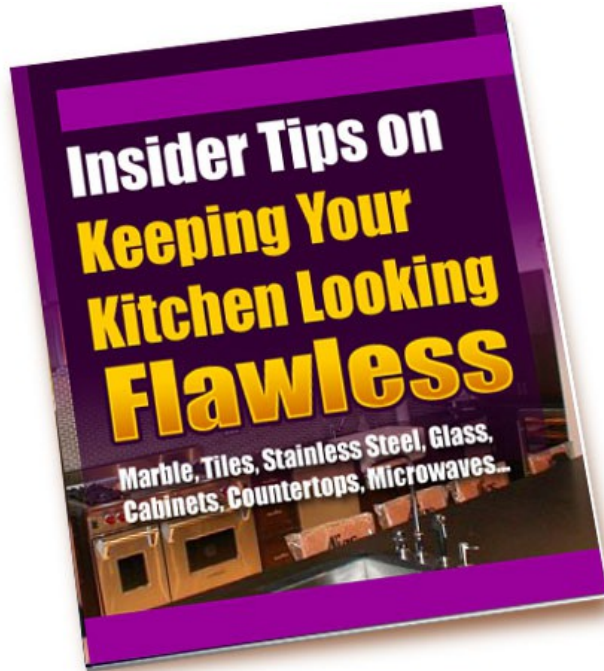


Kitchen Care: Hints for Cleaning That Flawless Brand-New Look



Of the many parts of the home, the kitchen deserves a close attention. Although it is just one room, it is where at any given time you can find a family eating, working on homework, talking on the phone, or simply hanging out with buddies. So it's no big surprise that the kitchen, as the centerpiece of the home, is also one of the dirtiest and toughest rooms to clean. Many experts have even said that not the bathroom bowl but the average kitchen sink contains the most concentrated combination of harmful microorganisms in the house. Now, isn't it yucky?

Well, getting a spotless kitchen can seem like an overwhelming task in the first place, but it doesn't have to be. As what the former director of engineering for the Good Housekeeping Institute, Mark Kalinowski, once said, a clean kitchen can be attained if routine and streamlined tasks are performed in the kitchen on a regular basis. Every home owner or housekeeper can particularly achieve this by using time saving tactics, coupled with proper cleaning tools. These can no doubt significantly lessen the time spent completing the dreaded kitchen responsibilities.

Now below is some of the most recommended time saving tips to ensure that the hub of your home will remain spotless. Just sit back, relax, and read on.

Tips Before You Clean

Make a Clean-Up Checklist

Most experts often recommend forming a clean-up checklist before you consider actual cleaning. According to them, this will help your kitchen shine. Well, one particular

reason behind this idea is that taking stock of your cleaning needs and supplies before you start the task will make sure that you will have everything on hand and ready to go. So, consider mapping out the chores you want to accomplish as this will further help in keeping you organized, so nothing is overlooked.

Teamwork is a Great Idea

Why don't you think teamwork? Yes, that's it! Teamwork is also vital when considering kitchen or home cleaning in general. So you don't have to do everything yourself, it is best to enlist the help of your family, including your children. It is worthy to note after all that a good work ethic can be easily learned at an early age. Moreover, it's a great opportunity for you and your family to spend time together and get some work accomplished.

Be Organized

Also, set aside a certain day every week to take care of the household chores that needs to be done. Having an organized system in fact will allow you more energy to sit back, relax and enjoy the time with your family and friends.

Tips During Cleaning

Get Motivated

One particular great idea here is to get motivated. I know that most of the time, you should restrict the limit of the number of distractions as you clean, but note that it is also necessary to use certain motivators that could pump up your cleaning routine. Speaking of motivators, why don't you consider a bit of music? It's great to work while music is on the air, right? Many experts in fact agree with me when it comes to setting up "music" as a cleaning motivator, as it can transform the drudgery of kitchen cleaning into an almost enjoyable experience. As you may know, one of the fastest and perhaps easiest ways to make the tedious duty of spring cleaning less taxing is to pop in a CD while doing your chores. You can even sing or dance with the beat of the music, and that's enjoyable. Now, I'm motivated!

