

# 6: Kitchen



## Cabinets

Your home has attractive, high-quality cabinets that are designed to meet your needs for functional storage.

Your home may have wood cabinets, plastic laminate cabinets, or both.

### Wood Cabinets

In wood cabinetry, the grains and color of the wood vary, lending a unique beauty to each piece. Your cabinet doors have been stained and varnished to protect the surface from household chemicals and other agents, as well as to enhance the natural artistry of the wood grain.

### Plastic Laminate Cabinets

Plastic laminate cabinetry has a very durable surface that requires only a minimum amount of maintenance. It comes in a variety of colors and patterns.

### Care and Maintenance

Follow these care and maintenance suggestions for your home's cabinets.

### General Maintenance

Check the caulking around sinks and backsplashes to prevent water damage to the cabinets.

Use silicone spray lubricant periodically on drawers and hinges to improve operation.

### Wood Cabinets

Wash and polish the cabinets once or twice a year. Use a light coat of high-quality furniture polish.

Clean spills immediately. Use a clean cloth and soapy water. Wipe the cabinets dry after cleaning.

Avoid excessive moisture on wood cabinets.

Use a mild soap and warm water to clean cabinet hardware, such as doorknobs and drawer pulls. Dry hardware with a soft cloth.

Don't use detergents, soap pads, steel wool, paste wax, or polishes that contain silicone on your wood cabinets.



Home  
Tip

*Furniture polish can hide minor nicks and scratches that occur over time on wood cabinetry.*

### Plastic Laminate Cabinets

Clean the cabinets with a damp cloth and a mild cleanser, such as Formula 409®\* or Simple Green®\*\*. Wipe them dry after cleaning.

\*Formula 409® is a registered trademark of The Clorox Company.

\*\*Simple Green® is a registered trademark of Sunshine Makers, Inc.

Apply a light coat of self-cleaning wax to the plastic laminate surface once or twice a year.

Keep water and moisture from soaking under the laminate.

Dry all cups, glasses, plates, and silverware before putting them in the cabinets, as standing water might damage the inside of cabinets, drawers, and shelves.

Don't hang wet dish towels on the edges of the countertops or on the tops of cabinet doors and drawers.

Use caution when cooking with kitchen appliances such as electric frying pans and griddles, or when using appliances that produce steam, such as coffeemakers. The high levels of heat may damage the laminate surface when used directly underneath or near your cabinets and cabinet doors.



Caution

*Never clean the cabinets with harsh abrasives. They can scratch and dull the surface.*



Home Tip

*If a cabinet door doesn't close flush with the cabinet face frame, either the hinge has twisted or the door has warped. See your owner's manual on how to adjust the hinge. See your warped door policy on how to repair the door.*

For more information about cabinets, visit the manufacturer's website.

## Countertops

The countertops in both the kitchen and the bathroom offer you good looks and service for many years.

### Kitchen Countertops

The majority of kitchen countertops in your new home are constructed from top-quality plastic laminate materials. These products consist of a sheet of very hard plastic laminated to a wooden base. With proper care, they will last for years.

### Bathroom Countertops

Your bath vanity tops, and perhaps your bath sinks, are made of either a top-quality plastic laminate or a cultured marble product that will give you classic good looks and utilitarian service, with proper care.

### Care and Maintenance

Follow these care and maintenance suggestions for your home's countertops.

### Laminated Plastic Countertops

Laminated plastic countertops, such as Wilsonart®\* Laminate, are fairly easy to maintain. Here are a few ways to increase their life and prolong their beauty.

\*Wilsonart® is a registered trademark of Wilsonart International.

#### General Maintenance

Be careful not to disturb the bond between the wood and the plastic-on-plastic laminate products.

Use a hot pad for anything that is likely to exceed 250°F. Anything coming directly off a burner or from the oven will be too hot to place directly on the plastic surface.

Treat plastic laminate and cultured marble products carefully because they will scratch and burn if mistreated.

#### To clean countertops

Wipe off spots, glass rings, and other spills with a damp cloth and mild soap.

Be careful with the inks used in making grocery products, especially meat and produce, as well as newspaper ink; these inks are often indelible.


#### To prevent damage to countertops

Be especially careful with razor blades, manicure equipment, and bathroom appliances to avoid damaging the laminate.

Prevent damage from leaks by monitoring the condition of all caulking on countertops and vanity tops. Reapply the caulking if it separates or shrinks.

