

clean sw

We've got the dirt on how to spray, swipe and sponge your way to a spotless house in no time.

By Laura Wallis





keep

SCOUR POWER

OVEN

Tackle those charred drips and baked-on blobs.

Racks » Lay them down on newspaper or, even better, place racks inside a large plastic garbage bag and spray with a nontoxic oven cleaner. Let sit, then scrub with a scouring pad, rinse well and dry.

Interior » Zap splatters by running your oven's self-cleaning cycle. If you don't have the feature, Debra Johnson, training manager at Merry Maids, suggests applying a fume-free oven cleaner (like Easy-Off). Give the solution about two hours to do its job, then wipe away the greasy debris with rags or paper towels. Follow with a scouring pad, if needed, and a once-over with a microfiber cloth.

PREVENTION PLAN Place nonstick oven liners on the bottom of the oven to catch spills. To clean, remove the sheet and rinse—burned food will lift right off.

HOT STUFF

RANGE

It's time to think beyond grates and burners.

Exterior » The only way to get rid of sticky cooking residue on the sides of a freestanding range is to first pull the appliance away from the wall. Jan Dougherty, author of *The Lost Art of House Cleaning* (Outskirts Press), suggests giving it a thorough wipe down with a spray cleaner and scrub sponge.

Top » Eliminate stubborn, encrusted drips with a rubber spatula or a no-scratch scouring pad and hot, soapy water.

PREVENTION PLAN To stay on top of greasy knobs, drip pans and grates, Dougherty advises putting them all through the scrub cycle of the dishwasher once a week.

COOL TIPS

REFRIGERATOR

Give the fridge a major going over.

Condenser Coils » For safety, always unplug before tackling spots in the rear and under appliances. Some models have condenser coils behind a removable grill on the front. Snap it off and gently vacuum or use a long thin coil brush. Slowly move the fridge away from the wall, vacuum coils in the back, if applicable, then damp mop the floor.

Exterior » Wipe down all sides with a damp cloth and a degreasing agent like Krud Kutter before sliding the appliance back into place.

Top » For the stubborn, sticky film that collects here, Johnson applies hot distilled vinegar in water with a microfiber cloth. Buff dry with a second microfiber.

PREVENTION PLAN Frequently sweep and vacuum the kitchen floor to minimize crumbs and dust collecting under the fridge.