De-Clutter the Kitchen

Tossing away every mess in place before you begin the heavy duty scrubbing is the first step to cleaning a room. This is most applicable to the kitchen where papers and mail can pile up quickly on countertops. Note that by de-cluttering the kitchen, you will have less mess to sort through while cleaning. It will even be much easier and quicker to wipe down surfaces. So, simply tackle every clutter first.

Consider Cleaning Vacuums

Another time saving tip commonly suggested by home experts is to throw away that old straw broom and dustpan. There are a lot of cleaning vacuums in the market these days that could help you finish the task easily and quickly. To mention, the new Dirt Devil Sweeper Vac with Swiffer is what most of the experts commonly suggest as this combined two innovative technologies into one easy to use and convenient cleaning tool. As noted, the Swiffer allows you to sweep and dust your floor free of dust and allergens. And, if you encounter some large debris, like cereal pieces or cookies crumbs, you can just press a switch on the handle and suck up the mess with its rechargeable vacuum. Great, isn't it?

Top to Bottom, One Side to the Other

Probably you've heard someone telling you to always clean from top to bottom and from one side of the room to the other. Well, my Mom often told me to do this when I was younger and I know that this is worth noting. What I've personally learned from this approach is that if taken, there won't be any time wasted in criss-crossing the room or wiping down the same counter twice. When you're finished, you're finished. But still, look critically to see what you may have missed.

Watch What You Are Doing

Perhaps another best tip to save time when cleaning is to be aware of what you are doing. The main idea here is not to waste time cleaning something that isn't dirty. As commonly noted, the vertical surfaces like walls are almost never as dirty as the horizontal surfaces, like the cupboards and countertops. The upper shelves as well as molding have less dust than lower ones. So, if you find that the entire area doesn't truly need it, then why spend some time cleaning it?

Tip After Cleaning

When you're done with all the cleaning tasks, it is best that you take all the kitchen items that you don't use. You can donate them to a local charity of your choice, or you can open a garage sale for them. Always note that permanently cutting down on any kitchen mess will make it much easier for you to keep this known centerpiece of the home clean and neat.

Other Kitchen Cleaning Tips

When it comes to cleaning up some mess on a particular area or item in the kitchen, there is one particular warning that you must remember: Be cautious when using orange-based cleaners to clean a kitchen. The reason behind this is that some of them contain petroleum distillates, which break down the rubber in the rubber gaskets around refrigerators and dishwashers.

- For ***Standard Surfaces***, you can use a mixture of ivory as it cleans most kitchen surfaces and appliances.
- ***Marble*** – Avoid using anything other than Ivory liquid dish soap on marble. If you consider harsher cleansers before, stop using them as they will ruin the surface. Then, always dry marble to prevent water spots from leaving their signature mark. As commonly noted, marble stains easily so wipe spills immediately. Also, do not use vinegar or orange based cleaners to clean the marble as the acid in them will damage the surface. You can remove stains and leave the surface safe with peroxide.
- ***Tile*** – The tile grout poses its own difficulties. That's what you should note. It is often said that the porous nature of grout means cleaning solutions pass through without a thought of taking the stain with them. When that dreaded spill happens, clean immediately as the longer a spill sets the better chance of it staining. Now, what to use? You can blend a 50/50 solution of hydrogen peroxide to water in a spray bottle. Then, spray the stain and allow it to set for 30 minutes. Retreat if needed. However, never use peroxide on colored grout as it is bleach and will possibly take the color out of the grout.
- ***Stainless Steel*** – To take away burned on food from the surface of a stainless steel stove, consider boiling some water and pour directly onto the spill. Then, let it set for a few minutes. Experts said that this approach will help loosen the food making removal easier. However, in microwaves, wipe them down with boiling water then scrub with Cameo perhaps. Cover the food to prevent the splatters.
- ***Corion*** – Only mild cleansers like Ivory must be used for Corion. Note that harsh detergents will damage the surface. Start removing tough stains with Cameo or baking soda or you can use 50/50 solution of hydrogen peroxide and water. Also, Corion can be sanded lightly by using number 800 sandpaper, which is commonly distinguished as gray in color. This sandpaper is also commonly called as wet or dry sandpaper. Rub this very gently keeping the paper wet.
- ***Refrigerators*** – Note that in refrigerators, the odors are caused by hidden food particles. So make sure to clean under the rubber gasket, but first, use the foaming bath cleaner on the walls. You can wipe them down with a baking soda, vinegar and water combination. You can in fact use about a quarter cup of vinegar and one or two tablespoons of baking soda for every quart of water, though you don't have to be too precise.
- ***Dishwashers*** – Remove the drawers and spindles. Clean under them and under the gaskets to get rid of odors. Then, fill one dispenser with Tang instant drink mix and the other with automatic dish soap and run the dishwasher empty through just the wash cycle. According to some experts, this combination deodorizes and cleans the inside.