Don't cut items directly on the countertop. Scratches and knife marks can be unsightly hiding places for dirt.

Don't sit or stand on countertops. Excessive weight can cause warping and drawer malfunction and can even cause the top to pull away from the wall.

 **Caution** *Cigarette burns are almost impossible to remove without professional assistance.*

See also *Interior Caulking* (p. 8).

### **Granite, Limestone, Travertine, and Marble Countertops**

Granite, limestone, travertine, and marble countertops are made from natural rock. These countertops vary in color and veining. Stone countertops can be scratched. Grainy materials, such as sand and abrasive cleaners, wear down the finish. Improper maintenance also will compromise the look and longevity of your countertops. Stone countertops absorb stains in as little as one minute. A small rock can scratch the surface severely.

You can clean stone countertops with any high-quality, nonabrasive bathroom cleanser. To clean stone countertops:

*Remove hard water minerals with a mild ammonia solution of 1 tablespoon to 1 quart of water. Also, commercial cultured marble cleaning and protecting products are available.*

*Dust or sweep the countertop regularly.*

*Wipe up spills immediately.*

*Clean the surface with a few drops of neutral cleaner or stone soap and warm water after each use.*



**Home Tip**

*Repair chips, scratches, burns, and stains using the manufacturer's recommended techniques, or consult a professional.*



**Home Tip**

*It's strongly recommended that you have your stone countertops sealed to prevent staining.*



**Caution**

*Don't place hot pans or pots directly on the countertops. Use coasters and mats under objects that may scratch the surface.*



**Caution**

*Don't use steel wool, vinegar, polish, or liquids containing acid on the surface.*

## Solid Surface Countertops

Solid surface countertops, such as Corian<sup>®</sup>,\* are nonporous, homogeneous, and inherently hygienic surfaces. Following these basic guidelines will help to keep these surfaces fresh and looking new.

*\*Corian<sup>®</sup> is a registered trademark of the DuPont Company.*

Clean solid-surface countertops with any household cleanser designed for daily use.

Remove typical stains with soapy water or ammonia-based cleansers.

Don't place hot pans or heat-generating appliances directly on the countertop. Use a trivet or hot pad with rubber feet.

Run cold water into the sink if you're going to be pouring boiling water into it.

Avoid prolonged exposure to strong chemicals, such as concentrated acids, and chlorinated solvents, such as chloroform. Also, avoid exposure to acetones, which are found in nail polish remover and paintbrush cleaner. If these chemicals contact the surface, flush the surface thoroughly with soapy water.

Use denatured alcohol to remove stains caused by cosmetics. Flush the surface with soapy water when the stains are gone.

Don't use abrasive pads; they'll scratch or dull the polished finish.



Home  
Tip

*A licensed contractor can polish Corian<sup>®</sup> to remove some stains, burns, and scratches.*

## Dishwasher

With proper use and maintenance, the dishwasher in your kitchen will clean dishes effectively and conveniently.

### Care and Maintenance

Follow these care and maintenance suggestions for your home's dishwasher.

### To Clean Dishes Effectively

Run the disposal before turning on the dishwasher. A clogged sink drain will cause a flood.

Use only dishwasher detergent and only in the recommended amounts.



Caution

*If the dishwasher isn't directly wired, plug it into a grounded outlet only. Don't use an extension cord.*

### To Clean the Dishwasher

Some parts of the dishwasher need cleaning.

Clean the control panel with a damp cloth. Dry it thoroughly.

Never use harsh abrasives to clean the dishwasher.

Clean the strainer, pump, and spray arms every three months per the manufacturer's instructions to remove objects that could clog the drain system.

Clean the dishwasher float periodically to prevent it from sticking; it controls the water level in the dishwasher. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to clean the float.



Caution

*Before cleaning the interior of the dishwasher, wait at least 20 minutes after a cycle for the heating element to cool down. Failure to do so could result in burn injuries.*

### To Remove Stains

Clean the stain with dishwasher detergent and water. If the iron in your water stains the dishwasher, clean the stains with a commercial soluble rust remover that's safe for use in dishwashers.

### To Check for Leaks

Inspect the dishwasher for leaks every six months. After washing a load of dishes, look along the front and underneath the dishwasher for water leaks.



Home  
Tip

*Use only automatic dishwasher detergents. The wrong detergent can cause the dishwasher to leak.*



Service  
Tip

*Call a professional to have any leaks or clogs repaired immediately.*

For more information about dishwashers, visit the manufacturer's website.

