

Between single room units and whole-home air purifiers: which one is better? The answer will depend on what “better” is for your indoor space. Better often means something different for everyone. Price, effectiveness, and convenience all play a role in deciding the best home air purifiers and what to invest in to improve your home’s indoor air quality.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of contradictory information when it comes to what the best air purifier options are. That said, it’s time we explain the benefits of both single room and whole-home systems to help you make the right choice for your home and the health of the people living in it.

## Single Room Air Purifiers

Standalone units do a great job of purifying the air in a single room or small space. For smaller homes or studio apartments, one large portable air purifier may be enough to cover the entire home. It performs okay if you’re looking for a unit to clean the air in one dedicated room. That said, single room air purifiers have a few requirements to truly be effective.

For standalone units to be efficient, know this:

1. Placed against a wall limits their ability to clean the air. The thing is, the dead center of rooms is where they need to be for maximum efficiency.
2. For them to truly purify the air, they must be on and running at all times. Keep doors and windows closed. Expect minimal lasting purification effects with standalone units.
3. Check and replace their small filters often. The purifier is significantly less effective without new filters.

## Whole-Home Air Purification Systems

Designed to clean all the air inside your home at once. Know that there is a fair amount of misinformation about these systems. That’s because larger standalone units are marketed as whole-home purifiers. The difference-maker: [true whole-home purifiers](#) are installed directly into your existing HVAC system.

Built to clean the air that blows through your home every day. As the air circulates through your home, the purifier removes harmful particles and continuously disinfects the air as it passes through the ductwork. No air in your home remains unpurified.

A possible downside is that your HVAC system must be running for this to work. However, this doesn't necessarily mean the heat or A/C must be on; alternatively, you can simply run the HVAC fan to keep the purification system going. Because the air cycling through your HVAC system is kept clean. Resulting in reduced wear-and-tear on your system by limiting the amount of dust and debris cycling through.

### The Best Whole-Home Active Air Purification System

What you want from the ideal whole-home purification system is one that uses [bi-polar ionization](#). This process fills indoor air with both positive and negative ions that make indoor air pollutants larger and thus easier to capture and remove. These systems actively seek out and destroy pollutants in the air and on surfaces.

## Which System Filters Better?

Technically, single room purifiers with HEPA filters are better filters than those commonly found in residential systems. Whole-home systems don't need their own filter. That's because they work with the filter already installed in your HVAC system.

We recommend [upgrading to MERV 13](#) air filters. They are 3-inches thick but fit into the 1-inch slot where the current filter is. Your filtration system works with the whole-home purifier without costly adaptations. [MERV 13 filter](#), coupled with a dual active technology air purification system dramatically improves the quality of your indoor air.

## Which One Is Cheaper?

Looking at system price: single room purifiers can be less expensive than whole-home purifiers. That's because some of the more popular standalone brand names are in the same price range as whole-home purification

systems. Homeowners end up needing multiple standalone units to purify a whole home. That's why single-room purifiers end up being just as expensive, if not a little more.

Maintenance-wise, single-room purifiers require more upkeep and regular filter changes because the filters are disposable. The thing is, the recurring costs of expensive HEPA filters adds up.

Whole-home purification systems require minimal maintenance—usually every few years. The sole extra cost for whole-home purifiers to keep in mind is that they must be professionally installed. As a result, whole-home units need less maintenance and are more cost-effective in the long run.

## Which One Is More Convenient?

A portable unit's main convenience is it can be set up and maintained without professional help. Standalone units can also be moved to the space where you need them.

Directly installed into the HVAC system, the whole-home system is much more convenient. When the HVAC system is on, it's working. Compare that to the consistent having to shift the location of single-room units and centering it in rooms for efficiency, and I think you have your answer.

## Final Thoughts

Whole-home solutions trump single room purifiers in every way: cost, convenience, effectiveness and efficiency. The best home air purifier is the one that will actively clean the air and surfaces in your home. Allowing a whole-home purification system to constantly decontaminate the air around you without ever needing to worry about it wins out every time.