

5 Apple Products Worth Buying Refurbished (And 5 To Avoid)

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Apple's products are regarded as the gold standard across multiple categories in the tech space. MacBook computers are powerful, easy to use, and have excellent endurance. If you're looking for a tablet, an iPad is almost always the default recommendation since it has a gorgeous display, a powerful chipset, and additional accessories like the Magic Keyboard and Apple Pencil to further enhance its functionality. Now, if

someone already has a Mac and an iPad, the first choice for a smartphone is always the iPhone. This is primarily because all of these devices work so well in Apple's ecosystem — making it easy to share files, text other Apple users via iMessage, and even use features like Sidecar that let you [use your iPad as a secondary monitor with your Mac](#). That said, all of these Apple products we've mentioned are rather expensive. So, one may want to consider going the refurbished route.

Refurbished devices are not only more affordable, but they're also better for the environment. So, does that mean you should opt for a refurbished variant of all Apple products and save a good chunk of money? Well, no. There are some products that are worth buying refurbished, while others — not so much. To make your job easier, we've come up with a list of Apple devices you can buy refurbished and ones that you should avoid. We've considered factors like longevity, reliability, repairability, and value for money. Use this as a reference to make a buying decision.

Worth: MacBooks



[Amazon Renewed Store](#)

MacBooks are easily among the best laptops you can buy for a wide variety of use cases. If you're looking for a computer for day-to-day tasks like browsing the web, watching TV shows and movies, preparing presentations, and working on Excel sheets, a MacBook Air can handle them well. In case you perform more intensive tasks like video editing, programming, etc., a MacBook Pro can do them all without breaking a sweat. macOS is easy to use, doesn't lag frequently, and is visually appealing. Moreover,

Macs received a major performance boost when Apple switched to its homegrown M-series of chips. That said, Macs are some of the most expensive pieces of hardware you can buy from Apple. Prices can go north of \$1,000-2,000, which isn't accessible to everyone.

This is where refurbished or used MacBooks make a lot of sense. You can get a [refurbished M1 MacBook Air](#) for under \$400, which is an excellent deal. If you're looking for something more powerful, the [MacBook Pro with the M1 Pro chip](#) is still a capable machine, and it retails for just under \$800. These are substantial savings compared to buying a new Mac. Moreover, Macs are generally handled with care since they're large devices, unlike smartphones that get abused. So if you're buying a used or refurbished one, chances are that the previous owner maintained it well. Overall, a [MacBook is among the best Apple devices you can buy refurbished](#) in terms of the sheer value proposition.

Worth: iPads



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Apple's iPad remains the benchmark for what a tablet should be. Regardless of whether you're looking for a tablet for media consumption, note-taking, gaming, or educational purposes, an iPad is the default recommendation thanks to its impressive hardware. Moreover, Apple has a wide range of iPads on sale that cater to consumers at various price points. The standard iPad is quite affordable, so a refurbished one may not necessarily make sense. However, if you're eyeing the iPad Air or the iPad Pro, you can consider opting for a refurbished unit. The [iPad Pro](#) is Apple's top-of-the-line iPad, retailing for close to \$1,000. That's a lot of money for a tablet. If you don't mind a slightly older version, a

[refurbished iPad Pro 2021](#) sells for under \$500, which is half of what a new one would cost.

This makes the iPad a worthy gadget when bought refurbished. Pair it with a [good keyboard case](#), and you have a portable computer that packs ample power for most everyday tasks. Getting a refurbished iPad is also a good way to gain access to older models that aren't on sale anymore. For instance, you may want a cheap iPad for basic tasks or to give to your kids. But the current generation of iPad is still slightly pricey for such purposes. In such situations, you can pick up a [refurbished iPad 8th gen](#) for around \$300. It will still fare well for taking notes, web browsing, and light gaming.

Worth: iPhones



[Amazon Renewed Store](#)

Whether you're looking for a primary phone but don't want to spend anywhere from \$700-1,200, or you need a secondary phone that won't break the bank, a refurbished iPhone is a smart choice. Phones are getting more expensive every year, so you may want to save some money by getting a used or refurbished iPhone. A big reason why iPhones are among the best Apple products to buy refurbished is that you can find a current-gen iPhone that's refurbished for a substantially lower price compared to a brand-new one. For example, an iPhone 16 will set you back \$799 if you purchase a new unit from Apple. However, the same iPhone 16 is available for as low as [\\$679 for the renewed version](#). That's a good \$120 saved right there.

