



# Electric air dusters

From canned air to electric dusters  
— Lindsay Handmer presents a practical guide.

**If you build and maintain your own computers, over the years you have probably gone through a small mountain of canned air. It's great at shifting hard-to-reach debris, but as we all know, dust always comes back and the cost adds up.**

Electric air dusters trade the disposable can for a compact electric blower that you can recharge and reuse. It doesn't fully replace canned air, but it can dramatically cut usage. For computing enthusiasts of all

types, they are an easy way to keep heatsinks, fans and filters clear without canned air or a bulkier workshop blower or compressor. For home office users they turn cleaning keyboards, docks and cluttered desks into a quick (and let's be honest, fun) job rather than a maintenance chore.

Of course, there are still trade-offs to think about. Electric dusters are not universally more powerful than a good canned air burst, and it's hard to beat the

crevice cleaning power of a skinny straw attachment. Electric dusters are not all made equal, and while some are great, others are cheap junk or use cells that will wear out rapidly.

But a powerful electric air duster is a very handy tool, so in this guide we will run through where they do best, how to dodge the junk and then test three Wolfbox models we love: the entry level MF50, the everyday powerful MF100 and the mighty if I strap wings to it, it might fly MF200.

## ELECTRIC AIR DUSTER 101

At its core an electric air duster is a small, handheld blower that uses a powerful electric motor and ducted fan (much like what you get in RC aircraft) to pull air in on one side and fire it out a nozzle on the other at high velocity. The result is the same basic idea as canned air – a focused blast of air that shifts dust out of gaps – but you can use it over and over, as well as for extended periods.

Most air dusters are either corded plug-in models that prioritise sustained power, or cordless battery powered units. In contrast, compressors or centrifugal blowers are great for workshops but they are bigger, heavier and usually need to be used somewhere your computer isn't.

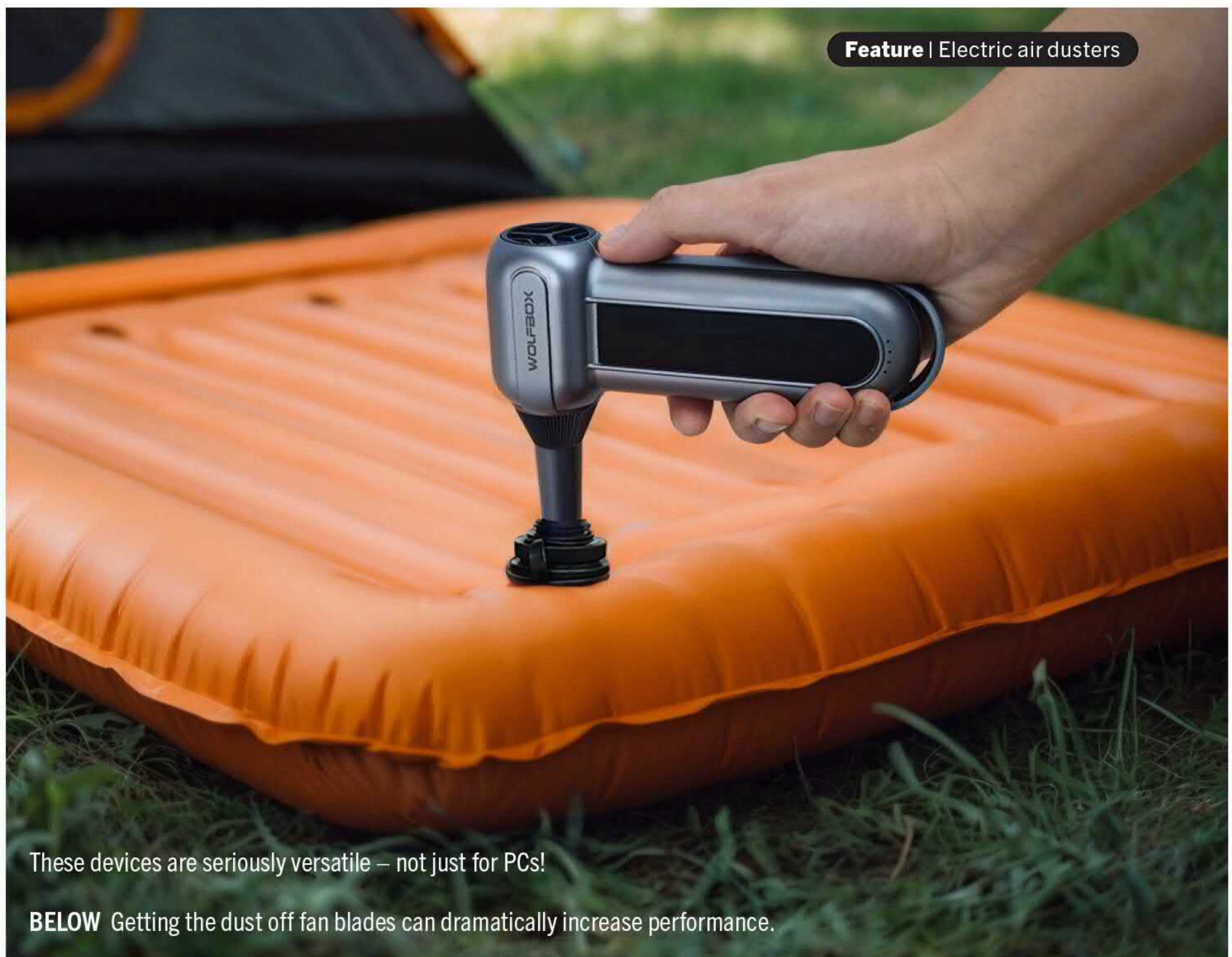
Canned air costs about \$10 and gives 5 to 10 minutes of total cleaning. A quality air duster starts from about \$50, so breakeven time depends on how much you use it. But considering how many uses they are good for beyond what canned air can handle, it's a worthy investment.

