



# ***Maintaining the Home***

## ***Range and Oven Care and Cleaning***

# ***Maintaining the Home: Range and Oven Care and Cleaning***

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## **Range Care**

The conventional cook top is made of durable porcelain enamel, so hot pans can be set on the cook top. When the cook top is hot you should not place cold items or liquids on it. The thermal shock can cause the enamel coating to crack, though newer coatings that are thinner and less likely to crack are available. When spills occur, wipe up at once and take care to avoid burns from heated burners

The sides and front of the range may be porcelain enamel, but are likely today to be synthetic enamel. This is more easily scratched and may be damaged by household chemicals. Acids such as milk, tomatoes and vinegar can damage the surface.

## **Range Cleaning**

Wash exterior surfaces after they have cooled with detergent and warm water. A paste of water and baking soda can be used on difficult spots. Rinse and wipe dry. The same materials can be used on chrome trim or stainless steel parts. Never use scouring powder or harsh abrasive pads. Plastic or nylon pads may be used for difficult spots.

Creamy appliance wax can be used on painted surfaces for protection and ease of cleaning, but is not needed on porcelain enamel surfaces.

Check the owners' manual to see if other cleaning materials are safe to use.

## **Conventional Oven Care**

Do not store plastic items or other utensils in the oven as they may melt or burn if the oven is accidentally turned on with them inside. Use a large enough cooking pan to avoid boil-overs. Wipe spills up promptly so they won't bake on the oven. Do not put large pieces of foil on the oven floor or the racks unless recommended in your appliance manual. Then follow the manual instructions for the proper foil size and placement. Using foil in the oven, especially on the racks, may slow cooking and reduce browning. Do not line the broiler pan with foil, as it concentrates heat and may damage the pan.

## **Conventional Oven Cleaning**

Fill a small glass bowl with 1/2 cup of full-strength ammonia. Place it in the oven and close. Let it stand overnight, then wipe loosened dirt with paper towels or newspapers. If necessary, rub surfaces with a suitable abrasive, such as fine steel wool or soap-filled steel wool pad, wiping off any suds with paper towels. Then wash with warm soapy water and rinse. Repeat the process if necessary.

Commercial oven cleaners are helpful if ovens are very soiled, but they should be used with caution. These cleaners can damage surfaces outside and around the oven. Be sure to protect these areas with layers of newspaper or other materials and cover your hands with protective gloves. Do not spray commercial oven cleaners in a hot oven (more than 200 degrees). The heat will make the

oven cleaner even more caustic and can cause it to corrode surfaces. Never spray it on the oven light, electric elements or pilot light in older gas ranges. Turn off the pilot light when using spray oven cleaners.

Removable parts, such as broiler pans and racks, can be cleaned more easily if allowed to soak in a sink or pan of sudsy water to which a little ammonia has been added. Soaking is better for the surface and easier than a lot of scrubbing. Never soak aluminum in ammonia or other alkalis.

If necessary, you can scour oven racks or porcelain enamel with a steel wool or scouring pad to remove baked-on grease or food spills which have not come off in regular cleaning. Occasional use of such abrasive pads or scouring powder on badly baked-on soil is OK, but don't use these too often or scrub too hard because you can scratch the smooth surface and make it harder to clean from then on. Do not scour mirror-finished metals, glass or baked-on enamel.

### **Self-Cleaning Oven Care**

These ovens clean themselves by oxidizing (burning off) soils at a high temperature.

Wipe up spills promptly to avoid excessive smoke during the cleaning cycle. Especially wipe up spills of sugar (i.e. pie fillings) and other carbohydrates (i.e. casseroles) which become firmly attached to the surface and sometimes damage the porcelain enamel glaze as they are burned off.

### **Self-Cleaning Oven Cleaning**

Follow directions in your manual exactly, as oven models and brands vary.

Pre-clean the areas not reached in the self-cleaning cycle: the frame around the oven opening and the edge of the door outside the gasket. NEVER clean the gasket with anything!

Use hot water and detergent or a paste of baking soda and hot water on difficult spots; rinse well with vinegar water to remove all residue. This prevents residue from being baked on during the high heat of the cleaning cycle. Re-clean these areas after the cleaning cycle is used.

If recommended in your range manual, you may leave the oven racks in for the cleaning cycle; however, they will discolor, lose their shine and become hard to slide in and out. If you do leave them in, afterward rub the edges of the racks and guides on the oven walls with a soapy, steel wool pad, wipe off and then rub a few drops of salad oil on the edges for easier sliding. It is probably better to take the racks out before the cleaning cycle and clean them by hand.

If recommended in your manual, you may put burner drip bowls in the oven for the self-cleaning cycle; however, high heat will permanently discolor chrome rings with a bluish hue.

You may put the broiler pan in during the self-cleaning cycle if recommended in your manual; however, be sure to wipe off all excess grease, as it may catch fire.

At the end of the cycle and after the oven has cooled down, wipe out the small amount of fine ash left inside with a damp cloth.

NEVER use chemical oven cleaners in a self-cleaning oven. Some residue may remain and change into compounds that etch the porcelain enamel by the high heat.

This material was adapted from publications produced by Michigan State University. Michigan State publications can be found on the Web at <http://www.msue.msu.edu/msue/imp/mod02/master02.html>.

*This resource is one in a series on **Maintaining the Home** which include:*

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