# New Roomba combo bots have swappable dust and water tanks

## reader comments

43 with

- The new midrange Roomba has two bins, one wet and one dry.
- Pick one to vacuum, the other to mop.
- You fill the wet one with water.
- The wet bin has a scrubby mop on the bottom.
- There is still a base, but it only empties the dust bin.
- The J5+ is smarter, thanks to the camera on the front.
- The cheaper i5 doesn’t have as many sensors.

Roomba is bringing the combo mop and vacuum feature to its cheaper robot vacuums with the new Roomba Combo j5+ and Combo i5+. Roomba’s last combo bot was the Roomba Combo j7+, which would automatically switch between mopping and vacuuming with a swing-arm setup. These cheaper bots can both mop and vacuum, but you’ll need to manually configure them for either task.

The idea here is kind of clever: the robot comes with *two* bins, one that sucks in dust and one that acts as a water tank with a mop pad on the bottom. You’ll need to switch out the bin depending on which cleaning mode you want (the iRobot marketing team has come up with the phrase “swap and mop”). Other combo bots need to balance water tank size and dust bin size, but here, you get water and dust bins that are free to

take up as much room as possible. Roombas have small bin areas to begin with, though, so that works out to a 210 mL water tank and 360 mL dust bin.

Advertisement
The vacuum part seems to be a bog-standard Roomba, complete with a charging base that can empty the dust bin. The mop part doesn’t have a water sprayer or seemingly any connection to the rest of the robot at all. There’s also no fancy water change system or scrubbing feature. It’s just a self-contained water tank that keeps a rag wet and drags it along the floor. It almost feels like you could retrofit the water tank onto a normal Roomba, but on this unit, of course, all the vacuum functions turn off when you’re mopping.

## iRobot Roomba robot vacuums

(Ars Technica may earn compensation for sales from links on this post through affiliate programs.)
One concern is that the robot needs to refrain from mopping your rugs. Neither model will be particularly “smart” about that, but the more expensive J5+ can map your home, and you can lay out “no mopping” zones in the app, thanks to a front-facing camera. The cheaper i5 doesn’t have as many sensors, and the press release says it’s “ideal for smaller homes with mostly hard floor surfaces.”

For all this talk of a “budget” bot, remember that this is iRobot, so everything is still pretty expensive. The J5+ with a base is $799, while the i5+ is $549. Both robots are up for preorder now.

https://arstechnica.com/?p=1963716