



Portable Ultrasound Buyer's Guide

Unravelling the mysteries of buying a new or used portable ultrasound machine



Choosing a Portable Ultrasound Machine



With more than 100 portable ultrasounds to choose from, finding the best machine for you is a difficult process.

Portable ultrasound machines have seen the largest growth in product offerings and sales volume over any type of ultrasound in the last 15 years. And with the growing number of products available, shopping for a portable ultrasound machine can feel like a bit of a gamble.

So before you start shopping, do some homework. It will save you serious time and money if you take the time to educate yourself. This buyer's guide will prepare you to make the best decision and get the best deal on the best portable ultrasound machine for you.

Step 1: What will you do with the machine?

You can't start shopping without knowing your primary purpose for the ultrasound. Write down what its primary use(s) will be. If you have multiple purposes, place them in order and assign an approximate percentage of use for the ultrasound, for example:

- 70% Vascular
- 20% Abdomen
- 10% Cardiac Echo

Step 2: Identify Key Features

Don't worry about getting too technical at this point, just be aware of what you must have. For example, if you're doing cardiac will you need stress echo? Do you need color? Do you need Doppler? How extensive are your studies and are there technologies you'll require for your specific needs? Are your patients out-of-the-ordinary in size, weight or otherwise which might require special features? And so on... Take notes as this is information that a good sales representative will want to know.

Step 3: Determine Your Budget

Because prices range from \$1,000 to more than \$100,000, it's important to have a general idea of how much you want to spend. This will narrow your search greatly and make your decision process much easier. You will need to inform the sales rep your approximate budget range... for example: \$5,000-\$10,000, \$10,000-\$15,000, less than \$20,000, less than \$30,000 etc.

Step 4: Weigh the benefits of New vs. Used

New systems typically come with a warranty and are often more expensive than used. However, many of the smaller manufacturers (SIUI, SonoScape, Mindray) offer new systems at a similar price as a used system from one of the major manufacturers (Philips, GE, Acuson/Siemens). There are advantages to each... for example some buyers prefer peace of mind about going with Big Name, and others need to go with a Big Name manufacturer because it offers technologies not available from the smaller manufacturers. But if you're not in either of those camps... buying a new system from a smaller manufacturer offers: similar or better image quality over refurbished equipment as well as more than one year of warranty. It's best to keep an open mind on new or used equipment because you'll likely receive prices on both.

Step 5: Research the machines

If you have a preferred manufacturer or a friend/colleague recommended a certain system to you, start with that system then evaluate similar systems. For example, if you have heard great things about the GE Logiq e, [look it up online](#), and a good company will offer a list of similar equipment on their website. From here, you can evaluate the features of the similar ultrasound machines and narrow your choice down to a few potential winners.

Step 6: Find the company you want to do business with

This isn't as hard as it seems. Looking online, you can determine the experts. Most sites' descriptions are verbatim copy from the product brochure... they don't outline the true advantages and disadvantages to these systems, nor give you any insight beyond what the manufacturer wants you to believe.

A well-researched, expert-driven website will allow you to do your own research and offer unbiased reviews about the ultrasound. A comprehensive, informative website guarantees you that there are experts at that company that have actually used the machines and can tell you what's best for your needs.

Step 7: Make the call

You're armed, educated, and found a company you can trust. If you've followed these guidelines, you'll have a completely different conversation with that sales rep than if you'd just called out of the blue... you have a good idea of what you want, you're confident in the company, and you're confident about what you'll get out of it. At this point, the sales rep can give you the "little things" that apply to your specific situation, thereby making the final choice a relatively easy one.

Step 8: Get reassurance

Even if you feel good about the company, keep asking questions. What do they offer after the sale? Can you talk with someone if you need a little help getting through something on the machine such as exporting to DVD or jump drive... connecting external monitors... exporting to DVD or jump drive... setting your own custom presets... getting through a strange quirk on the system? Is this free?

If it's not free and they don't have anyone like that, you need to ask who's at the company that is evaluating the ultrasound systems. How can they confidently tell you what's good and what's bad if they don't have experts on-site? Will you be charged by the hour to get some simple questions answered?

Ask about their service department and whom you would talk to if an issue arose. Ask about the refurbishing process. Ask about their facility and what they have in-house. Be sure that they REALLY DO have the capabilities they're telling you about.

Step 9: After the call... how do you know what's the best deal?

Everyone wants the best deal. But unfortunately, there's not a simple answer to the question. The "best deal" differs day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month. Oftentimes,

the best deal is something that comes through on trade or is a special deal on a bulk buy from a manufacturer. There's no way to predict the timing and it is a very fluid process. A good sales rep will know what the best deal is on any given moment and assist you in getting that great deal.

New equipment prices don't fluctuate like refurbished, which is why it's important to keep an open mind when considering new or used ultrasound equipment. There are some days where it makes more sense to buy new, on others, just the opposite.

Need more info?

If you're doing this for the first time, you may want to check out our [Ultrasound Machine Buyer's Guide](#) and get some more insight as to what's out there, what to look for in a company, and exclusive information that's not available anywhere else.

More questions? Don't hesitate to call us at Providian Medical. We have trained experts in sales, service, and training. You can make a free phone call to us at Providian Medical 888-627-6101.

