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Is the shark navigator or rotator better

When you think of uprights, two things comes to mind - bulky and impractical. Shark wants you to change the way you think about it. I'll be featuring two of their most innovative products available. These aren't the latest but it paved the way to how uprights function in the coming years ahead. The Shark Navigator and Rotator are two of the most versatile upright vacuums available right now. When you look at their upright product line, the Shark brand is one of the most innovative in the market with features that I've never seen before. Related: Please check out my in-depth guide on the best Shark vacuums and find out which Shark cleaner would be best suited for your needs. The one that stands out is the Lift Away feature that's groundbreaking. It essentially extends the usability of their products, and a big reason why their products are popular in online stores. The Lift Away feature turns a normally bulky upright into a mobile canister vacuum capable of cleaning above the floor areas like upholstery, tables, ceiling fans and other hard to reach areas. Shark utilizes different strategies with their upright products and you'll see it here. This guide will help you see the difference between the Navigator and Rotator to help you figure out what variant will fit your needs. Because the last thing I want you to do is buy something and later regret it because you didn't do enough research and found out that it lacks a particular feature that you need. Shark Navigator The Navigator is one of their first products and this is purely a stick vacuum. Only one variant exists in this line - the Navigator Freestyle. Shark Navigator Lift-Away NV352 The NV352 was the first product that utilized the Lift Away feature that separates the floor tool from the body. With the lift away feature you disconnect the hose from the floor tool and attach it to a wand. It turns this upright into a canister vacuum minus the wheels. First to use the Lift Away feature This product is ground breaking in way that it was the first upright that truly cleans above the floor with the portability of a canister vacuum. Without the cumbersome floor tool, it frees up extra weight that allows this to clean any part of the home. Versatility You essentially have a cleaner that can clean stuff from the floor to the ceiling. Add to that the 1,200 watt motor and the large 3 quart dirt capacity, you have a tool that can hold a large amount of dirt capable of cleaning not just the floors but also stairs, vents and upholstery. It however lacks some essential tools that hold it back like a mini-turbo brush. And it doesn't have any swivel steering so moving this around won't be as easy as moving around a Dyson upright. Fortunately Shark has made improvements and added them to the next vacuum I'll feature here... Shark Navigator NV360 With the NV360, Shark took what's lacking with the NV-352, added those into this upright vacuum and still retained the same "lift away" functionality that makes it so popular. The NV360 retains the shape and dimension of the older NV-352. But this newer version comes in a bright blue color. It has the same motor and HEPA filtration. But it lacks cyclonic filtration which means you'll have to clean the filters more often. Key features added... Shark added two features missing from the previous Navigator. The first was the swivel steering that's missing which made it difficult to move around furniture. The second important feature added is a mini turbo brush that allows you to use this on stairs and upholstery. It also helps this vacuum deal with pet hair on carpet as well as upholstery. Another bonus would be the under appliance wand that allows it to clean dust and cobwebs under upholstery. This is a really hard area to clean in most homes. Shark Navigator NV356E I'm sure you've see the Dyson Hard in TV commercials and stores. A Dyson Hard on steroid This tool is like a Dyson Hard on steroids because it allows you to mop and vacuum at the same time. It wasn't exactly a success because it was absurdly expensive and you can buy other products that perform as well for less like the NV356E. Upright and Canister in one No the NV356E isn't a cordless. But it morphs from an upright to a canister vacuum thanks to the same "lift away" feature found in the NV360 and NV352 and there's an important addition. This variant comes with the Dust-away attachment that has a microfiber attachment. This tool looks similar to the floor head of the Dyson Hard and the great news? You don't have to spend \$500 for it. It is an add-on from Shark that comes in a product that costs less than \$200! Imagine that for the price you get a lot - an upright with swivel steering that converts to a canister vacuum. And it also has a floor tool that looks like the Dyson Hard plus two microfiber towels. Lastly this variant also comes with the mini turbo brush great for picking up crumbs of biscuits