## Disposal

The food disposal unit in the kitchen helps make cooking and cleaning easier.

### Care and Maintenance

Follow these care and maintenance suggestions for the disposal in your home.

### To Use the Disposal Correctly

Run the cold water, and then turn the disposal on before depositing food into it. Don't deposit foods into an inactivated disposal and then turn the unit on.

Run cold water while the disposal is running. Running cold water helps to solidify any grease in the disposal so it can be chopped up and moved out with the remainder of the foods.

Insert foods loosely into the disposal. If you pack in too much at once, you can jam the disposal.

Keep the disposal running for at least 15 seconds after the noise of grinding has stopped to flush all food particles through the drain line.

Make sure all small objects are removed from the sudsy water before you drain the sink.

### If You Have a Continuous-Feed Disposal

Move silverware and other small items away from the edge of the sink to avoid accidentally knocking them in while the disposal is running.

### To Use the Disposal Safely

With a continuous-feed model, use the cover as directed to protect yourself when grinding bones or fruit pits – the force of the disposal action could eject small particles. Avoid leaning over the disposal if you are feeding waste into it while it is running.

To avoid damage to the motor, all disposals have overload protectors. If the disposal should stall, turn off the disposal and the cold water. Retrieve the article causing the problem. Press the reset button on the disposal. If it won't stay in, wait a few minutes and try again. If the disposal won't start when you turn the switch on, check your electrical panel box for a tripped circuit breaker, and reset as necessary.

### What You Can't Put Into the Disposal

Follow the directions in the manufacturer's manual regarding what shouldn't be put through the disposal.

Don't grind large bones or fibrous materials, such as corn husks, artichokes, etc.

Don't pour grease or fat down the disposal.



Home  
Tip

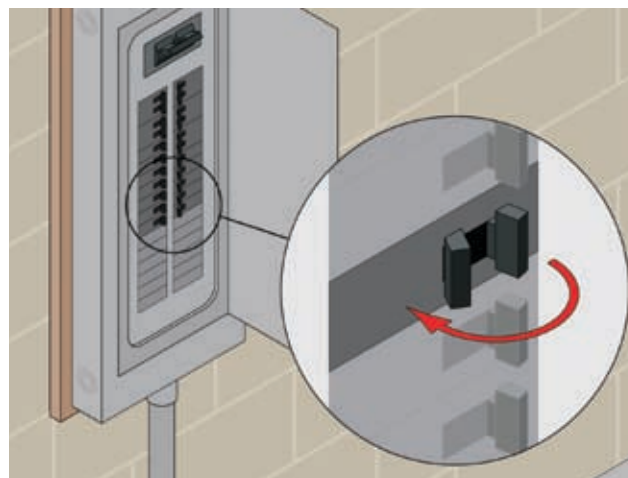
*Pour liquid fat into a jar or can, and then solidify it in the refrigerator. Dispose of the jar or can in the trash.*

### To Clean the Inside of the Disposal

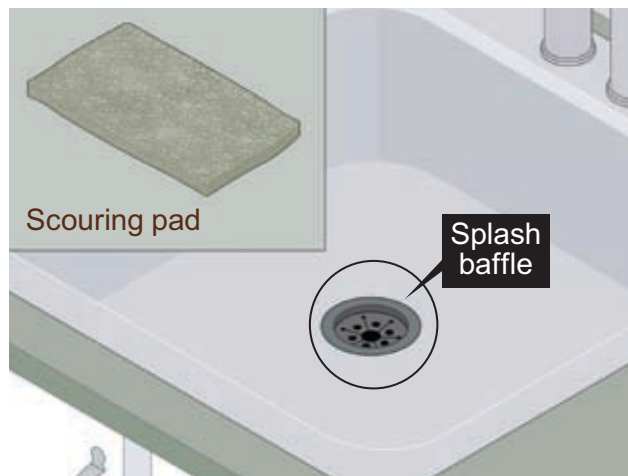
Disposals may emit odors when food particles and grease collect in the grind chamber and on the baffle. This odor can be unpleasant and is typically the result of not running enough water during and after using the unit.