## WHERE ELECTRIC AIR DUSTERS SHINE IN EVERYDAY USE

The obvious place to start is inside a desktop PC, as over time dust settles onto the surfaces of heatsinks, fan blades and filters, and eventually becomes quite hard to shift. Regular blasts directed at the CPU cooler, GPU, intake filters and PSU vents help clear settled dust before it bakes on, which in turn improves airflow and helps keep temps in check. The same is true for laptops – just blow air into the out vent to dislodge dust back the way it came in, and do a quick burst to avoid overspinning the fan.

A clogged heatsink is often most obvious at idle, leaving the CPU fan still screaming, whereas under load, your processor throttles from the heat and that once snappy spreadsheet takes minutes to open.

Even the most fastidious owner's keyboard is a mess of crumbs and grit under the keycaps. A duster with a narrow nozzle makes it easy to sweep along the rows of keys, clear USB and HDMI ports, or blow dust out of console vents without



These devices are seriously versatile – not just for PCs!

**BELOW** Getting the dust off fan blades can dramatically increase performance.

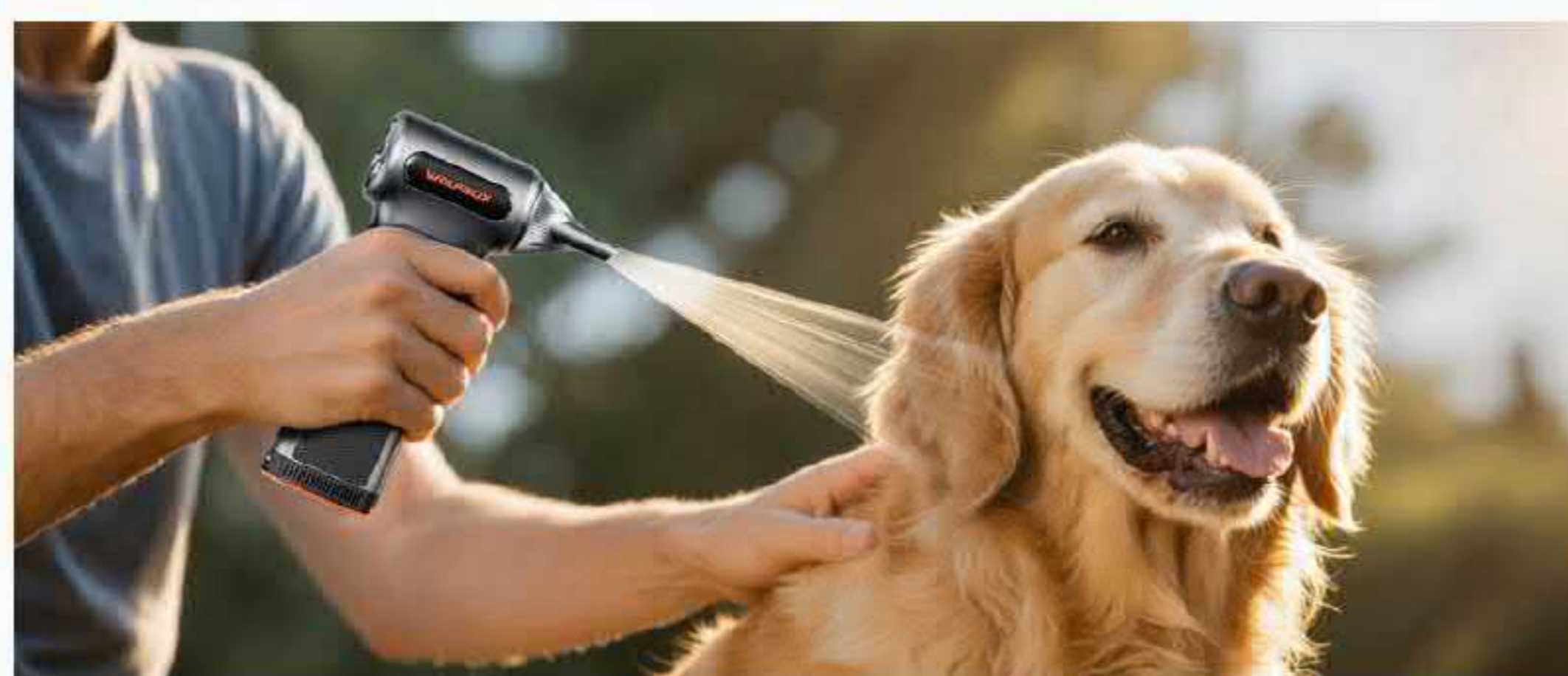


opening anything.

With a powerful electric air duster in hand, suddenly everything around the house starts looking a little dusty. Bags with that bit of sand that never quite comes out, kitchen appliances with hairballs in hard to access mechanisms and window tracks full of who knows what. A quick blast with an air duster makes short work of such problem areas, but watch for the blowback unless you want a face full of dead bugs. Now, it's not a replacement for a vacuum,

**ABOVE** Make your keyboard as-new again.

**BELOW** And just look at how happy puppy is!



but it does a good job of getting debris out of the tight spots the vacuum suction never quite reaches.

The more powerful air duster models also earn their keep in cars and garages. You can clear dust and sand from cup holders and off floor mats, get your dash clean without wiping, blow debris out around door seals, and finally unseat that spider living inside your wing mirror. They can also do a passable job of cleaning debris off a small balcony or patio.

