A basic robot with a plain charging dock, in a smaller home without heavy shedding, has the lightest running cost of all — just the basics, now and then.

- A filter now and then, and a side brush occasionally.
- No dock bags, because there's no self-emptying dock.
- A main brush rarely; a battery every few years.
- The lightest yearly cost — a small sum, easily planned.

A feature-packed robot in a busy home

A mopping robot with a self-emptying dock, in a bigger home with pets, earns its comforts but has a few more small costs to keep up.

- Dock dust bags every few weeks, by the multi-pack.
- Filters and side brushes a bit more often, from the extra work.
- A mop pad to replace now and then if it mops.
- Still a modest yearly sum — just more items on the list.

★ Want help pricing your own setup?

Tell me your robot and whether it has a self-emptying dock, and I'll help you tally the real parts and their current prices so you know what to budget. Call (330) 200-8042.

Genuine parts vs. risky knockoffs

Here's where a few dollars saved can cost you. Not all replacement parts are equal, and the cheapest listing is often the one to avoid.

For filters and batteries especially, the part matters. A bargain no-name filter may not seal properly or filter the fine dust well, so your robot puffs it back into the room. A cheap off-brand battery is the bigger worry — a poorly-made battery can run hot, swell, or fail early, and that's not somewhere to gamble to save a little.

The safe path is the maker's genuine parts, or a well-reviewed compatible brand that many owners vouch for. Brushes are the most forgiving — a decent compatible side brush is usually fine — but for filters and batteries, lean genuine or clearly reputable.

! Batteries are the one to be careful with

A cheap, unbranded battery is the riskiest part you can buy for any device. If you replace a robot battery, use a genuine one or a battery from a maker with real reviews and a return policy — never the rock-bottom mystery listing.

Where to buy parts safely

Knowing where to shop is half of buying good parts. A little care about the seller saves you from the worst of the knockoffs.

The surest source is the robot maker's own website or app, which sells the exact genuine part for your model. Major retailers you already trust are good too. On big marketplaces, read carefully: check that the part lists your specific model, look at the reviews, and favor the maker's official store on that marketplace over an unknown third seller.

Match the part to your exact model number — robots that look alike can take different filters and brushes. Keep your model number written down (snap a photo of the label underneath), so you order the right part the first time and don't pay return shipping on a wrong guess.

✓ Write the model number down now

The single best thing you can do for easy future parts is note your exact model number today, while the robot's new. Tape it inside a cupboard with the maintenance calendar, and buying the right part later takes seconds.

Will the parts still be there in a few years?

A part is only a bargain if you can still buy it when you need it. This is the quiet risk behind the whole cost question.

Replacement parts keep flowing as long as the brand is healthy and still supports your model. If a maker stops making a model, is bought by another company, or goes under, genuine parts can slowly dry up — and then even a perfectly good robot becomes hard to keep running. The robot-vacuum world has seen real shake-ups lately, so this isn't far-fetched.

Roomba's maker, iRobot, is a timely example: it changed ownership recently and says it's business as usual, but ownership changes can eventually touch apps, support, and parts. Our Roomba-owners guide and our 'when a maker shuts down' guide cover how to protect yourself — the short version is on the next page.

✓ Favor a well-supported brand

When you choose a robot, a maker with a steady history, a real app that gets updates, and parts you can readily buy is worth more than a few dollars saved up front. It's the difference between a five-year helper and a two-year orphan.

Stock up while parts are easy to get

A small, cheap insurance policy: keep a few spares on hand, especially for a robot whose brand's future you're unsure of.

A spare filter and a spare side brush cost little and mean you're never cleaning with a tired part or waiting on a delivery. If your robot is older, or its brand has changed hands, it's worth buying a genuine spare battery while you still can — a battery is the part most likely to become hard to find, and the one you'll eventually need.

You don't need to hoard. One of each wear part in a labeled drawer near the dock is plenty for peace of mind, and it turns the day a part wears out from a problem into a two-minute swap.