Clean the inside of the disposal by doing the following:

1. Unplug the disposal or disconnect it from the power supply by switching off its circuit breaker.



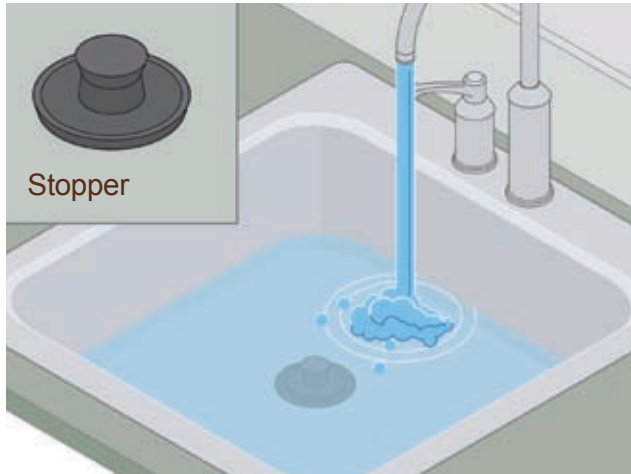
2. Use a scouring pad to clean the inside upper lip of the grind chamber and the underside of the splash baffle.



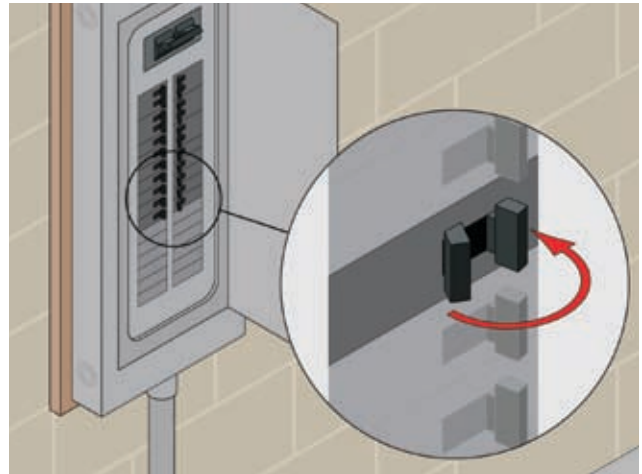
Caution

*Never put your hands inside the disposal unit. If you drop something down the disposal unit, use long-handled tongs to retrieve it.*

3. Stop up the sink, and fill it halfway with warm water.



5. Plug in the disposal or reconnect it to the power supply by switching on its circuit breaker.



4. Pour ¼ cup of baking soda into the water and mix.



6. Turn on the disposal and remove the stopper from the sink at the same time to wash away loose particles.



### **To Clear a Jam in the Disposal**

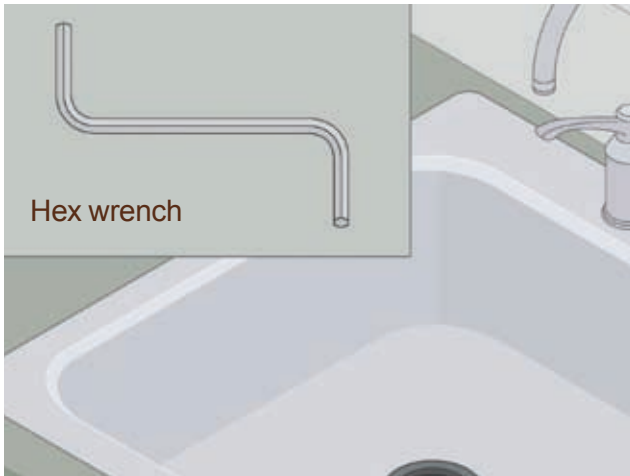
A jam is when the disposal's motor stops while the disposal is running. Disposal manufacturers provide model-specific instructions on how to clear a jam, as well as how to keep one from occurring.

In general, to clear a jam in the disposal, follow these steps:

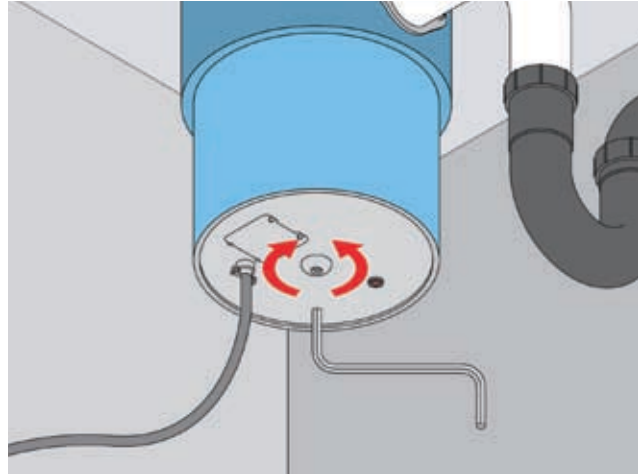
1. Turn the disposal's power switch to the OFF position. Taking this step is essential in ensuring your safety while clearing a jam. If water is in the sink, wait for it to drain or bail it out.