or pet hair from upholstery and carpeted stairs. All Navigator variants don't have the Lift Away feature. Bottom line: In my opinion the \$50 price difference between traditional upright and variants with the lift away feature is a great investment. In addition to the floor cleaning capabilities you also get better above the floor cleaning capabilities and more reach. Shark Navigator Powered Lift Away This is the only Navigator in their product line up with the powered lift away feature similar to the Rotator series you will see below. Comparing the Navigator Series Now let's move over to the next variants - the Rotator series. Shark Rotator Lift Away NV501 I've already shown you the innovative lift away feature found first in the NV352 and how Shark further improved their products with the NV360 and NV356E by adding swivel steering and a mini turbo brush tool. Shark really has been listening to consumers. One of the biggest complaints for the older Navigator series is the lack of wheels in canister mode. This means that you have to carry it every time you need to move which could take a toll on your back. Another innovation Fortunately for us Shark listed and added a feature that truly make this a canister vacuum that you can pull around. They added a caddy where you can place the vacuum's body on. This caddy not only helps with mobility, it doubles as storage for the tools that come along with this upright. What you'll get? Tools such as a pet mini turbo brush, crevice tool, straight suction nozzle and a wed pet upholstery tool. Look underneath the caddy, it has 4 caster wheels that turn 360 degrees. This allows it to turn on dime similar to a canister vacuum. Shark also added a pair of LED lights on the main floor head to help with visibility. To round out the feature set, the NV501 comes with HEPA filtration that can trap up to 0.3 microns. Here's the Rotator Pro in action... As you can see, this vacuum is quite versatile. In addition to being an upright you can use it as a true canister vacuum. You don't have to carry a heavy 15 pound vacuum when moving to a different area. Just tug gently on the rubber hose to pull the caddy. The two caster wheels up front will do the work in terms of steering. And as long as you don't pull it too hard, it will not tip over. In terms of performance, it isn't too far off a Dyson. The great thing about this is that it costs half the price and adds a lot of versatility to the table. Bottom line: This product is a great alternative if you cannot afford a Dyson upright. It won't match the power of a Dyson but it is more versatile thanks to the Lift Away feature. But take note that you won't be able to use the main cleaning head in Lift Away mode so you won't be able to deep clean carpeted stairs. To get that feature you'll have to look at the Powered LiftAway or the DuoClean Powered LiftAway. Shark Rotator Pro Complete Both the Rotator Pro and Rotator Pro Complete have the same feature set and accessories so what's the difference? It all comes down to the features. First let's look at the similarities. Both of these variants have the "lift away" feature and both have the caddy that doubles as a storage bin for the accessories. These two also have the same motor and will perform similarly on carpet. Each also has the swivel steering not found in the Navigator series so what does the "Complete" have that the NV501 did not? It actually has three more tools one of which will help you clean hard to reach areas under furniture that no broom, stick vac or hand vacuum cannot reach. Have a look at this innovative tool called the under appliance wand... This tool works great if you have appliances with only a few includes of clearance. It will allow you to clean up cobwebs and allergens underneath these low clearance furniture gather. It also comes with the flexible crevice tool for even more reach when cleaning tight spots and hard floor tool that looks like the Dyson Hard - plus 2 microfiber towels. More innovations! The next innovation that Shark introduced with the Rotator series is the capability to use the main floor tool in canister mode. Yes, this sounds crazy but you will have to read through the next few paragraphs to see what I mean. Again, I'll go through each variant and let you see the differences. Shark Rotator Powered Lift Away In terms of versatility, it's hard to beat the Powered Lift Away series. Aside from being able to use this as an upright and canister, the Powered Lift Away allows you to use the main tool in canister mode. Let me show you what I mean... Looks like magic isn't it? Shark engineers manage to create a system that would separate the body from the frame but still allowed you to use the main floor tool. This removed the limitation that most upright vacuums face when areas around and under furniture. Lift away feature is a game changer The powered lift away allows consumers to navigate around these areas much better because the bulky dirt bin is out of the way. Swivel steering