How to Clean a Range Hood and Grease Filter

Restore suction, stop dripping grease and cooking smells, and keep your kitchen safer - in about 45 minutes.

Time: 45-60 minutes | **Deep clean: every 1-3 months** | **Filter soak: 20-30 minutes** | **Cost: low - basics you own**



A range hood pulls smoke, steam and grease out of the air. When the grease filter clogs, suction drops, the motor works harder, smells linger, and grease can drip back onto the stove. Built-up grease is also a fire risk. A regular deep clean fixes all of that - no special products needed.

Safety First - Read Before You Start

- [ ] Switch the hood OFF and unplug it, or switch off power at the breaker
- [ ] Let the stove, hood and lights cool completely before you touch them
- [ ] Never spray cleaner directly into the fan, motor or electrics
- [ ] Never use oven cleaner, bleach or flammable sprays inside the hood
- [ ] Use a stable step stool - never stand on the stove or counter
- [ ] Wear gloves; hot soapy water and degreaser can dry and irritate skin
- [ ] Keep children and pets out of the kitchen while filters are soaking

What You Need

- Hot water and washing-up liquid (dish soap)
- Baking soda - about 1/4 cup for the soak
- White vinegar in a spray bottle (for rinsing and glass)
- Soft sponge, non-scratch scourer and microfibre cloths
- Soft brush or old toothbrush for mesh and edges
- Large sink, basin or bathtub big enough for the filter
- Rubber gloves, paper towels and a dry towel
- Optional: a little degreaser for very heavy build-up

Know Your Filter Type

Filter type	How to spot it	How to clean it
Mesh filter	Flat aluminium or stainless mesh panel under the hood	Soak and wash as in Step 2. Most are dishwasher-safe on a gentle cycle - check the manual first.
Baffle filter	Heavy stainless panels with angled channels, common on larger hoods	Soak and wash the same way. Handle with care - edges can be sharp and panels are heavy when wet.
Charcoal filter	Black fabric or pad, found on ductless / recirculating hoods	**Do NOT wash.** Replace every 3-6 months, or as the manual says. Washing does not restore it.

Not sure which you have? Slide the panel out (Step 1) and check the hood manual or the label on the filter frame before you soak anything.

Step-by-Step Deep Clean

Step 1 - Remove the filter

1. Confirm power is off and everything is cool. Put a towel over the stovetop to protect it and catch drips.
2. Find the latch, handle or spring clips on the filter panel under the hood.
3. Slide or lower the filter out slowly - greasy filters drip. Carry it straight to the sink.
4. If there is a charcoal filter behind it, lift it out and check its date. Replace it if it is past due or still smells after airing.

Step 2 - Soak and wash the grease filter

1. Fill the sink or basin with very hot water, a good squeeze of washing-up liquid and 1/4 cup baking soda. Stir to dissolve.
2. Submerge the filter fully. If it is too large, soak one half, then turn it over.
3. Leave it for **20-30 minutes**. Very greasy filters can soak for up to 1 hour.
4. Scrub both sides gently with a soft brush or non-scratch sponge, working along the mesh - not across it.
5. Rinse under hot water until the water runs clear and the mesh feels squeak-clean, not slippery.
6. Shake off water and let the filter **dry completely** on a towel before refitting. A wet filter drips and traps smells.

Dishwasher option: Many mesh and baffle filters can go in the dishwasher alone, on a hot cycle, standing upright. Skip this if the manual forbids it, if the frame is aluminium and your detergent is harsh (it can darken the metal), or if the filter is very clogged - soak first instead.

Clean the Hood, Fan and Lights

Step 3 - Degrease the hood, inside and out

1. Mix hot water with a little washing-up liquid in a basin.
2. Wring a cloth or sponge out well - it should be damp, not dripping.
3. Wipe the underside of the hood first, where grease collects most, then the inside walls you can reach.
4. Wipe the outside, chimney and edges. For stainless steel, wipe in the direction of the grain.
5. For stubborn spots, apply a paste of baking soda and a little water, leave 5 minutes, then wipe away.
6. Wipe again with a clean damp cloth to remove residue, then buff dry to prevent streaks.

Step 4 - Fan area, lights and controls

- [ ] