

60+ NEED-TO-KNOW
APPLIANCE
MAINTENANCE TIPS

Routine maintenance is the best way to get the most out of your appliances. You probably know you should clean the lint filter every time you use the dryer and change the HVAC air filter regularly. But there are several other important things you should do to help keep your home safe and your appliances running strong.

These maintenance tips can help lower utility bills, save time and energy, increase safety and extend the life of your appliances.



P.3 Fridge Maintenance Tips



P.4 Oven and Stovetop Maintenance Tips



P.5 Dishwasher Maintenance Tips



P.6 Washer Maintenance Tips



P.7 Dryer Maintenance Tips



P.8 HVAC Maintenance Tips



P.9 Appliance Maintenance Resolutions

Fridge Maintenance Tips

1

Check the temp.

Refrigerator temperatures fluctuate seasonally. Place a thermometer in the center of the middle shelf (not on the door). Be sure food is stored safely below 40°F.



TIP: Sometimes refrigerators don't operate properly because the room they're in is too hot or too cold. Keep that in mind, especially as the weather heats up or cools off dramatically.

2

Don't block airflow.

Improper ventilation around the outside of a fridge will cause increased energy usage and possible early equipment failure.



3

Don't overcrowd.

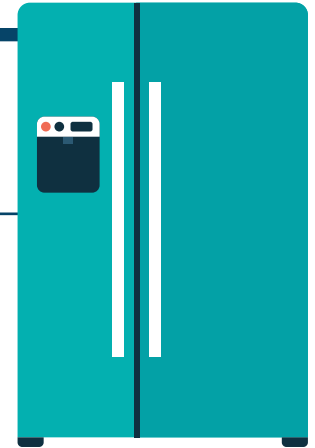
You need airflow inside as well to make sure all foods are equally cooled. Avoid the urge to stack items or cram in too many containers.



4

Inspect the door gaskets for tears, gaps or air leakage.

If not sealed correctly, the fridge will run longer than normal, increasing energy use and raising the temperature inside the refrigerator.



5

Clean the condenser coil regularly.

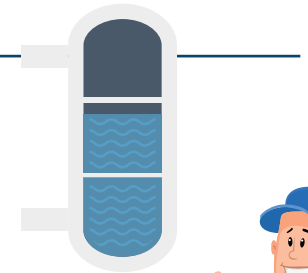
Dirty condensers increase the energy needed to operate the fridge and can cause early failure. Clean the coil with a brush or vacuum — just be sure to unplug the fridge first.



6

Change the water filter.

Don't ignore the filter indicator when it says it's time for replacement. Filters pushed past their limits can no longer fully trap contaminants.

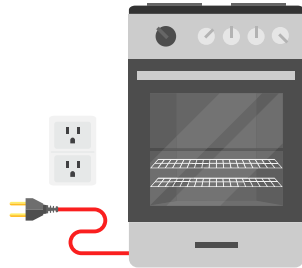


TIP: Subscribe to a water filter replacement program like the one Sears offers so you'll never have to worry about picking up a new filter.

Oven and Stovetop Maintenance Tips

1 Unplug the oven before cleaning.

If it's accessible, it's a good idea to unplug your oven before cleaning the interior by hand. This is especially important if you're using water.



TIP: Use vinegar, baking soda and water to make a DIY oven cleaner.

2 Be careful cleaning the knobs.

This mistake is one of the major reasons for oven service calls. If you spritz cleaning fluid under the knobs, you're essentially spraying the oven's electrical system. That's not safe!



TIP: You can clean the knobs themselves by pulling them off and popping them in warm soapy water.

3 Deep clean the grates.

Spray grates with oven cleaner, put them in a plastic bag and let it sit for 24 hours. Then wash the grates with soap and water.



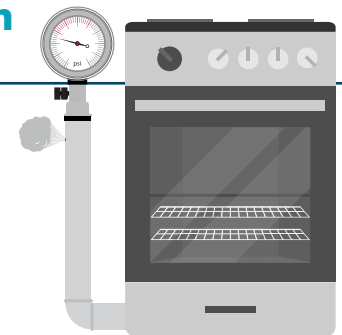
4 Self clean.

Check your owner's manual for more information and detailed instructions.



5 Check the gas line when you get a new oven.

Your installer can check your gas line and replace it if needed when installing the new oven. You don't want gas leaking into your kitchen.



Dishwasher Maintenance Tips

1

Clean your dishwasher with vinegar.

Pour 2 cups of vinegar in the bottom of the dishwasher and run a cycle. Mid-way through, stop it for 15-20 minutes to let the vinegar work its magic, and then continue with the cycle.

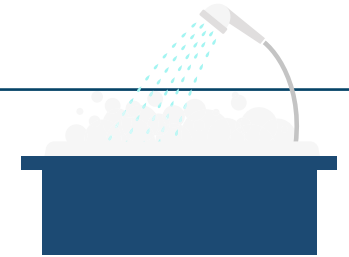


TIP: To prevent damage, use a spray or wipe made for stainless steel to clean the outside of the dishwasher.

3

Soak the filter.

Some dishwashers have a removable filter on the bottom. Soak it in soapy water for a bit, rinse it off and pop it back in.



4

Wipe around the dishwasher door seal.

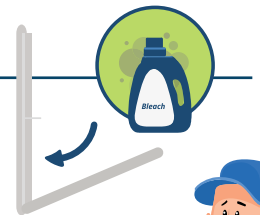
Use a vinegar and water solution and a rag (or even a soft toothbrush).



5

Tackle mold with bleach.

Fill your detergent holder with bleach and run a cycle in your empty dishwasher.



TIP: Don't use bleach with any other cleaners — especially not vinegar — and if your dishwasher's interior is stainless, check your owner's manual.

2

Eyeball the holes in the spray arms.

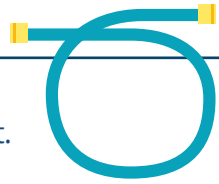
If debris is clogging any of them, use a toothpick or needle-nose pliers to clear them — but be careful not to scratch the arms!



Washer Maintenance Tips

1 Inspect the hoses.

Every month or so, make sure there are no bulges or cracks and that the fittings are tight.



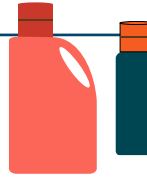
2 Don't overload it.

This can damage washer, so break up laundry into smaller loads.



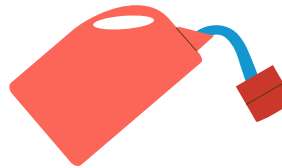
3 Use the right type of detergent.

Make sure you're using the right kind for your model. Many energy-efficient washers require a low-sudsing HE detergent.



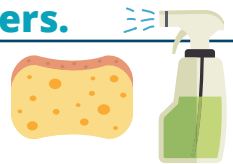
4 Use the right amount of detergent.

Too much detergent will leave a residue and can be hard on your washer. Pods make it easy, but if you're using liquid, measure according to the manufacturer's directions.



5 Clean the interior and dispensers.

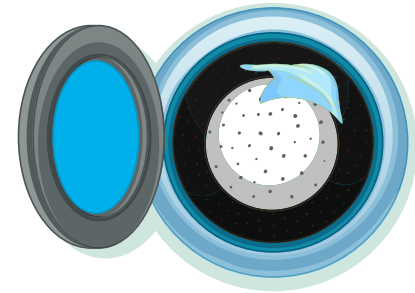
Yes, you need to wash the washer to help keep it clean and smelling fresh.



TIP: Every month or so, run an empty load of hot water with 2 cups of white vinegar. In the middle of the wash cycle, add ½ cup of detergent. Then let the cycle complete.

6 Wipe down the drum, door and gasket.

A monthly cleaning helps ensure the washer won't give off odors that can seep into your laundry.

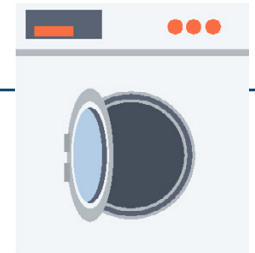


TIP: Use equal parts water and vinegar and a cotton swab or two to clean the gasket.



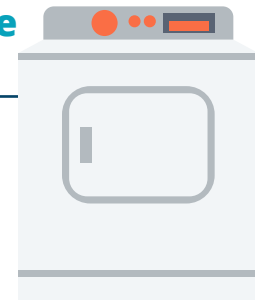
7 Leave the door ajar after a load.

Ever notice a smell when you open your washer to start a load? Letting it air dry can help prevent odors.



8 Transfer clean laundry to the dryer as soon as it's done.

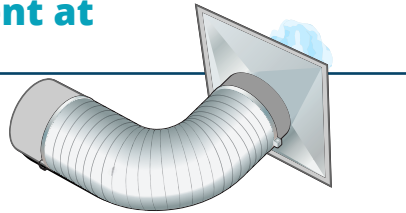
Letting wet clothes languish in the washer can cause mold and mildew.



