

WEEKEND 2: CLEANING THE KITCHEN, BATHROOMS, AND WINDOWS

- First eliminate any clutter from the kitchen and bathrooms, just as you did while cleaning last weekend.
- Ask yourself when was the last time you cleaned or replaced your kitchen sponges. If the answer is “Sometime during Obama’s first presidency,” it’s time to toss those squishy bacteria colonies and start fresh. If it’s been a couple weeks since their last cleaning, space the sponges out on a small, microwave-safe plate, cleaning surface up, pop them in the microwave, and set it on high for three minutes. Carefully remove the plate and let the sponges cool completely before you try to pick them up.
- If your dishtowels have been hanging up for more than three days or were used to mop up any counter spills, throw them in a hot-water load of laundry.
- Shake out and wash your area rugs —this is especially important if you haven’t done it in a while. Hang them to dry in moderate sun or partial shade to prevent fading of any non-UV-treated rug weaves.
- Clear off the kitchen counters entirely. We know it sounds like a lot of work, but it will actually make the cleaning process go so much faster. Once you’re in the clear, grab your liquid of choice (we love this herby antibacterial cleaner from Method) and spray a light film over as much of the countertops as you can. Allow it to sit for a few minutes to kill any nasties, then wipe with paper towels, a clean sponge (not the one you use for the dishes!), or a clean, damp rag. Repeat if necessary to remove all the cleaner, then allow the counters to dry completely.
- Give any dusty kitchen and bathrooms surfaces the once-over with a duster or rag. If you come across kitchen cabinets or walls that have an oily residue from cooking, wipe them down with a towel dunked in a 2:1 solution of water and white vinegar.
- Comb through your bathroom cabinets for any expired medications or beauty products; make a list of what needs to be replaced, and toss the rest. Also check for any towels or washcloths that smell funky from sitting in storage, and run them through a hot-water wash with ½ cup white vinegar in the rinse cycle. Or check out our guide on how to remove stains the nontoxic way.
- Spray the bathroom shower/tub and countertops with antibacterial cleaner, and allow them to sit for about 20 minutes before wiping down. Also spray the seat (top and bottom), behind the seat, and inside the toilet bowl. Although we usually prefer milder cleaners around the house, you don’t want to mess with the toilet. Use a bleach-based cleaner, and let it sit for at least 20 minutes before scrubbing. To make the bowl really sparkle, after cleaning and flushing, pour in ½ cup white vinegar, let it sit for 10 minutes, and scrub it shiny.
- For dirty or streaky windows, try this tried-and-true window cleaning formula: fill a large spray bottle with 2 cups water, ¼ cup white vinegar, and ½ teaspoon liquid dish soap. Crinkle the newspaper into a loose ball in one hand, and spray the window with the other. Rub in a circular motion to remove dirt, then switch to either horizontal or vertical wiping to eliminate streaks.
- There probably isn’t much in the way of furniture in your kitchen or bath, but move any pieces away from their normal spots and vacuum thoroughly. For tile or wood floors, follow up with a careful steaming or polish.