★ Let's build your spare list

Tell me your robot and I'll help you pin down exactly which filter, brush, and battery it takes, check they're genuine and in stock, and set you up with a sensible spare or two. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

Making the parts last longer

The cheapest part is the one you don't have to replace yet. A few small habits stretch the life of everything.

- **Clear hair often** — wound hair wears brushes and strains the motor and battery; a weekly clear does a lot.
- **Tap out the filter between washes** — it keeps suction up and the filter lasts longer before it's replaced.
- **Tidy before a run** — fewer cords and rug fringes mean less strain on the side brush and fewer jams.
- **Let the robot finish and dock** — a battery kept topped up and not run flat ages more gently.
- **Keep the dock contacts clean** — steady charging is easier on the battery than repeated struggling.

✓ Good habits beat new parts

Nearly every part lasts longer in a home that clears hair and tidies the floor. The maintenance calendar isn't just upkeep — it's how you spend less on parts over the robot's whole life.

A parts-buying checklist

Keep this handy whenever you order a replacement part, so you buy the right thing from the right place.

- ☐ I matched the part to my exact model number, not just a lookalike.
- ☐ I'm buying genuine, or a compatible brand with real, good reviews.
- ☐ For a filter or battery especially, I didn't chase the rock-bottom mystery listing.
- ☐ I bought from the maker, a trusted retailer, or the maker's official marketplace store.
- ☐ I checked the current price rather than assuming an old one.
- ☐ I grabbed a spare of the fast-wearing parts while I was at it.
- ☐ I checked the part is still readily available for my model.
- ☐ I noted my model number somewhere I'll find it next time.

! If genuine parts are vanishing, take note

If you go to reorder and find genuine parts suddenly scarce or discontinued, that's an early sign the model is being wound down. Buy a spare battery and filter sooner rather than later — see our 'maker shuts down' guide.

Common mistakes with robot upkeep

A few avoidable slip-ups cost folks either money or a robot's early retirement. Now you'll know them.

- **Running a clogged filter** for months — losing suction and puffing dust back into the room.
- **Buying a cheap off-brand battery** — the one part where a bargain can run hot or fail early.
- **Ordering the wrong part** — not matching the exact model, then paying to return it.
- **Letting hair strangle the brushes** — wearing them out early and straining the motor.
- **Waiting too long to buy a battery** — until the model's parts have quietly gone out of stock.

✓ The fix for all five is a little routine

A monthly glance at the filter and brushes, your model number written down, and a spare or two in a drawer prevents every mistake on this list. It's a few minutes a month for a robot that lasts years.

Setting honest expectations about cost

A robot vacuum is an inexpensive machine to keep running, as long as you go in with clear eyes.

Expect a modest, steady trickle of small costs — a filter here, a brush there, dock bags if you have them — and one bigger, occasional cost in the battery every few years. That's it. No surprise repair bills if you keep up the simple routine, because there's very little to go wrong on a robot that's cleared of hair and charged properly.

The one real risk to the cost picture isn't the parts themselves — it's whether you can still buy them. Choose a well-supported brand, keep a spare or two, and a robot stays a cheap, cheerful helper for years. Owners who plan for the small costs are never unpleasantly surprised.

✓ Think bags and belts, not repairs

Picture the old upright vacuum that needed bags and the odd belt. A robot is much the same — small consumables, not big repairs — just with a battery added to the list every few years.

Where to read more

This guide is the money-and-parts picture; a few siblings go deeper on the pieces that touch it.

If most of your upkeep is hair — wound brushes, clogged filters — our pets guide covers choosing a robot that handles fur and the routine that keeps it happy. And when a part finally gives out and the robot acts up, our fix-list guide walks through clearing it calmly before you spend a dime on a replacement.

On the availability worry, our Roomba-owners guide and our 'when a maker shuts down' guide are the ones to read. They cover protecting yourself when a brand changes hands — saving the manual, noting the model, learning the on-robot buttons, and stocking spares while they're easy to get.

