

Cleaning habits that are a complete waste of time

Most of these common cleaning mistakes are simply laziness. The information below can help you clean smarter, not harder.

Everyone has better—and more enjoyable—things to do than scrubbing counters or wiping dirty pots and pans. But a few crucial cleaning mistakes can make your chore list take up much more time than it needs to, leaving you with less time to do the things you really enjoy.



Luckily, by keeping a few magical cleaning rules in mind, you can make sure every minute counts when doing the dishes—so you can get back to what you really want to do even faster.

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Cleaning in the wrong order

Yes, there is a specific order of cleaning your home to avoid having to re-sand what you just polished. In most rooms, a top-to-bottom approach works best—letting the dust and dirt from dusting and wiping countertops fall to the floor should be the last thing you do in any room. However, sometimes you can forget a few spots and end up having to redo them. Where are the most common places people make mistakes? Washing the stovetop before cleaning the microwave, or washing the bathtub before cleaning the bathroom tiles.

Product abuse

More isn't necessarily better when it comes to cleaning products. And too much cleaner can dull finishes, take longer to rinse off, and even attract dirt and make floors and other surfaces look dirty faster. Be sure to follow the directions on the bottle when diluting the product—and only spray or wipe on as much cleaner as you need to get the job done.



Spray and Wipe Immediately

This is probably one of the most common cleaning mistakes—especially since it seems like every cleaning video or commercial shows people spraying a product and then wiping it off immediately. But that doesn't give the product time to work. It just adds more work to your routine, especially if you're dealing with stubborn stains.

What's the best option? Spray on the cleaner, then let it sit for a few minutes (you can move to another room or do something else while you wait). When you come back, it will be much easier to wipe the dirt off.

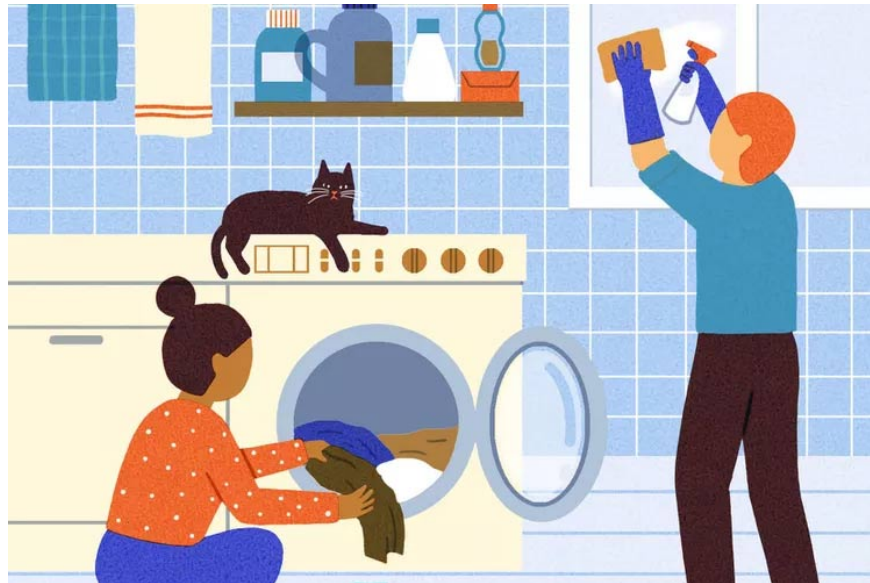
Keep dust away

Dust doesn't fall to the floor right after you dust it—it hangs around in the air for a while. So it's not necessarily best to go straight from dusting to mopping, as more dust will fall after you declare the task complete. So you'll probably want to let the dust settle for at least 20 minutes before mopping.

Be sure to use a microfiber cloth — or lightly dampen the cloth — when dusting, to help reduce the amount of dust that gets into the air in the first place.

Do not soak difficult to wash dishes

Burnt or dried-on food can be tough to scrub off – but soaking it in hot, soapy water can do most of the dirty work (literally). For really burnt-on pots, you can fill the pot with water and a little soap, then boil it for a few minutes to help loosen the burnt bits from the surface.



Misuse of cleaning tools and products

Using the wrong cleaning products will be ineffective at cleaning your home (and can actually be harmful—like using vinegar on your granite countertops). Using less effective tools for dusting, like a feather duster, can actually just spread dust over more surfaces and make it take longer to clean.

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