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tip

The best degreaser I've used is dish soap—it's better than any fancy special cleaners. —Don Aslett

## the kitchen

For most families, the kitchen is the heart of the home—and gets cleaned frequently. But your regular scrubbing of counters, cooktop, and sink isn't enough to conquer the cooking grease that circulates everywhere and builds up over time.

■ Kitchen walls are the only ones in your house that need a seasonal scrub.

**Use a mop instead of a sponge to wash walls—you'll cut your time in half and save your back.** —Lynda Lyday

■ Don't neglect your stove exhaust fan, which sucks in grease on a daily basis. Use paper towels to wipe grease off of the fan (it has a motor, so don't place it in water), then slide out the fan's filter (it's made to slide out easily—refer to your owner's manual). Soak filter in hot soapy water. Leery of washing electronic appliances yourself? Hire a handyman for the job. —Laura Dellutri

■ Give your refrigerator a full body tune-up. Empty the drip pan, wipe down the back grill, and sponge off any mystery goop on inside shelves. Wash refrigerator drawers in the dishwasher. While the refrigerator's pulled out from the wall, give the floor underneath its once-a-year mopping. —Laura Dellutri

■ Run the dishwasher empty for one hot water cycle (with no soap) to give it a refresher. —Lucinda Ottusch

■ Mopping made easier: Use two buckets (or a two-in-one model, see right). Fill one halfway with water and a spoonful of dishwashing detergent. Wring your mop out in the empty bucket (or in the sink if you're working with one bucket), so you're never cleaning with dirty water. —Hannah Keeley

COMPOTES  
PETITE  
(COMP)

RUFFLE  
PLATE 11"  
(PLR11)

### Must-Have Tool

A microfiber mop (Easy Glide mop, \$25, [cleanreport.com](http://cleanreport.com)) can absorb two times its weight in water. We also love the Michael Graves two-in-one wheeled cleaning bucket (\$19, Broadway Panhandler), which means no lifting, less mess, and easy clean-water mopping.

### Treat yourself...

Run some ice and chopped lemons through your garbage disposal to sharpen its blades and create a fresh scent all around the sink. —Laura Dellutri

## the entryway

Your entryway welcomes you home and invites guests to stay, especially when there's a system in place to manage outdoor gear (and grime).

■ Station a basket of clean rags (we used a round Abaca Basket, \$28, [holdeverything.com](http://holdeverything.com)) by the door so you can handle your dog's muddy paws right as he walks inside. —Lynda Lyday

■ **Keep drippy umbrellas and dirty sports equipment in stands and baskets to contain the mess at the door.** We like

this no-rust stainless-steel stand (\$60, [stacksandstacks.com](http://stacksandstacks.com)). A plastic woven-strap basket (shown in blue, \$24, [holdeverything.com](http://holdeverything.com)) is easy to wipe clean. Boot trays store wet boots by the door, where you need them, and keep outdoor ickiness off your floors. This bronze-tone tray (\$34, [smithandhawken.com](http://smithandhawken.com)) fits everyone's wellies. —Lynda Lyday

■ Make sure you clean your outdoor mat—shake it out and hose it down—so it can do its job well. —Jeff Bredenberg

tip

Organize around where everyone's stuff is already going, rather than trying to change the flow.

—Hannah Keeley



### Must-Have Tool

80 percent of dirt that makes its way into your home comes from the bottom of your shoes. Doormats made from Astro-Turf (Clean Machine Original Doormat, \$6, available at Walmart) work best, since their plastic blades scrape off the dirt. —Don Aslett



TRUFFLE  
TICKING RUNNER  
(PRSTR)



### Treat yourself...

An Er'go soy-wax aromatherapy candle (\$18, [ergocandle.com](http://ergocandle.com)) placed in the entryway gives a fragrant impression as you walk through the door, even when it's not lit.