★ I'll help you keep it running for years

On a visit I'll set you up with the right parts list, a spare or two, and a maintenance routine that suits your home — so the robot you bought stays cheap and easy to keep running. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

Questions to ask before you buy — and buy parts

A few questions at the shelf, and again at reorder time, keep the running cost honest and low.

Q: What do the filters, brushes, and battery cost for this model?

Ask, or look it up, before you buy the robot. Cheap robot, pricey or scarce parts is a trap. Check the current prices for that exact model.

Q: Are genuine parts easy to get, and will they stay available?

Favor a brand that readily sells parts for its models and has a steady future. Scarce parts turn a good robot into an orphan.

Q: Is this replacement part genuine or a good compatible one?

For filters and batteries, lean genuine or a well-reviewed brand. For brushes, a decent compatible part is usually fine.

Q: Does this part match my exact model number?

Lookalike robots take different parts. Match the model number before you order to avoid paying for a return.

✓ There's no silly question

If a seller can't tell you whether a part fits your model or whether it's genuine, that's a reason to buy elsewhere. A clear answer is the least you should expect.

Common Questions

The cost-and-parts questions I hear most, answered plainly.

Q: How much does a robot vacuum cost to keep running each year?

Less than most folks fear — a modest yearly sum for small parts like filters, a side brush, and dock bags, plus a battery every few years. The parts cost far less than the robot. I won't quote a figure because prices change; check the current parts prices for your model.

Q: How often do I replace the filter and brushes?

Roughly: a filter every few months (washing it between times if it's washable), a side brush every few months as it frays, and a main brush around yearly if worn. A hairy, busy home needs the shorter end; follow your model's guidance.

Q: How long does the battery last, and can I replace it?

Usually several years before it holds noticeably less charge, and on most robots it's a replaceable part. A fresh battery restores the run time — often cheaper than a new robot — as long as a genuine one is still sold for your model.

Q: Are cheap off-brand parts okay?

For brushes, a well-reviewed compatible part is usually fine. For filters and especially batteries, lean genuine or a clearly reputable brand — a cheap mystery battery can run hot or fail early, which isn't worth the few dollars saved.

Q: What if the parts for my robot stop being sold?

That's the real risk, and it's why brand support matters. If genuine parts start getting scarce, buy a spare battery and filter sooner rather than later. Our Roomba-owners and 'maker shuts down' guides cover protecting yourself.

★ Want the real numbers for your robot?

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and I'll help you tally the actual parts and current prices for your model, check they're genuine and in stock, and set you up with a simple upkeep routine.

You don't have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made robot vacuum upkeep and parts feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. I'll help you choose the right machine, get it set up and mapped, connect it to your Wi-Fi and your phone, and show you how to run it. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site — app settings, schedules, a quick question — I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. For anything that calls for a ladder, wiring, or digging, I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro rather than risk it.

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A Year of Robot Upkeep

General timings -- adjust to your home and model

	How often	What to do
Every run or two	Empty the bin,	peek at brush
Weekly-ish	Clear hair,	wipe sensors
Monthly-ish	Wash filter,	wipe dock
Every few months	New filter,	new side brush
Every few years	New battery	when run drops

Pin this near the dock -- a routine you see is one you keep.