2. Locate a hex wrench. Many disposal manufacturers automatically supply a hex wrench with the disposal. A hex wrench is a simple tool that's also available for purchase at home care centers.




3. Look on the bottom of the disposal for a hexagonal-shaped hole. Insert the hex wrench into the hole. Work the hex wrench back and forth until it turns a full rotation in both directions.



4. Look into the disposal's grinding chamber using a flashlight. You can see the grinding chamber by peering down the sink's drain. Use long-handled tongs to remove any objects from the disposal.

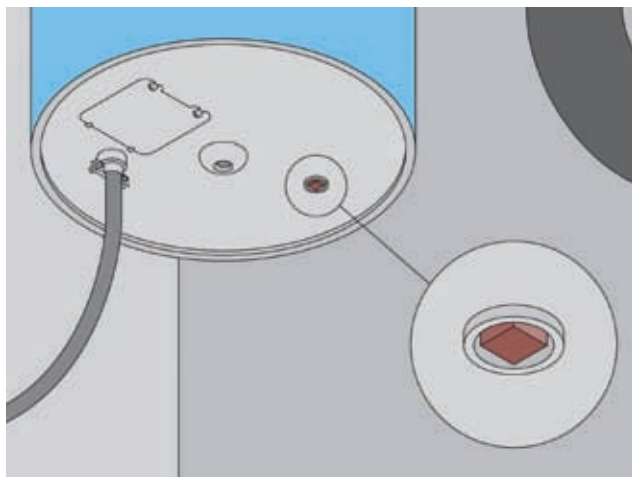


 **Caution** *Never put your hands inside the disposal unit.*

5. Allow the disposal's motor to cool for three to five minutes.



6. Push the red reset button on the bottom of the disposal. If the button won't stay in, wait a few minutes and try again. If the disposal still fails to work, check your circuit breaker panel for a tripped circuit breaker and reset it.



**H** Home Tip  
*If your disposal is designed to plug into an outlet instead of being directly wired, make sure it's plugged into the right outlet.*

7. Run a steady to strong flow of cold water from the faucet, and then turn the disposal's power switch to the ON position. The disposal should now work properly. If it jams again, repeat steps 1 through 7.



**S** Service Tip  
*If you can't clear a jam in the disposal, call a licensed plumber for assistance.*

See also *Circuit Breakers* (p. 13) and *Electrical Troubleshooting* (p. 14).

For more information about disposals, visit the manufacturer's website.

## Ranges, Cooktops, and Ovens

Your kitchen comes equipped with either a range and oven unit or with a cooktop and a separate oven.

### Care and Maintenance

Follow these care and maintenance suggestions for your home's ranges, cooktops, and ovens.

### To Clean Ranges, Cooktops, and Ovens

Clean the broiler pan, control panel, and stovetop with a nonabrasive cleaner.

Clean the knobs with a little detergent and a damp cloth.

If your oven is self-cleaning or continuous cleaning:

*Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning the interior.*

If your oven isn't self-cleaning:

*Clean the interior with a mild detergent or with soap and water when the oven is cold.*



Caution

*Don't spray cleaners directly onto the range, cooktop, or oven surface.*

*Put the cleaner onto a soft rag, and then wipe the surface.*



Caution

*Chrome discolors during the self-cleaning cycle on an oven. Remove the broiler pan and chrome racks from the oven before cleaning.*

### To Clean a Range Hood

Clean the grease filter frequently. Remove it, and wash in a mild detergent solution. Rinse and dry it thoroughly.

Wipe the range hood lightbulb when it's cool with a soft rag and a mild detergent solution. Rinse and dry it thoroughly.

Clean the range hood with soap and warm water, a degreaser, or a nonabrasive cleaner.

Clean the underside of the range hood regularly. Deposits will form a hard residue that can be difficult to remove.



Home Tip

*If your range hood has a charcoal filter, replace it once a year. Charcoal filters can't be cleaned.*



Caution

*Turn off the range and oven before cleaning the range hood.*



Caution

*Never clean the range hood with abrasive cleaners.*

For more information about ranges, cooktops, and ovens, visit the manufacturer's website.