



Facts About Mixers—In Hand Or On Stand

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Motor-driven mixers have been on the market for over 50 years. And with new features, increased power, and sleek styling, mixers have become so popular that 8 out of 10 American homes have one.

If you own a mixer, how often do you use it? Where do you store it? Do you know how many speeds it has? What special attachments come with it?

A mixer's principal task is to incorporate air into a mixture. Additional attachments allow you to chop or grind foods, and juice fruits as well. A small hand mixer is best used for quick and light mixing. A heavy-duty mixer is especially useful with the popular dough hook. Tedious mixing tasks become fun and challenging with the use of a versatile mixer.

Your decision to buy a mixer

Before deciding the type of mixer to buy, keep in mind these questions:

- Do you want a stand-type mixer or a portable model? (Or consider a built-in unit.)

Considerations: It is probably unwise to invest in more than one mixer if you can buy one model to meet all your needs. If you plan to use it most for stiff mixtures, a portable may not be strong enough. If the mixer would be used for long periods at a time, a portable model may be tiring to hold.

Portables are best used for light mixing or whipping when use will be occasional and when counter space to store and use a larger model is limited.

Stand mixers, or built-in units, do require readily available storage and use space and are more satisfactory for frequent use with larger portions. Check to see if the head of the mixer removes from the stand for use as a portable should you want to use it at the range or other mixing area.

- What type of control do you need for mixing?

Considerations: Heavy-duty mixers have either an electro-mechanical or solid-state control to provide constant mixing speed. Motor speed is stabilized because the power supply is regulated regardless of the load. Lightweight mixers often have a rheostat controlled motor. This allows full power only at the mixer's top speed. In these models the only way to increase power for heavy mixing is to change to a higher speed.

The motor won't do that automatically in a rheostat control. These models are designed for beating light batters and are unsuitable for mixing cookie and bread doughs since they do have a load limit. Check the control of the model to be sure you purchase a mixer that meets your needs.

- Is a heavy-duty motor required for your mixing tasks? Would a less powerful model work as well for you?

Considerations: The wattage rating is your guide to available mixing power and is listed on the nameplate. Both portable and stand-type mixers are available with powerful motors. For heavy batters, use at least a 135-watt motor. Models with a dough hook attachment will have 225-watt motors to maintain mixing speed with high efficiency.

- Do you need a wide range of operating speeds? Will a three-speed model work as well as one with 12 speeds?

Considerations: How many speeds would you really use? If you have a mixer, how many speeds do you now use?

- What do you want in mixer attachments? Some available ones are blender, ice-crusher, juicer, knife sharpener, and dough hook.

Considerations: Your choices may be narrowed by make and model, depending on the attachments. Seldom used additional attachments add unnecessary cost to the mixer unit. If you purchase attachments, they should function as well as a separate appliance would at the same job. Invest your appliance dollars wisely.

Basics to consider

After answering the above questions, you will want to look at specifics. The following are *musts* for a wise decision:

- *Good balance.* The mixer should remain stable when in use and have a steady head rest. Is there any method to raise the beaters from the bowl on the stand or built-in mixer? Does the portable have a heel rest for standing alone while the beaters drain over the bowl without tipping?

- *Large beaters* should have a somewhat flattened bottom rather than rounded to assure thorough mixing of ingredients. Beaters should also be easy to insert and remove.

- *Control* must be easily read and operated. On a portable this is especially important since you may need to change speeds with the same hand that holds the mixer.

- *Easy to clean.* Avoid models with crevices and joints that collect food particles that later

spoil or sour on the appliance.

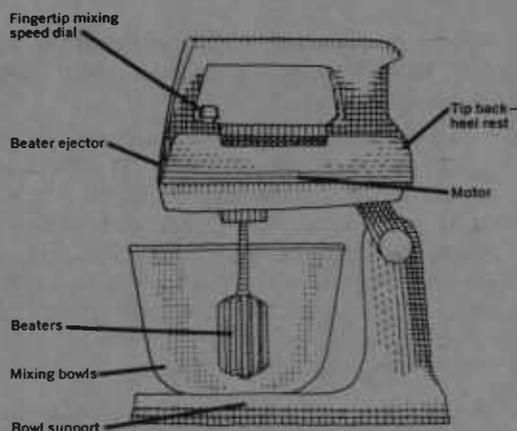
- *Weight* of the mixer head. If the portable models are heavy, they will be tiresome to hold. If the head of a stand mixer detaches, is it too heavy to hold comfortably when used as a portable option?

- *On the stand mixer,* do the bowls or beaters adjust to allow thorough mixing? Or do beaters and mixtures stay in one place during the mixing?

- *The noise level* should be low. Turn the mixer on before buying it.

- *The size* of the mixer determines whether it can be easily stored. Will it be left on the counter if it is a stand-type? With the portable, hanging space, shelf, or drawer space should be considered. For on-counter storage, check the height of the stand. You may want to fit it between counter and cupboards. An appliance that is stored out of sight and is difficult to reach will not be used.

Parts of the mixer



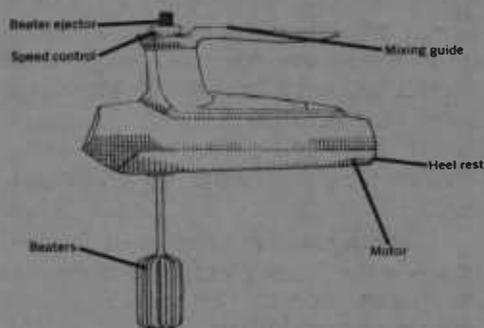
A stand mixer has a motor head, a stand, beaters, and bowls. The motor head is the housing that contains the motor and gears. Some mixers have a head with a large handle attached so that the mixer becomes portable when taken from the stand. With built-in or power-unit models, the motor is the base of the appliance and the various "heads" are attached.

The speed control of the mixer is usually found on the motor housing. This control should

be located for easy use and access. On the hand-held mixer, it is best to have the speed control where it can be easily operated by a finger, such as on the mixer's handle.

Some stand mixers have a tilt-back joint between motor head and stand. Tilting allows you to easily remove beaters from the mixture.

A "lazy Susan" bowl control is also included with many mixers. This device lets bowls rotate when the mixer is in use. It is usually adjustable for several sizes of bowls. Some models, however, keep the bowl stationary and utilize a planetary beater motion that moves the beater around, not the bowl. Both mixing actions are important; you need to blend the ingredients beyond just the normal flow of the mixture.



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