



## Tips for cleaning your bathroom

Most people dread cleaning their bathrooms yet it is a room where hygiene and cleanliness is very important and should therefore be cleaned on a weekly basis or even more frequently if it is heavily used, such as in a busy household with many family members.

In fact, most bathrooms are made of materials that are designed to be easy to clean – for example, tiles and porcelain surfaces are stain resistant if they are kept clean of dirt and scum build-up. Thus, by following a few simple steps, keeping your bathroom clean should become easier and less of a chore.

### Baths and Showers

For baths, you need to first determine what it is made of – most new models are made of fibreglass and acrylic and with these, you have to be especially careful of scratching the surface; only use a commercial fibre-glass cleaning product or a non-abrasive liquid cleanser, applying with a damp sponge and rinsing liberally with clean water. If your bath is older, it might be made of porcelain-on-cast-iron or porcelain-on-steel. These should also be cleaned using a non-abrasive powder or liquid cleaner, as they may not be acid- and alkaline-resistant. If you get a stubborn “ring” around the bathtub, cover it with a paste made of cream of tartar and hydrogen peroxide, wait until it dries and then wipe it off. This paste can also be used to tackle rust stains around the drain and taps, although you can also use a commercial rust remover. Finally, don't forget to remove any hairs stuck in the drain to prevent clogging and flooding.

Showers, especially those with glass enclosures, can be a chore to keep clean. The glass shower doors and walls can be cleaned with a sponge dipped in white vinegar, which will help to keep them sparkling. This solution will also help to remove any hard-water deposits. For the tiled walls, run the shower on the hottest water temperature and soak the walls – the steam will help to loosen the dirt. Then using a mixture of ½ cup vinegar, 1 cup clear ammonia and ¼ baking powder, all mixed in 1 gallon of warm water, apply to the tiles with a sponge. Rinse thoroughly with clean water.



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Remember, even if there is frustrating scum stuck to the walls and edges, resist the temptation to use harsh abrasive powders and steel wool pads. Instead, use a solution of 1 cup liquid fabric softener mixed with 1 quart of warm water, which will loosen and clean the soap scum. If you get mineral deposits in your shower head, remove it from the main apparatus, take it apart and soak it in vinegar before loosening the deposits with an old toothbrush. You can even clean the holes by sticking a wire, pin or toothpick through them individually. The best way to keep showers clean is through daily good habits and prevention – for example, wiping the shower walls with a towel after each shower and leaving the shower door slightly open to allow air to circulate – to discourage the growth of mildew.

## Toilets

You can buy special toilet cleaners at your supermarket or convenience store – or you can use a chlorine bleach solution, although take great care if using the latter – always wear gloves and eye protection, keep the area well-ventilated and NEVER mix with ammonia-based products – this can release toxic gases. Be careful also of splashing any cleaning solution on other bathroom surfaces and make sure that it is thoroughly rinsed from the toilet bowl after cleaning. Never use any toilet cleaners in baths or sinks as the chemicals can damage the finish in those areas.

As most toilet bowls and tanks are made of vitreous china, they tend to be non-porous and easily cleaned. Pour your cleaning solution into the toilet bowl (e.g. ½ cup chlorine bleach) and let it stand for 10 minutes, then scrub with a long-handled toilet brush, paying particular attention to any stains or hard scum. An easy way to clean toilets overnight is to put two denture cleanser tablets into the bowl and then scrub the toilet in the morning.

## Countertops and Mirrors

As bathroom countertops have to withstand assault from a variety of substances, from hairspray to toothpaste, they are usually made of strong, inert, stain-resistant materials such as ceramic tile, cultured marble and plastic laminate. Not only are these materials durable, they are also very easy to clean. Most will respond well to just a regular wipe with a sponge moistened with water. If you have a plastic laminate countertop and it has become particularly dirty, you can use the abrasive side of a wet scrubbing pad to gently rub away grease and grime, before wiping with the sponge side. A bit of baking soda can also help to shift stubborn spots and stains. If your countertop is cultured marble, avoid using any abrasives as these materials can scratch easily, making it more likely to trap dirt and stain in the future.



Mirrors are often the focal point of a bathroom so it is important to keep them clean and sparkling. You can purchase a glass cleaner from the supermarket or hardware store specifically for this purpose or you can just use some vinegar mixed with warm water, applied with a sponge or sprayed directly onto the glass, followed by buffing with a micro fibre cloth or paper towel. Crumpled newspaper can also be used as the ink will act as a polish.

Your weekly bathroom clean-up will be made a lot easier if you can keep up good habits during the week – for example, always rinse out the bath or shower enclosure immediately after using it to remove as much soap residue as possible and prevent the build-up of scum.

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