makes it easy to turn on the dime. And the fold flat feature makes it possible to clean deep under beds - an impossible task with a traditional upright. And like the Rotator Lift Away, this variant also comes with a caddy that has a different design from the previous Rotator series where the body will rest at a slanted angle to reduce center of gravity. Another improvement would be the hose. One of the biggest complaints in the previous Rotator Lift Away series was the stiff hose that tips the caddy over when pulled hard enough. Shark addressed this issue in this variant using a softer material with more play making it less likely to tip over. LED headlights Other improvements include adding more LED lights on the main floor tool which gave better visibility. If you look underneath the floor tool, you will notice that the brush roll is different. They took the brush roll from the Shark Rocket Powerhead and used it in this variant. What makes the Rocket's floor tool great is agitation. It has it's own motor so bristles will dig into carpet strands and deep clean carpet. This also had very good agitation and has better deep cleaning compared to the previous Rotator series. The last feature and my favorite upgrade would be fingertip controls on the handle so you don't need to bend down just to turn the brush roll on or off. Logan from VacBin shares the features of the Powered Lift Away from the brushes it used to how the lift away feature in this series works. You'll see that instead of just removing the main floor head, the whole vacuum was re-design in a way that when you press a lever, only the bin comes off while the wand (handle) and the floor tool remain intact. In the cheerios test, the Powered Lift Away performed better than the previous Rotator series. Shark has elevated the floor tool slightly to eliminate the snowplow effect that was a problem before. This also has the hard floor genie I talked about earlier that has a suction channel and a microfiber towel behind it that looks like the Dyson Hard, the only difference is you don't have to pay \$500 for it. Here's how it performed on carpet... If you need more dirt capacity - then get the Shark Rotator XL Just in case you think the dirt capacity of the normal sized Rotator is too small for you, Shark offers a variant with an extra-large dirt bin. However Shark did not specify how large the capacity is. Best Buy says that it's around 0.8 gallons which is pretty substantial. But a tad bit smaller than some of the bagged vacuums I've reviewed. It retains the same features found in the other models with the exception of tools. Lastly if you need something lighter - Shark also has a solution for that with the Rotator speed series than weighs only 13 pounds. Bottom Line: The Powered LiftAway is a game-changer in the upright vacuum industry because it extends reach and added versatility not seen in other brands. With the release of the DuoClean Powered LiftAway, prices have dropped and now would be a good time to buy one. The biggest issue with the NV752 would be cleaning large debris because the cleaning head has a low profile and will snowplow large debris. Shark DuoClean Powered LiftAway If you think the Powered LiftAway NV752 is good then you need to look at this latest product from Shark. When Shark introduced the Powered LiftAway, it changed how people thought of upright vacuums. This innovation allowed consumers to use an upright anywhere in their homes, not just floors. The design allows you to use this literally like a canister vacuum but with the power of an upright. In terms of design, the Shark DuoClean NV803 has the same features as the NV752 but one key difference - better agitation. Instead of using a bristled brush and a separate tool for hard floors, Shark incorporated the DuoClean system into this product. What is DuoClean? Let me show you... You will notice that the new cleaning head has two brushes - a soft roller that looks like foam (it actually wrapped in fabric) and a stiff bristled brush. The soft roller bar solves the problem of snowplowing by pulling dirt towards the suction inlet. Same concept as the Dyson V6 and V8 There's not doubt in my mind that Shark got this concept from the Dyson V6 Absolute as they were the first to introduce the soft roller cleaning head. The good thing is they did not just copy the tool. They took the idea and added something not found in other products - counter rotating brushes. This isn't an entirely new concept because Roomba uses it but I haven't seen an upright that combined a soft roller and bristled brush. Combining these two improved agitation and eliminated snowplowing because of how well the soft roller "grabs" large debris. Just have a look at this before and after screen grab... This is the result after just one back and forth pass. Notice that the huge pile of dirt in the first photo and how the new cleaning clean gobbled up that mess. You can watch the whole video here... Make sure to watch the whole video to see