

Appliances need a spring-cleaning too

For some people, spring-cleaning efforts are focused on washing windows, vacuuming furniture, cleaning curtains, and rotating mattresses. It's okay if you're not one of the "some" that do these chores every spring — or ever. We all do the best we can when our time and resources are limited. But this spring, try to give some of your appliances a refresh by placing them on your spring-cleaning list. Grime lurks in places you cannot see, causing some appliances to work inefficiently. So, don't ignore these hard-working helpers when you get ready to clean. Ideally, you should give all your appliances a good cleaning, but here are just a handful to start with. When necessary, remember to unplug your appliance before cleaning.

Traditional drip coffeemaker: This appliance can be a bacteria breeding ground. Remove old coffee grounds and the filter after each use, wipe surfaces and allow the water reservoir to dry. To remove mineral deposits, you should run a cycle with half vinegar and half water using a paper filter. Turn it off and let it sit for an hour after half of the liquid has brewed, then finish the cycle. Replace the paper filter, and run two cycles with only fresh water to flush any vinegar residue.

Dishwasher: Wipe around the gasket area of the door, and clean any food filters in the bottom of the dishwasher tub. Then run an empty cycle with a glass full of vinegar on the top rack.

Microwave: Wiping the inside often will prevent food buildup. Here's what you can do if your microwave needs to be rescued. Fill a heat-proof container with one cup of water and one tablespoon of white vinegar then microwave for several minutes, or until half of the mixture has evaporated. Turn off the microwave and leave the container inside with the door closed for 10 minutes. Carefully remove the half-full container (it may be very hot), and wipe the interior with a clean cloth or sponge. If there is a glass turntable, remove it and wash it.

Clothes washer: If your machine has a removable detergent or softener dispenser, take it out and wash it in soapy water, then return the dispenser. Add one cup of bleach directly to the washer and run an empty load on a long cycle or cleaning cycle. Wipe down the interior and gaskets when the cycle is finished. It's a good idea to wash a white load next in case there is some bleach residue in the washer. If possible, leave your washer door or lid and detergent dispenser drawer open when the washer is not in use to prevent mold-causing moisture buildup.

Garbage disposal: Take precautions by turning off the power to the disposal switch before you start cleaning. Most rubber gaskets at the drain area can be removed, cleaned, and put back — a lot of gunk can collect here. Use an old toothbrush to clean around the gasket area. Add baking soda and the peel of a citrus fruit to freshen the disposal. Just be sure to flush the drain with plenty of water as you run the disposal with the peel.

Refrigerator: To maintain peak performance, this is one major appliance that will benefit from a thorough cleaning. Not only should you periodically remove the contents and wipe down the interior, you should clean the outside as well. Remember to change any water filters, and check your owner's manual for details about caring for the condenser at the bottom or top of the fridge. These should be vacuumed because they collect dust. You should empty and clean the drip pan that most refrigerators have at or near their bottoms, and see if your older model needs to be defrosted.

Tidy Tip: Spring may inspire us to do our once-a-year deep-clean around the house. But if we spend just a few extra minutes each day wiping surfaces and putting things away, it's easier to keep our homes clean and tidy all year long.

Source:

Jeanne Badgett, Senior Extension Associate for Clothing, Textiles, and Household Equipment

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