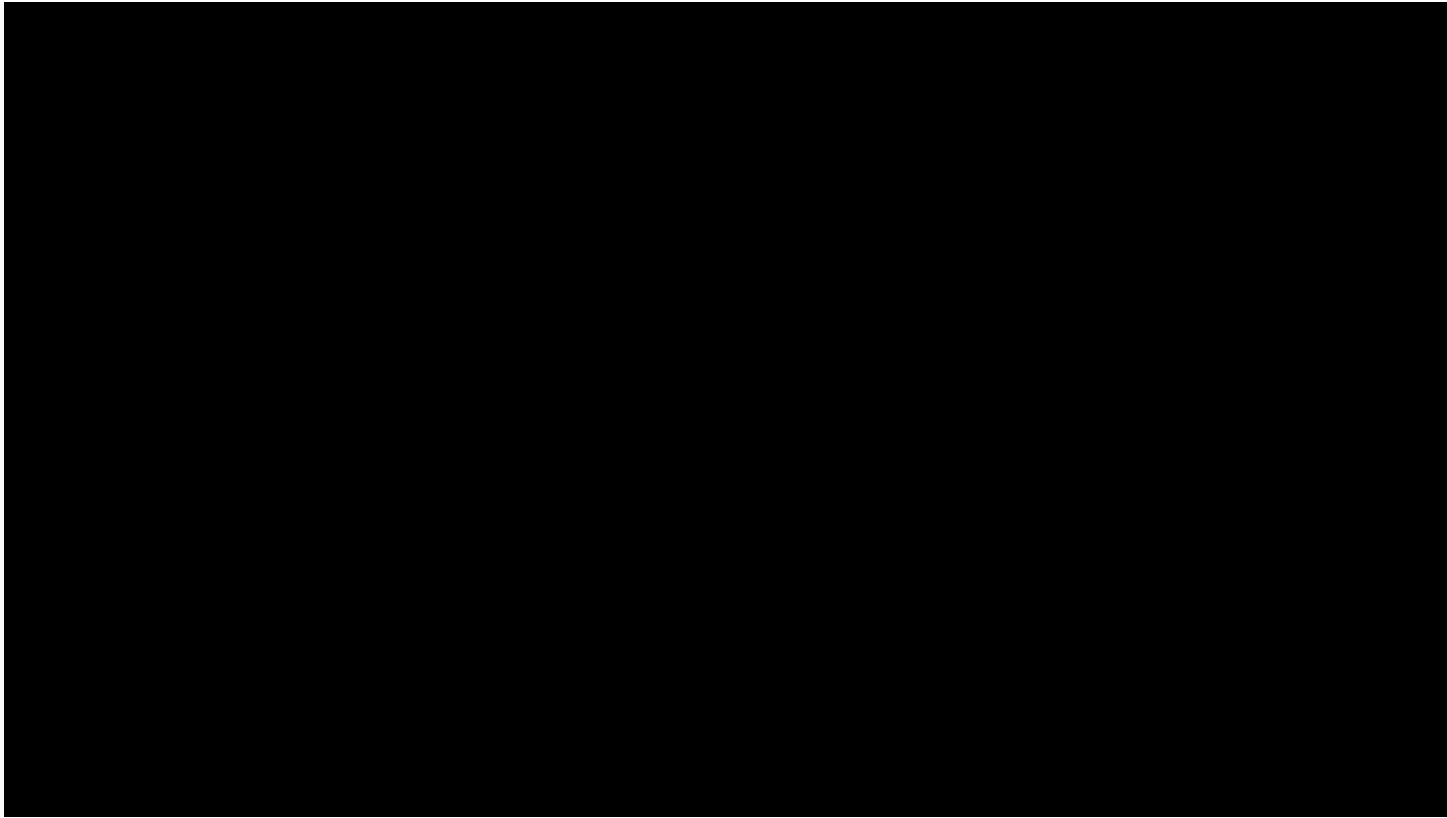


SHOPPING > ACCESSORIES

Scratch-and-Dent Appliances Can Save You Thousands When Remodeling

Here's how to snag the deals you may have been missing out on.

BY BRITTANY ANAS | PUBLISHED: SEP 25, 2023



During the Covid pandemic, I made a discovery that changed the way I shop for appliances. My oven stopped working, so while the world was baking banana bread, I was waiting months for an oven to be delivered. The global supply chain was in a jumble so I canceled my pending order, followed a friend's advice, and went to a store that has what are called "scratch-and-dent" appliances—they're not used, they're new, but sustained some cosmetic damage somewhere along the way. There, I shopped from the available floor models that I knew were in stock—all of which had a slight imperfection. I found an oven that was discounted

because it had a small dent on the warming door and a scratch on the side of the unit that would be concealed once it was installed anyways.

Fast forward to last month when my fridge went out. After a few unsuccessful repairs, I knew it was time to shop for a new one. Before heading to the big box stores, though, I popped into the local scratch-and-dent factory by my house and found a shiny, brand new Bosch refrigerator with French doors for \$1,500—the exact same model was selling at nearby stores for \$3,000.

