



SPOTLESS

9 THINGS YOU CAN CLEAN IN THE DISHWASHER

Load up the machine with a number of surprising items,
from vent covers to flip-flops to baseball caps.

BY LESLIE CORONA



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Most items should go on the top rack. Some large items can go on the lower level if the top rack is removable.

BATHROOM ACCESSORIES

Toothpaste drippings, soap residue, and—let's be real—mold from moist surfaces can be gross to scrub by hand. The heat from the dishwasher will take care of toothbrush holders, soap dishes, plastic shower caddies, and drain stoppers without triggering your gag reflex.

BASEBALL CAPS

These are fine on the top rack, as long as the brim isn't made of cardboard, which most aren't nowadays. (Your kid's new Cavaliers cap? Sure. Your Delta Sigma Theta classic? Nope.)

FLIP-FLOPS

If they're grungy following an active summer, rinse off any sand or dried mud, then place them on the top rack. Loop the straps over a tine so they don't flip-flop around.

You can use your everyday dishwasher detergent, but rinse extra-muddy items before loading (in the sink or tub, or outside with the hose).

GARDENING TOOLS

You can typically clean these under the outside spigot between uses, but give them a thorough wash before storing them for the season. First hose them off to remove chunks of dirt, and check that they're not aluminum (which can discolor in the dishwasher). Dry completely to prevent rust.

PLASTIC HAIRBRUSHES

Dishwasher detergent is excellent at breaking down residue from styling products and built-up scalp oils. A monthly cleanse is ideal. Remove hair strands first, and avoid putting brushes with wooden parts or natural boar bristles through a cycle, as those can dry out and crack from excess moisture.

KITCHEN TOOLS

The drain plug, scrub brushes, and drying rack can join the dishwashing club. In many cases, larger items made of sturdy plastic—like a drainage tray—are OK to put on the bottom rack. If your top rack is removable, take it out to make room for taller stuff. To keep little things from getting tossed around, put them in a small mesh laundry bag on the top rack.

REFRIGERATOR COMPONENTS

If you have removable crisper drawers, butter trays, or shelves, go for it (about every three months). Rubber-coated metal shelves are safe too—just thoroughly dry them with a microfiber cloth afterward to keep them from molding.

METAL VENT COVERS

Every six months, send these dust magnets through the wash. Dry completely before reinstalling.

VACUUM CLEANER ATTACHMENTS

Consult your owner's manual first, but in some cases, vacuum attachments are dishwasher safe. As needed, run a load with all the plastic attachments and detail brushes.

OUR EXPERTS

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