

# 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

# deep

## 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.