Of course, you can always purchase an older iPhone if you want an even more affordable option. The [iPhone 14](#), for instance, goes for \$379 for the renewed version, while the [iPhone 13 mini](#) is just \$299. The latter is one of the [best refurbished phones you can buy](#) if you don't have large hands. If you're looking for a Pro iPhone, the [iPhone 15 Pro](#) is being sold for \$708. This is a good deal for those who want an iPhone with triple cameras but don't want to spend \$1,000 on the latest iteration. Just make sure you buy a refurbished iPhone from a reputable seller to ensure you get a genuine battery and display.

Worth: Mac desktops



[Amazon Renewed Store](#)

Like MacBooks, iMac desktop computers from Apple are equally good for browsing the web, typing documents, making presentations, etc. In fact, they can also handle heavier tasks like programming and content creation. Moreover, the large, stunning display makes it the perfect media machine to watch your favorite shows and movies in HDR. The main reason to buy an iMac is that it's an all-in-one desktop that has its brains built right into the monitor. This way, you don't need a separate PC connected to a monitor. Notably, the screen that ships with an iMac is of extremely high quality, which means that oftentimes, a standalone monitor of that calibre may

end up costing more than a refurbished iMac.

A good example of this would be the [2019 iMac](#) with a 4K 21.5-inch display. It's available for under \$350, which is a good price for a basic computer. You can get one

for your kids so that they have a large canvas to do their homework or school projects. Or, you can use it as a media server to watch content. Of course, the performance isn't going to be as good as the latest M-series chips, but it should still run most tasks with ease. If you're looking for a more recent version with the redesign, the [2021 M1 iMac](#) will set you back around \$700. A [refurbished Mac Mini](#) is also a good option if you already have a monitor.

Worth: iPods



Amazon Renewed Store

We all stream music on smartphones nowadays, so iPods or dedicated music players aren't relevant anymore. However, if you want to relive nostalgia and use an iPod purely for listening to music without any of the distractions of a modern-day phone, the only way to get one is to go the refurbished route. Several sellers modify older versions of iPods to increase the memory, add Bluetooth support, improve battery life, etc. These refurbished units are the ones you should be eyeing, since they provide a lot more value and are better suited to the current day and age, where most people use wireless headphones to listen to music. You may have to look around to find a seller with a unit like that, but it would definitely be worth getting a modded one.

If you can't find one, or you're finding it hard to trust a random seller on eBay, Amazon has a few refurbished iPods for sale. The [iPod Classic 7th Gen](#) is a good option, but it's quite pricey at \$260. You can also consider the [iPod Nano](#) or the [iPod Touch](#) — both of which are priced lower than the iPod Classic. These devices are good replacements for a smartphone when you're running or working out at the gym. That said, keep in mind that you'll have to transfer MP3 files from your computer to the iPod, and you won't be able to use [music streaming apps](#).

Not worth: Apple Watch



Apple/Amazon

An Apple Watch is worn on the wrist almost every day, which means it is regularly subjected to a fair amount of abuse. After all, it's natural for the watch to collide with walls, furniture, etc. while going about day-to-day activities. As a result, the chassis and display of the Apple Watch may develop permanent scratches, scuffs, and dents. These issues can drastically ruin the look of the watch. Moreover, Apple doesn't replace any of these parts in case of external damage, which is a bummer. Due to these reasons, it's best to stay away from a used or renewed Apple Watch. The previous owner may not have treated it with care. Unlike smartphones, most

people don't use an Apple Watch with a case or screen protector, so the damage shows up like an eyesore.

Additionally, the Apple Watch has a rather small battery due to its form factor, so the battery life is already not great out of the box. Most Apple Watches, barring the Ultra, will only last about 18-24 hours on a single charge. With a refurbished watch, you may be looking at reduced battery capacity if it's an older model. If the battery health has dropped below 80%, the watch will only stay on for a couple of hours before needing a charge. Apple doesn't provide any battery replacement service either, so you'll be stuck with an expensive paperweight after a while.

Not worth: AirPods



Amazon Renewed Store

The reasons not to buy a pair of refurbished AirPods are similar to those for the Apple Watch. For starters, Apple doesn't provide any battery replacement or repair program for any issue whatsoever with the AirPods. So, if you end up with a pair that has an aged battery, it will only last you an hour or two before dying. Unlike iPhones or Macs, Apple doesn't display the battery health of AirPods, so there's no way to tell how good or bad the cells are. Given how tiny each earbud is, the battery is naturally quite small, so it's going to lose its charge-holding capacity sooner compared to larger devices. If you take your AirPods to Apple due to poor battery life, you'll be asked to purchase a replacement — and it can be pricey.

Instead, it makes sense to invest that money upfront in a new pair of AirPods. This way, you're assured of getting a unit that has 100% battery health and will last you a few years. If you ever decide to get a used or renewed pair because you're getting an irresistible deal on it, check if it has AppleCare+ coverage. If it does, you can go ahead with the purchase since you can get a free replacement from Apple in case things don't go as planned. The price difference between a new and refurbished pair of AirPods Pro is hardly \$50, so that's another factor in favor of a new unit.