Dryer Maintenance Tips

1 Clean the exhaust vent at least once a year.

Remove the vent from the back of the dryer and clear out any built-up lint.



TIP: Removing lint is the most important thing to do to help prevent fires.

2 Check the vent cap outside.

It's common for debris, dirt or snow to build up around the vent. Clear it out every so often to let the air flow freely.



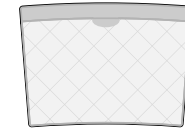
3 Don't overload it.

Large loads take longer to dry and use more energy. And if clothes don't dry completely, you may end up with a musty smell.



4 Deep clean your lint screen.

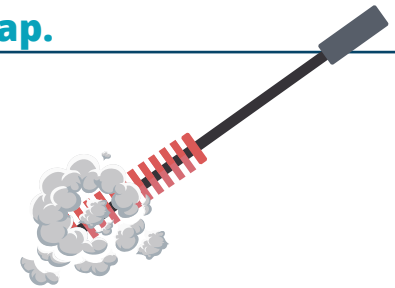
Don't just clean it after every load — wash it every three months.



TIP: Use a bit of laundry detergent and rinse it thoroughly or pop it in the dishwasher to clear residue left by dryer sheets.

5 Clean out the lint trap.

Remove the screen and use a dryer lint brush to clean inside the trap itself. Lint can build up there, too.



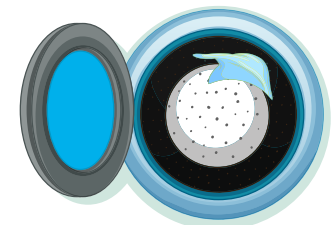
6 Replace vinyl or plastic exhaust vents with metal.

Plastic exhaust vents are more likely to catch fire. Play it safe with metal.



7 Clean the inside.

Give the inside a wipe down with a microfiber cloth and a bit of rubbing alcohol to remove any dryer sheet residue. Let it dry thoroughly.

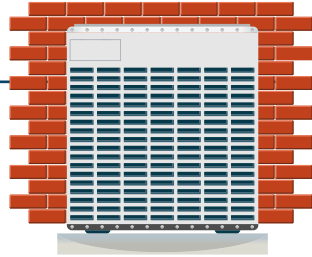


HVAC Maintenance Tips

1

Give it a checkup twice a year.

Have an expert do a preventive maintenance check in the spring and fall to look for motor or electrical failures.

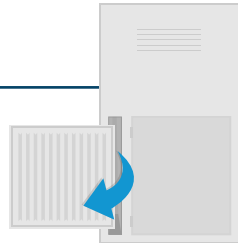


TIP: No matter what type of HVAC system you have, Sears can handle repairs, maintenance and replacement.

2

Replace the filter every few months.

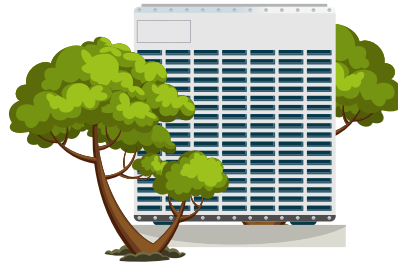
Change it out, even if it doesn't look dirty. Any buildup reduces the amount of air the system draws in.



3

Clear outside debris.

Cut or remove plants that are encroaching on your condenser so it can pull in fresh air from all sides. Make sure to allow for at least 12 inches of space around the coil.

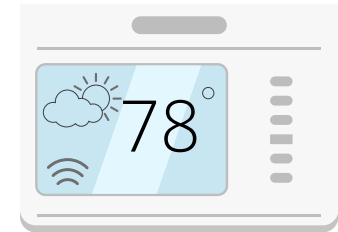


TIP: Turn off the unit and use a hose (with no spray attachment) to wash off dirt and debris.

4

Know the best temp.

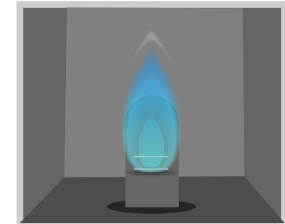
The optimal temperature for cost savings is 78° during the summer and 68° during the winter.



5

Check the flame.

Your furnace flame should be a nice, crisp blue. If it's wavy, orange or yellow, call a technician.



6

Clean the condensate drain line.

Every three months, pour a solution of 1 cup bleach and 3 cups water down the condensate drain tube to keep it clear of algae and other debris.



Appliance Maintenance Resolutions

Resolve to complete one small task each month, so by the end of the year your appliances will feel like new.

