

My Dude Watch

Best Movements Under \$500 (Explained Simply)

If you're shopping under \$500, the movement matters more than the logo. This guide explains the most common movements in affordable watches — what accuracy to expect, how reliable they are, and realistic service considerations.

Understanding Accuracy & Service Costs

Accuracy is measured in seconds per day (spd).

Factory tolerances are usually wider than real-world performance once regulated. Basic automatic service commonly ranges from \$150–\$300 depending on region. For lower-cost watches, replacement can sometimes be more economical than full service.



Seiko NH Series (NH35 / NH36 / NH38)

Accuracy: -20 to +40 spd (often performs better when regulated). Power Reserve: ~41 hours.

Reliability: Extremely durable and widely used.

Service: Often replaced due to low cost. Summary:

The workhorse king of affordable tool watches.

Miyota 8 Series (8215 / 8315 / 9015)

Accuracy: -20 to +40 spd (9015 typically tighter). Power Reserve: 42–60 hours

depending on model. Reliability: Very

robust; 9015 offers higher beat (28,800

bph). Service: Comparable to NH series.

Summary: Reliable alternative with slimmer options in some cases.

PT5000

Accuracy: Often rated around -10 to +30 spd. Beat Rate: 28,800 bph. Reliability: ETA-style architecture; smoother sweep. Service: Moderate; parts access varies. Summary: Higher-beat feel at a budget-friendly price.



Sellita SW200

Accuracy: Typically -12 to +12 spd in standard grade. Beat Rate: 28,800 bph. Reliability: Swiss-made with strong track record. Service: \$200–\$350 typical. Summary: Premium Swiss option near the top of the \$500 tier.

ETA 2824

Accuracy: Can be regulated to tight tolerances. Beat Rate: 28,800 bph. Reliability: Longstanding industry benchmark. Service: Widely serviceable; similar cost to SW200. Summary: Proven Swiss classic when found under \$500.



Seagull ST19 Chronograph

Accuracy: Often -20 to +40 spd. Type: Hand-wound mechanical chronograph. Reliability: Solid when well assembled; more delicate than 3-hand automatics. Service: Higher due to chronograph complexity. Summary: Exceptional value for mechanical chronograph enthusiasts