The Parts That Wear

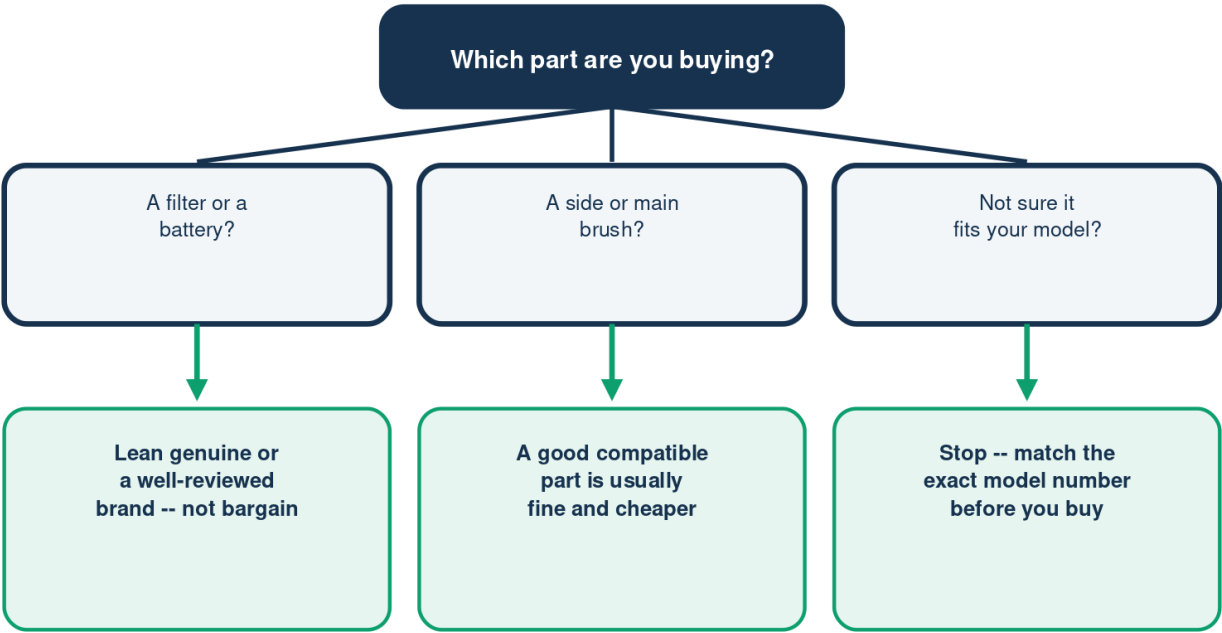
What each costs, in plain terms

Part			Cost & frequency
Filter	Small, every		few months
Side brush	Cheapest, swap		as it frays
Main brush	Modest, around		yearly
Dock bags	Small, every		few weeks
Battery	Bigger, every		few years

Added up, a modest yearly sum -- far less than the robot.

Genuine Part or Compatible?

Match the risk to the part

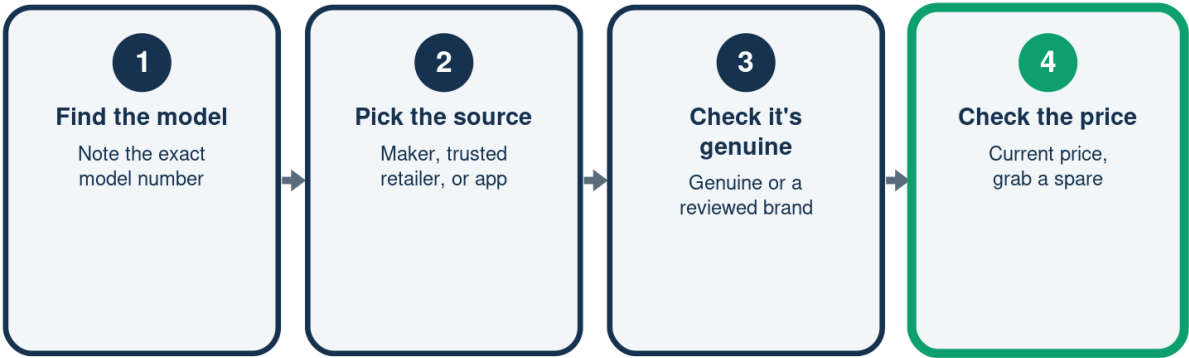


A cheap mystery battery can run hot or fail -- never worth it.

Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.

Buying a Part the Safe Way

Four steps to the right part, first time



Matching the model number is what prevents a wrong order.



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A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



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