From there, uses only get more creative. A long blast under a shirt during a sweaty hike is a remarkably effective way to cool down. And turning a reluctant backyard fire pit into an almost call to the fire brigade has never been easier.

## THE KEY SPECS THAT ACTUALLY MATTER

When you start looking at air dusters, the spec sheets can feel like a race to the biggest number. Motor speed in RPM is touted front and centre, but it does not mean much by itself. Wind speed is useful, but it's usually a peak with a specific nozzle. Airflow (cubic feet per minute) is another metric that doesn't tell you how much actual force (and thus cleaning dust power) the unit has.

Run times are good for lower settings, but at maximum power, they can be misleading. 10 minutes on max does not mean 10 minutes

at the same maximum output – you get 30 seconds or so of highest output, before voltage sag in the batteries drops performance. Bigger milliamp hour numbers for battery capacity look good, but it does not mean the cells give that rating on the max setting.

Still, these numbers make for a starting comparison point, as long as the brand is honest. But to get rid of some of the guesswork, in our reviews we use an anemometer to directly measure the airspeed, as well as log the force generated.

**HOW TO AVOID LOW QUALITY ELECTRIC AIR DUSTERS**

Buying an air duster online is a bit like it used to be when shopping for an affordable power supply. There are some excellent units, but there are also a lot of rebadged specials with numbers that only exist in someone’s imagination.

The red flags are easy enough to spot: absurd RPM claims, missing or implausible battery capacity, hours-long runtimes at max and airflow figures that would put a tropical cyclone to shame.

Really though, if you are shopping on AliExpress, your local market, or anywhere without a returns policy, unknown brands are best avoided. Amazon (for all its faults) is slightly better thanks to an actual returns policy, but really the best bet is to buy from a known brand with real reviews.

Now, you might be forgiven for thinking Wolfbox sounds like a sketchy name, but it’s actually one of the more reputable options available.

**WOLFBOX AT A GLANCE**

Wolfbox might not be a brand you are familiar with, but the company is better known for its dash cams and other in-car gadgets and has been operating long enough (6 years) that we are confident they aren’t going to disappear.