- ***Small Appliances*** – Simply sprinkle a little baking soda on a damp towel to clean without scratching.
- ***Excellent Window and Window Cleaner*** – Here's what you can do: In a 32 oz. spray bottle, add 1/3 cup of vinegar and 1/4 cup of rubbing alcohol. If you however must have another cleaner, add a tablespoon of automatic dishwashing detergent.
- ***Disposals*** – To get rid the disposal of lingering odors, dampen a round toilet bowl brush then sprinkle some baking soda on it.. Then, scrub the inside of the disposal to freshen it. Now, pour a cup of Bac Out, as stain and odor eliminator, into both kitchen drains. Since Bac Out is an enzyme product, its enzyme will "eat" away at any food particles, removing the offending odors from your drains. Also, it will keep your entire drain clear except for tree roots.
- ***Microwaves*** – I have here a real simple way to clean those spills and splatters and deodorize at the same time. You can do this maybe once a month to avoid buildup: Fill a coffee mug with water and a few slices of lemon. Then, put it in the middle of the microwave's tray. Cook on high for about 3 minutes, and then turn off the microwave. Leave the mug inside for another few minutes. Note that steam will soften the food spills, and the lemon will get rid of odors. If done, open the door and take out the mug. Wipe down the walls with warm, soapy water to remove excess residue and food. And, rinse and dry with a clean dish cloth.
- ***Kitchen Cabinets*** – Just because it's behind closed doors doesn't mean that you don't have to clean it. Remember that cabinets are the exact places where we usually keep our kitchen utensils, and unfortunately, those doors don't keep dirt and dust out, thus they must be deep cleaned and conditioned twice a year in order to prevent cooking oils, dust and dirt from penetrating the wood. Note that cooking oils, for instance, will dry and crack the wood, so they must be eliminated.

To start, empty your cabinets of all pots, pans, utensils and cooking products. Then, wipe down the cabinet interiors with a microfiber cloth. Press it into corners, under ridges as well as along the door edges. Then, dampen a sponge with a solution of dish soap and warm water, and proceed by cleaning the tops, bottoms and walls. Rinse the sponger in clean water as you go. Dry with a clean towel or rag as you work.

If you find some stains of cooking oil, you can use some wood cleaner and conditioner to clean the cabinets, just to keep them in top shape if used regularly.

Here is a real simple tip: Try to consider storing muffin tins, woks as well as other rarely used things in plastic bags, so you won't have to rinse off the dust the next time you use them.

Most experts further suggest doing this once a season. After all, it's the perfect time to look at what's stale and should be thrown out. You can do the same steps with your fridge. Just pick a specific date when you get rid of all those dirt and dust on your cabinets.

- ***Countertops*** – When the dishes are cleared after the evening meal, grab a towel and perhaps a bottle of a natural cleaner and clean the countertop. You can also use the same cleaner in cleaning your stove or a refrigerator shelf at night. After which, wipe the counter tops with a clean rag. Never use dish rags, as these sometimes contain dirt and grease that leave smears on counter tops. Also, many experts have noted that the many stains on countertops can be removed with whitening toothpaste. This is also considered safe for the Corian, marble or granite.
- ***Stove Hood*** – Found some grease under the hood of your stove that has gotten to the point of no return? If so, try to spray on some foaming tub and tile cleaner. Then, cover your stove top to keep it protected. However, when it starts to drip, wipe it with a clean but old rag.
- ***Fine China*** – I guess many of you have fine chinas in your kitchen. Well, simply rinse them in a sink of water adding one half cup of borax, and then a second rinse in plain water. This will actually shine your china for those special dinners.

So, those are the most recommended tips for cleaning your beloved kitchen. What basically is important here is to cook up a perfect “recipe” for a clean kitchen, and what I have mentioned above are some of the best steps to consider.