

Improvement to ducted home vacuum system

Ducted vacuum systems have a large vacuum unit with several hose inlets arranged around the home. The central vacuum unit starts automatically when the user connects the vacuum hose to an outlet. A simple switch mechanism in each of the outlets completes a low-voltage control circuit when the hose is connected.

The downside of this arrangement is that if you don't have a switchable hose, you find that you have to walk back to the inlet and unplug the hose a number of times during a typical cleaning session. You can upgrade to a switchable hose but they cost well over a hundred dollars.

A simple solution is to install a cheap wireless RF remote control switch near the central unit and clip the associated remote control

fob to a cable tie on the end of the vacuum hose. These low-cost wireless RF Remote Control Switches are available on eBay or from KitStop (www.kitstop.com.au, as featured in the "Barking Dog Blaster Wireless Remote" article in the October 2012 issue). These typically have at least one set of relay terminals which are controlled remotely; the KitStop unit has two independent outputs.

You can power the relay/RF receiver from your vacuum unit if it uses a 12V DC control system. Mine uses 24VAC, so I used a small 12V plugpack instead. Wire the relay's NC (normally closed) contacts in series with the switches on the inlets. This means you can still use the vacuum system in case you misplace the remote control or its battery goes flat.

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