how to put together this product plus performance tests on upholstery, tile and carpet. Bottom line: This latest Shark is their most advanced upright to date because of the DuoClean system that improves cleaning performance on bare floor and carpet. It is also the most expensive (over \$300 in Amazon) so you may want to wait a few months before purchasing it for prices to drop. Comparing the Rotator Series Accessories Here are the different tools that you will get depending on what variant you choose. I'll enumerate them one by one to give you an idea how each one works to better enable you to make the right choice when selecting a variant. Take note that these tools will work on the Shark Rotator series. Duster Crevice Tool This two in one attachment morphs from a crevice tool to a dusting brush. Think of it as a longer version of Dyson's crevice tool found in their cordless handheld vacuums. Pet Upholstery Tool This is the standard upholstery tool that you will find in most Shark uprights whether it be the Navigator or the Rotator. It does not have any motorized brush. But it relies on a strip of velcro on both sides above and below the suction inlet for agitation. It is less efficient but you don't have to spend time cutting long hair wrapped on the bristles. This tool is great to use on fabric upholstery or low pile carpeted stairs. Dust Away Hard Floor Attachment At first glance this tool looks exactly like the floor tool you will find on the Dyson Hard, the biggest difference? You don't need to pay \$400 for it. This tool is an add on to either a Shark Navigator or Rotator upright vacuum. This tool would be great to use on flat surfaces like hardwood or tile where you can maximize the mopping and suction of this tool. It saves you time from bringing out the mop. Now don't use this on a heavily soiled tiled surface but this would be best utilized light duster and moper. To clean heavily soiled tile or hardwood, you need something with a scrubber and a water tank that houses the cleaning solution. Canister Caddy You'll notice that the old caddy stored the dust canister upright and with the high center of gravity it was prone to tipping over. The new caddy stores the canister at a slanted position. This reduces the chances of it tipping over on sharp turns or sudden pulls. Under Appliance Wand This has got to be one of my favorite tools because I have a furniture at home with only 2 inches of clearance and it is hard to clean up. The low profile design of this tool is designed for areas like this. Even our robot vacuum and Swiffer will not be able to clean this area. Watch this video to see what I mean... TruePet Mini Motorized Tool If you have pets at home, then this is an essential tool for cleaning pet hair on fabric upholstery. It has a motorized brush that provides some additional agitation to deep clean fabric upholstered chairs and even carpet. Multi-angled Dust Brush This dusting brush has a larger inlet and pivoting head that rotates in any direction. It's great for areas like ceiling fans or tops of closets. The soft brushes allow you to clean these hard to reach areas and prevent dust and allergens from accumulating. You can see it in action here... Home & Car Detailing Kit If you ever need to clean your vehicle or even the computer's keyboard, this detailing kit is a must have in your tool arsenal. It comes with several small brushes and extension wands specially designed to fit in tight spaces around your vehicle. HEPA filtration The Navigator and Rotator series both have fully sealed HEPA filters that filter out allergens up to 0.3 microns. It isn't Miele quality in terms of filtration but at least filtration is solid. But I must warn you that this is a bagless vacuum so there is still exposure to allergens when emptying it. People with severe case of allergies should stick with a bagged vacuum like a Miele to minimize exposure to allergens. Warranty Regardless of the variant both the Navigator and the Rotator will come with a 5 year warranty on the vacuum and parts. To Wrap Up Both the Shark Navigator and Rotator are the best in terms of versatility and features. No other upright vacuum can come close to the tool set you'll get and the area you'll cover. Heck, you can even use this inside your vehicle - that's how versatile this product is. Even is the Rotator is more expensive, it has address issues present in the earlier Navigator series. This includes no LED headlights, toppling caddies, stiff hose and the fault floor tool. Other vacuums may possess more suction power or better deep cleaning capabilities. But the Powered Lift Away series is simply the most versatile upright vacuum that you'll find in the market. Shark took the already versatile Navigator and morphed it into a Swiss army knife. If you purchase this product, a handheld vacuum isn't a requirement anymore because it can clean above floors unless you'd want something compact for quick clean ups.

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