



Appliance Care and Maintenance Checklist

Maintaining your appliances is necessary to prolong their life as well as keep them in good working condition. When you clean your kitchen, harsh chemicals are out! Stick to cleaning products that are safe to eat or use on dishes like vinegar, lemon juice, baking soda and dish detergent.

Oven

- Run the self-cleaning cycle on your oven. Cut back on energy costs by using the self-cleaning cycle right after baking. If you don't have a self-cleaning oven, you can clean your oven with a mixture of 1/2 cup of baking soda and 3 T of water to make a paste. Spread the paste over the interior surfaces of the oven, avoiding the heating element. Leave overnight and wipe it out in the morning, scraping with a silicone spatula where necessary. Spray the surface with a little vinegar and finish with a final wipe down.
- Check your oven door seal to be sure it is clean and working properly. A leaky seal can waste energy and leave your kitchen, and your house, hotter than it should be.

Stovetop

- If your stovetop or drip-pans have baked on spills, using a little baking soda can help remove them without scratching the surfaces.
- Remove knobs and soak them in warm soapy water.

Microwave

- Spatter and greasy build-up can be removed with vinegar and water. Add 1/4 cup vinegar to 1 cup of water and boil the mixture for 3 minutes. Leave the door closed and let it stand for about 10 minutes before wiping clean.
- Deodorize your microwave, combine 1 cup of water with 1/2 cup of lemon juice and heat on high for 3-5 minutes. Let it stand for 5-10 minutes before removing.

Refrigerator

- Toss old and expired food.
- Wipe down the shelves and drawers starting at the top and working down.
- Place removable parts in a tub of warm water and a splash of baking soda. (While they soak, wipe interior surfaces and take a small scrub brush and clean the places that you wouldn't be able to get to when the removable parts were in place. Make sure parts are completely dry before returning them to your refrigerator.)
- Vacuum the coils. Use a bristle brush to brush away dust and your vacuum's nozzle attachment is perfect to clean between the coils and suck up the debris that you loosen with the bristle brush.

- ❑ If your refrigerator has a drain hole and drip pan to remove condensation, it's important that these function properly. Wash the drip pan & clean the drain hole, removing food particles & mineral deposits. (Some newer models do not have a drip pan that can be accessed, check the specs for your refrigerator.)
- ❑ Check the gaskets for cracked or otherwise damaged places. Then shut a dollar bill in the door and make sure you cannot pull it out easily. If either test turns up problems, consider replacing the gasket.

Dishwasher

- ❑ Running a cycle with a bowl of three cups of vinegar on the bottom rack can get rid of mineral buildup.
- ❑ For dishwasher odors put a cup of baking soda in the dishwasher and run a rinse cycle.

Washing Machine

- ❑ Running a cycle with a cup of bleach and no clothes will clean the drums and eliminate any musty odors. It's important to leave the door open after you run a load, so it can completely dry out.
- ❑ If you have a front-loading washer, wipe the door seal and glass with a dry cloth after you finish your laundry.
- ❑ Inspect the rubber door seal of your front load washer for mold and mildew. Be sure to pull back the seal to examine the hidden crevices. (To clean, mix 1 cup of liquid chlorine bleach with 1 gallon of warm water. Moisten a clean white cloth with the bleach water solution and wipe down the seal to remove any mold and mildew. Allow the solution to remain on the seal for five minutes, then wipe down the door seal with a clean, dry white cloth.)
- ❑ Check hose quality to insure that they're in good shape and avoid a water disaster that's more common than you think.

Clothes Dryer

- ❑ Make sure your lint trap is clean. As a test, take your trap to the sink and run water into it. If the water does not freely flow through the screen, it needs to be scrubbed. (Scrub with dish soap and water with a toothbrush to make sure air can properly flow through.)
- ❑ Check your vents. Make sure the flapper on your exterior vent is not held open by excess lint buildup. If the flapper does not close tight, a bird can open the flap with its beak and head inside to nest.
- ❑ Vacuum around, behind, and between washer and dryer.

Cleaning and maintaining your appliances may take a little time, but will add years to the life of your appliances, making it completely worth it.



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