The reason for the deep discount? Cosmetics! The refrigerator had a couple of small dents and a slight scratch, imperfections that were easy to identify because they were circled with a waxy yellow crayon. The dents are small enough for me to overlook, but I'll probably try to pop them out with [a dent puller](#). Even if I can't remove them, it's no biggie because the dent on the front part of the appliance is near the freezer handle and I can hide it by hanging some kitchen towels.

I'm now convinced that this is the smartest way to shop; scratch-and-dent stores are one of the cheapest ways to buy top-tier appliances. And experts agree. From the chatter I overheard in the store on my recent visit, these are popular spots with investors who are buying and fixing up properties. "Most items end up at scratch-and-dent retailers for cosmetic damage," says Tom Nolan, founder of [All Star Home](#), a home

improvement company. "This damage could happen during transportation or delivery, causing the original owner to refuse the item. If you're lucky, the damage won't be visible when you install the appliance."

Intrigued? Here's what to know about shopping scratch-and-dent appliances.



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How to Find Scratch-and-Dent Stores

Once I learned the term, I started googling and realized these stores are everywhere. "You can usually find these kinds of places by googling

'scratch and dent retailers near me,'" says Nolan. Often, "factory" or "outlet" is in the retailer's name. You can also ask appliance retailers in your area where they send inventory with cosmetic damage, he suggests.

Appliance Factory, where I shopped, for example, has 27 locations in Colorado, Wyoming, and then some midwest states.

How to Shop Scratch-and-Dent at Best Buy, Lowe's, The Home Depot, and more

You might even be able to purchase scratch-and-dent appliances online. Best Buy, has some "open box" appliances offered at a reduced price. They don't specify the imperfection, but state that the objects have minor cosmetic damage. Note that when you click "shop open-box," you're offered options at store locations near you, requiring you to go pick them up rather than having them delivered (which makes sense, because you can assess the damage yourself).

Lowe's offers reduced scratch and dent appliances, too; just go to the site and search "scratch and dent appliances." There, too, your search will return stores near you where you can go pick up a lightly damaged item.

And at [The Home Depot](#), if you search "scratch and dent appliances," you'll be met with deeply discounted options you can go to a nearby store and see, or, in some cases, have delivered (if you don't feel the need to check out the damage first).



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How Much Can You Save on Top-Tier Appliances?

You can often save between 30 to 50 percent off retail prices, which is significant, especially for major purchases like appliances, says [Erin](#)

Hybart, a Louisiana-based realtor and flipper.

"Don't hesitate to negotiate the price at the store, either," Hybart says.

"Sometimes buying two items could get you a better price."

When I was shopping for my fridge, there were dozens of models from major appliance brands available. The store was also running some deals to clear out inventory, too—buy an oven and get a dishwasher for free. There was even one refrigerator that had a "make me an offer" sticker on it.

Northern California interior designer Sam Jernigan with Renaissance Design Consultations told me that she purchased a high-end stainless steel KitchenAid dishwasher at an appliance outlet because she already planned to have it skinned with a solid wood veneer to match her custom kitchen cabinetry. "And voila, I saved around 30 percent at the time," she says. "In this instance, the consumer would be in the strongest possible position for an item with a prominent front scratch."



Tips for Shopping Scratch-and-Dent Factories

If you opt to shop in person at your local scratch-and-dent factory, make

sure to jot down this advice for a successful haul.

Have a plan in mind.

If you're sliding a stove into a counter, side dents don't matter. If you're covering a fridge in wood paneling, a front dent is no big deal. Personally, I like to zoom in on appliances where the dents are in convenient places—i.e. can be covered up with a tea towel or is in the upper corner where you might keep a magnet notepad with your grocery list.

Bring a tape measure.

Know what space you have to work with, and then be prepared to measure appliances when you shop in store; some appliances have dimensions listed, others don't and you'll want to make sure the fridge, oven, dishwasher or washer and dryer units will fit your space before you bring them home.

Have your cell phone handy.

The appliances have model details on them, so with my phone in hand, I was able to walk the aisles searching for them online to see how much they sold for, see the reviews, and read the ratings.

Pay attention to the warranty.

Most times, appliances will still be covered by the manufacturer's

warranty, giving you protection in case of defects, but the scratch-and-dent retailer may also offer an additional warranty you can purchase to cover repairs. In my case, I have a one-year warranty from Bosch, but also paid a couple hundred bucks for a five-year extended warranty from Appliance Factory that also covers the compressor (a pricey fridge part) for 10 years.

How to Fix Scratches and Dents on Appliances

Once you buy, if you do want to try and fix a dent, suction-based dent pullers work well, Hybart says. "I have seen the trick of using a hair dryer to heat up the metal to make removing the dent easier, too," she adds.

As far as scratches go, Hybart recommends using a fine-grit sandpaper to smooth the sides of the scratch, followed by touch-up paint. If the scratch is superficial, you can also try using a car paint repair kit and color-match it, says Nolan.

With a little know-how, a slight imperfection just might add up to one beautiful deal.



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Brittany Anas is a former newspaper reporter (*The Denver Post*, *Boulder Daily Camera*) turned freelance writer. Before she struck out on her own, she covered just about every beat—from higher education to crime. Now she writes about food, cocktails, travel, and lifestyle topics for *Men's Journal*, *House Beautiful*, *Forbes*, *Simplemost*, *Shondaland*, *Livability*, Hearst newspapers, *TripSavvy* and more. In...

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