



How to Buy a Reliable Scale

A special report for Friends with the Scale

By Linda Spangle, RN, MA

If you love cooking you might invest in a few special cookbooks, a great non-stick skillet, and lots of fresh ingredients. Or suppose your favorite activity is fishing. In this case, you would look for the best gear such as a new casting rod and some great lures.

Whether you're working on a computer or enjoying a hobby, great tools make your tasks easier and more fun. The same thing is true with your weight-loss program. You need to have a good diet plan, perhaps a weekly meeting, and most of all, a reliable scale.

Do you still have an analog scale with the round dial? Using one of these older scale models is like fishing with a cornstalk rod. It might still work, but it's just not very reliable. Besides that, an older or inaccurate scale will mess with your head. When you're working your weight-loss goals, having a scale you can count on is just as important as a heavy-duty skillet or a creative fishing lure.

Because it's such an important tool, make sure you own a really good scale. And if you've decided to buy a new one, think about the features and design options that matter most to you. Then purchase the best scale you can afford that matches your personal needs and preferences.

FEATURES

When you step on your scale, what information do you want to know? Do you like monitoring lots of data such as changes to your BMI and percent body fat? Or do you just want to see your weight and go on your way? Here are some options to consider:

- **Simple readout**

This type of scale shows your weight, nothing more. No bells or whistles, just your weight number on a screen that's easy for you to read.

- **Data tracking**

Tracking scales can monitor a variety of numbers including BMI, body fat percent, hydration levels, even bone mass.

- **Connect to a device**

Some newer scales will connect to your computer, smartphone or tablet, and display your data on the screen. If you're into technical stuff, you might enjoy monitoring your progress this way.

- **Talking scale**

Although most people don't want to hear their weight announced to anyone within listening range, there is a place for a talking scale. If you have vision problems or your body shape makes it hard to see the numbers easily, this type of scale might be a great choice.

- **Memory**

Many of the newer scales have the ability to track the weight changes of several people. A couple of scales will even show how much your weight has changed from your starting weight as well as from your most recent weigh-in.

DESIGN

Of course, any bathroom scale will provide basic information about your weight. But depending on your needs, you might want to consider these design features:

- **Screen**

Make sure you can easily see the screen and read the scale numbers. Many new scales have LCD displays with back lighting that enhances the readout.

- **Capacity**

Over the past few years, many companies have created scales that can read weights up to 400 pounds or more.

Make sure your scale has a high enough capacity to show your actual weight right from the start. You probably don't want to wait a month or until you've lost 40 pounds to be able to see your weight number.

- **Style**

Again, here's a place where you can match your personal tastes. Keep in mind that a black scale will look nice but it might show dust or water spots from your shower.

Scales made of clear glass or plastic can look stylish as well as blend into the décor in your bathroom instead of being obvious.

- **Easy to use**

Personally, I want to step on my scale, note the number, and step back off. If you're a person who enjoys having more data, that's fine. Just be sure the numbers you want to monitor are obvious and easy to read.

Scales with a memory for tracking several people may require a few taps to assure you're seeing your own weight, not that of your teenager. And if you buy a scale that connects to a computer or smartphone, make sure you learn how to set up the app and monitor the data.

Whichever type of scale you buy, be sure it matches your needs. If you get a scale with too many features or ones that you never use, you'll simply waste your money.

TESTING A SCALE

Once you have your new scale home, there are still a few important things to consider. Here's how to make sure you've picked the best scale for your needs.

- **Five times test**

To test the accuracy of your new scale, place it on a solid floor, not on carpet. Then step on and off the scale five times in a row. Your weight number should read the same at least four out of five times.

- **Level of quality**

Evaluate whether the scale feels sturdy or heavy duty enough for your body. Make sure it doesn't tip easily or feel unsteady and that the platform is large enough to feel comfortable when you stand on it.

- **Clear readout**

Even the best scale in the world won't be very useful if you can't read the numbers. The first few times you step on your scale, study the display to make sure you can read the numbers in normal lighting. If you can't easily see the readout, consider getting a different scale.

Like any tool or gadget, you might get one that doesn't work right. If possible, buy your scale through a company such as Amazon.com or a store that allows you to return or exchange it. Often, a different scale in the same brand will work fine.

RECOMMENDED SCALES

In this section, you'll find a list of some of the best scales on the market based on consumer research and user preferences. You can usually find the best deals on Amazon.com although some scales might also be competitively priced at stores such as Target or Walmart.

By doing the research for you, I hope to make it a lot easier for you to find a scale that's perfect for your needs. Before you buy any of the scales listed in this report, be sure to check the online reviews in case something has changed in the buyer responses.

The cost listed for each scale is based on the discounted price listed on Amazon.com, not the official retail price. Rather than giving specific prices, I'm providing a range of costs to allow for changes that can happen over time.

The list begins with simple, basic scales, then moves into models that track more details. Look for the type of scale you want, then review the options and features for that kind of scale. You'll notice that several of the top scales are the EatSmart brand, which consistently rank at the top of the reviews in terms of quality and consumer satisfaction.

For each scale, you'll find a list of features included with that specific model. The listings are based on information available at the time this report was created. Keep in mind that some models may have changed by the time you begin shopping for a scale.

BEST BATHROOM SCALES

(Links go to product listings on Amazon.com)



EatSmart Precision Basic Scale

Type: Basic, Step on to use
Capacity: 400 pounds
Special features: One of the highest rated scales on Amazon.com; large, back-lit display
Power: 4 AAA batteries (included)
Cost: Under \$30



Taylor 7506 Digital Scale

Type: Basic, Step on to use
Capacity: 400 pounds
Special features: Heavy-duty, tempered glass platform; large, easy-to-read LCD display
Power: Long-life lithium battery
Cost: Under \$25



EatSmart Precision Plus Scale

Type: Basic, Step on to use
Capacity: 440 pounds
Special features: Extra durable, oversize platform; large, back-lit display
Power: 2 AAA batteries (included)
Cost: \$30 to \$50



EatSmart Precision Tracker with Accu-Track Software

Type: Tracking, Step on to use
Capacity: 400 pounds
Special features: Extra large lighted display; memory tracks up to 8 users; compares to starting weight and most recent
Power: 4 AAA batteries (included)
Cost: \$30 to \$50



Weight Gurus Smartphone Connected Body Fat Scale

Type: Smartphone connected, Step on to use
Capacity: 400 pounds
Special features: Choose to view actual weight or only changes; memory tracks up to 8 users, connects to smartphone for tracking
Power: 4 AAA batteries (included)
Cost: Under \$30