In the MF lineup, the MF50 is the compact cordless all-rounder for light to moderate cleaning, the MF100 steps up the airflow for people with more gear to look after, and the MF200 is the heavy hitter with a removable battery for longer or tougher jobs.

So how do they actually stack up in real world use?



**PRICE** \$50 **WEB** [au.wolfbox.com](http://au.wolfbox.com)

**Wolfbox MF50**

The baby wolf.

The MF50 is the affordable Wolfbox duster, with a street price that often dips under \$50. It’s pocket sized, weighs 200 grams, has three speeds and four different nozzles. Airflow specs are light, and Wolfbox claims up to 110,000 RPM. It has a built-in 5,000mAh battery and USB-C charging.

Despite being the smallest option, it’s powerful, noisy and fun, and does a great job at cleaning dust and debris in close quarters. It shifts most, but not all, baked on dust on a CPU heatsink. While it will happily blow a desk or bench clear, it’s not as good at bulk or distance cleaning as the bigger units.

Wolfbox rated it for the following runtimes: low: 240 mins, medium: 36 mins, high: 19 mins. In testing, we saw Low: 213 mins, medium: 33 mins, high: 16 mins. That’s not too bad, but notably the output on high is around the same as on medium by the end of the 16 minutes.

There isn’t a rated airspeed, but we measured 19.49 m/s on high, 11.25 m/s on medium and 4.3 m/s on low. And force (in newtons) of 1 N on high, 0.37 N on medium and 0.05 N on low. Read our comparison between models for more info, but these are good results.

**VERDICT**



Budget friendly yet powerful and useful every day.

**SPECS** 110,000 RPM brushless motor (3 speed); 5,000 mAh battery, rated runtime: 240 min low / 19 min high; USB-C, 3.5 h charge; 4 nozzles; 8.6 x 8.6 x 13.0 cm; 204 g.



**PRICE** \$100 **WEB** [au.wolfbox.com](http://au.wolfbox.com)

**Wolfbox MF100**

Versatile enough for loads of jobs.

The MF100 is a popular air duster and often can be found for under \$100. While chunkier than the MF50, it is easy to slip into a pocket or bag, but has significantly higher performance. Wolfbox rates it for 45 m/s (~162 km/h) airspeed, 10 minutes runtime on high (medium is not rated and low: 100 minutes), a 6,000 mAh built in battery and a weight of 300 grams.

In real world use it has a serious amount of power, with a noticeable kick from the thrust when set to high. It ran for 10 minutes, 24 seconds on high, while medium was 17 minutes, and low made it 101 minutes – bang on spec.

The rated max airspeed is 45 m/s, but we measured 23.29 m/s. This isn’t a surprise, as with different testing procedures, nozzle use etc we can’t directly compare them and our measured speed is for comparing between Wolfbox models.

In terms of cleaning, the MF100 is a noticeable step up from the MF50 and will shift stuck debris the smaller duster can’t. The higher speed jet of air also travels further, so it’s better for broader use, like clearing up a workbench or cleaning out the car. It’s also excellent for blowing up pool and beach toys, or filling an air mattress.

**VERDICT**



A great allrounder option that handles everything from cleaning out your electronics, to helping in the garage or when camping.

**SPECS** 150,000 RPM brushless motor (3 speed), max 45 m/s; 6,000 mAh battery, rated runtime: 100 min low / 10 min high; USB-C, 2.5 h charge; 5 nozzles + 2 brushes; 16 x 4 x 6 cm; 300 g.



**PRICE** \$200 **WEB** [au.wolfbox.com](http://au.wolfbox.com)

# Wolfbox MF200

A wolf in wolf's clothing.

The MF200 is the newly launched flagship of the Wolfbox range, and is bigger and more powerful than the MF100 or MF50. It also uses a removable 6,000 mAh battery, so you can swap it for prolonged use, or replace it in the future if wear drops the capacity too low. Of course, this all comes at a cost: the MF200 is close to \$200, and spare batteries cost \$60.

The MF200 uses the same three speed setup as the smaller models, just with a larger, more powerful motor. Wolfbox rates it at up to 85 m/s airflow, but in testing we saw only 30 m/s. That is a huge difference, but not actually an issue in terms of how it performs or compares to the other MF models.

It's rated for the same 10 minutes on high runtime as the MF100, and happily does so, lasting 10 minutes, 32 seconds. Note however that by the end it's performing at a similar level to the medium setting due to (an expected) voltage sag.