Not worth: Apple Pencil



One aspect of Apple's accessories that's truly disappointing is that most of them aren't repairable. That's exactly the case with the Apple Pencil as well. So if you're getting a refurbished unit, you would never know if there's any internal damage, how much the battery has been used, how long it's going to last, etc. Now, you may argue that this is the case with every refurbished item. While that's true, an iPhone or a Mac can have its parts replaced in case of an issue — whereas that's not the case with the AirPods, Apple Watch, and Apple Pencil. It's

Apple/Amazon

also worth noting that a refurbished Apple Pencil may come with used nibs that might need replacing.

Considering these factors, it's best to spend a little extra on a brand-new unit, since you won't have to face any such issues. A refurbished Pencil and a new set of nibs from Apple would cost you more or less the same as buying a new Pencil directly from Apple. This way, you get a one-year warranty and a chance to purchase AppleCare+, which you should. In case something goes wrong, Apple will replace the Pencil free of cost. The added peace of mind that you get with AppleCare+, especially for small accessories like this, is unmatched. It's better to pay more once than buy a used or refurbished unit every year because the previous one went bad.

Not worth: Magic Keyboard and Mouse



Apple/Amazon

If you see the trend, most Apple devices we're recommending you don't buy refurbished are accessories and peripherals. This is because Apple provides absolutely no support if things go south. That's exactly the case with Apple's Magic Keyboard and Magic Mouse accessories. The Magic Keyboard comes in two types — one is a standalone keyboard that can be used with a desktop like the iMac, while the other is a keyboard case that attaches magnetically to the iPad Air or iPad Pro. The primary issue with buying a refurbished unit of either of

these devices is that there's a good possibility of some keys not functioning as intended. Apple's history with keyboards hasn't been great, so you wouldn't want to end up in a situation where the space bar or the Shift key isn't working.

Unless the device is under warranty, Apple will not repair or fix the issue, since all of these accessories are glued shut in a way that makes them impossible to repair. Moreover, older generations of the Magic Keyboard have a fabric-like exterior that also shows signs of wear and tear. If the fabric starts peeling or tearing from the edges, it'll ruin the look of your iPad. While the Magic Mouse doesn't have keys, it does have switches to actuate a click. If these switches go bad, or the mouse wasn't handled with care by the previous owner, you'll be stuck with a rather expensive mouse that doesn't work.

Not worth: HomePod



Apple/Best Buy

Funnily, a refurbished unit of the HomePod mini on Amazon is retailing for a higher price than a brand-new one from Apple. If that's not enough reason to skip the refurbished version, let's walk you through a few more. The exterior of both the HomePod and the HomePod mini is wrapped in fabric for aesthetic appeal. Used or refurbished units may show signs of wear and tear on this fabric

layer. Now, since a HomePod is meant to be placed in your living room or in a common area where multiple members of your family use it, a scuffed version may not look too appealing. Furthermore, the same issue with repairability arises here, too.

The primary reason you may want to get a HomePod is to listen to music. So, you'd obviously want the speaker to sound good when you play your favorite tracks. If you hear some sort of rattling or static sounds while playing audio, and the HomePod isn't under warranty, you'll have to shell out more money for a replacement. If you don't want to spend too much on the larger HomePod, we recommend getting a new unit of the smaller HomePod Mini instead of a refurbished larger HomePod. That's a good way to save money while still enjoying a new product that has a lower chance of running into issues.

How we picked these devices



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One of the most important factors when buying a refurbished device is where you're buying it from. Reputable sellers like Amazon and Apple's own refurbished store are dependable choices. Refurbished goods generally have repaired or replaced parts. Buying from a reliable seller increases the chances of these parts being genuine or of high quality. If you buy from an unknown seller, you risk counterfeit or low-quality parts being used internally.

MacBooks and iPhones are usually long-term investments that you'd want to use for 4-5 years. Low-quality replacement parts may not last as long. Apart from longevity, another important consideration for many consumers is the price difference.

All the devices we've mentioned that are worth buying refurbished are quite expensive to buy new. By opting for a refurbished variant, you can save a substantial amount of money that you can use to buy [accessories and peripherals for your Mac](#) or iPhone. On the other hand, smaller gadgets like AirPods and Apple Watches cannot be repaired. So if you're buying a unit on which the battery has already worn out, you may have to buy a new pair sooner than expected — defeating the purpose of saving money in the first place. Moreover, some refurbished Apple accessories are only \$20-30 cheaper compared to a brand-new one — at which point, it makes more sense to get a unit with full warranty and support from Apple.