
Best boat dehumidifier: 11 models to keep your boat dry



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Damp and condensation can lead to serious problems in a yacht, getting hold of the best boat dehumidifier will make an enormous difference. David Harding and Fox Morgan share their findings on 11 of the best options on the market.



TAGS:

It sounds obvious, but boats tend to live in a damp environment. Even if you keep yours ashore or in your driveway, damp can still present a problem – just as in a car or caravan. So buying the best boat dehumidifier for your needs is important.

An added challenge with boats is that that salt water inevitably finds its way down below. And salt, as we all know, retains moisture.

Since iron will start to rust when the relative humidity exceeds 50% (80% for steel), the problems caused by damp aren't limited to mould, mildew and mustiness: electronics, electrics and engines will suffer too, not to mention tools. This is where a good boat dehumidifier can help.

10 of the best boat dehumidifiers available right now



Meaco DD8L Junior

TESTED

On test for 8 years on the Tech Editors boat.



Meaco DD8L Junior. Made in the UK, this desiccant model from Meaco has proved very popular among boat owners because of its light weight (6kg/13lb), low noise and efficiency at low temperatures.

Fox Morgan, the Tech Editor here at Yachting Monthly notes: Indeed it was a recommendation from a fellow boat owner that made me run off to the internet to find one for my own boat about 8 years ago.

They claim it can extract 7.5 litres of water per day at 20°C and 60% relative humidity. It has two fan speeds, a variable humidistat and a laundry mode for maximum extraction or for drying clothes. I can't say exactly how much this fabulous little Meaco Junior actually extracts, but if I put it on the laundry dry setting over night, it empties the dogs water bowl nearby. It's really very efficient at sucking water out of everything nearby. The benefit of the desiccant dehumidifier is that it blows gently warmed air out of the top, so it keeps the air moving in the boat as well as adding a bit of warmth.

It comes with a tube to allow continuous draining, but the unit is too tall to fit on any of my boat counters, so I've been unable to use that function on my boat.

It's economical to run because of the way it has an air sampling setting, so when it's reached the level of dry you want, it just ticks over, clicking in to sample and then back off again.

This unit, pictured has been used for at least 6 months of every year for the past 8 years, mostly on my boat, but occasionally in a camper van and a damp office. It's been faultless and it has been a brilliant bit of kit that has easily paid itself several times over in reducing mildew damage to zero. Its been a total game changer for stress free winter boat maintenance.

5 stars from me for this stalwart bit of kit.

If you want an ioniser and an anti-bacterial filter, you can spend a little more and buy the DD8L model as opposed to the DD8L Junior.

Reasons to Buy

Quiet, extracts lots of water, lightweight, has worked faultlessly for years

Reasons to Avoid

uses a little more power than a compressor type, filter housing is a little fiddly.

What makes a good boat dehumidifier?

Mechanical dehumidifiers that run from a mains supply are often left on the galley worktop to drain into the sink so they don't cut out when the water bucket fills up. That's unless you have a top-of-the-range boat dehumidifier that's 'plumbed in' and expels water to the outside.

Your first choice is likely to be whether to buy a condenser type of boat dehumidifier or one of the newer desiccant types. The former use a compressor and refrigerant gas to create cold plates or coils on which moisture in the air, drawn in by a fan, condenses before dripping into a bucket.

With the desiccant dehumidifiers, the air passes over a rotating wheel coated with an absorbent material (typically zeolite). The saturated wheel is dried by hot air that's then cooled so, again, the condensed moisture is collected. This process is more power-hungry, but desiccant dehumidifiers are typically lighter. They also heat the surrounding air and work better at lower temperatures, when condenser types have to shut down periodically to defrost.

Whichever you buy, bear in mind that not all domestic dehumidifiers are designed to be left running for

lengthy periods. There have been instances of fires on board being attributed to boat dehumidifiers, so

it's a good idea to check with your insurers just to make sure.