The extra airspeed and increased force combine to give the MF200 a very noticeable amount of extra dusting power over the MF50 or MF100. It cleaned stuck on debris out of a filter that the others couldn't shift, and the stream of air travels far and fast enough to quite effectively move leaves outdoors.

## VERDICT



Supremely powerful and a very effective electric blower for anyone happy to pay for portability.

**LINDSAY HANDMER**

**SPECS** 110,000 RPM brushless motor (3 speed), max 85 m/s (306 km/h); 6,000 mAh removable battery, rated runtime: 100 min low / 10 min high; USB-C, 2.5 h charge; 4 nozzles + 2 brushes; 9.7 x 9.7 x 17.8 cm; 380 g.

## Wolfbox MF50 vs MF100 vs MF200: performance comparison and which should you choose.

While the airspeed and force from the MF50, to the MF100 and then the MF200 increases in a linear fashion, the result of this is not quite as intuitive. All three actually shift around a fairly similar amount of air overall. Just the more powerful air dusters are moving that same volume a lot faster, which takes a lot more energy.

Our results are only useful to compare the Wolfbox models, not alternative air dusters (due to different test setups), but they do let us calculate some extra figures and make a deeper comparison of the performance differences.

For example, the MF200 shifting 46 l/s of air at 30 m/s has 140% more kinetic energy in that airstream, vs the MF50 moving 43 l/s of air at 20 m/s. So over twice as much energy to impart (and move) debris, making it much better at clearing a larger area. The airflow from the MF200 also has about 125% higher dynamic pressure, which is the "punch" of how hard the air hits, making it better at dislodging stuck on debris.

While the MF200 is a fantastic air duster and the heavy hitter for deep cleans, longer sessions and yard or camping duties, it's (delightful) overkill for everyday dust clearing duties on the likes of computers and keyboards. The MF50 is the ideal choice for lighter but effective cleaning of electronics and it gives excellent bang for buck. At double the price, the MF100 is better for tougher dusting jobs and suits a wider variety of tasks, like helping with cleaning car interiors or use in the garage.

**Our pick of the bunch is the MF100 – especially when under \$100. All three are sold directly from Wolfbox, but we find the best prices are almost always from Amazon.**

Spec	Wolfbox MF50	Wolfbox MF100	Wolfbox MF200
<b>Motor type / max RPM</b>	Brushless, up to 110,000 RPM (3-speed)	Brushless, up to 150,000 RPM (3-speed)	Brushless, up to 110,000 RPM (3-speed)
<b>Claimed max airspeed</b>	Not specified	Max 45 m/s	Max 85 m/s (306 km/h)
<b>Battery capacity / type</b>	5,000 mAh built-in Li-ion	6,000 mAh built-in Li-ion	6,000 mAh removable pack, 22.2 Wh (7.4 V)
<b>Spec runtime (low-high)</b>	240 min (low) to 19 min (high)	100 min (low) to 10 min (high)	100 min (low) to 10 min (high)
<b>Charging</b>	USB-C, 3.5 h full charge	USB-C, 2.5 h full charge	USB-C, 2.5 h full charge
<b>Weight</b>	204 g	300 g	380 g
<b>Nozzles / brushes</b>	4 nozzles, no brushes	5 nozzles + 2 brushes	4 nozzles + 2 brushes
<b>Dimensions (approx)</b>	8.6 x 8.6 x 13.0 cm	16 x 4 x 6 cm	9.7 x 9.7 x 17.8 cm
<b>Test results</b>			
<b>Runtime High</b>	15:56	10:24	10:32
<b>Runtime Medium</b>	33:24	17:21	19:45
<b>Runtime Low</b>	212:11	101:14	99:12
<b>Airspeed m/s</b>			
<b>High</b>	19.49	23.29	29.26
<b>Medium</b>	11.25	15.57	16.37
<b>Low</b>	4.3	7.8	7.88
<b>Thrust grams</b>			
<b>High</b>	102	131	165
<b>Medium</b>	38	62	61
<b>Low</b>	5	15	16
<b>Calculated figures for High setting (max, theoretical)</b>			
<b>Force (N)</b>	1	1.3	1.6
<b>Dynamic pressure (Pa)</b>	228	325	514
<b>Flow (L/s)</b>	43	46	46
<b>Flow (CFM)</b>	91	98	98
<b>Jet power (W)</b>	20	30	47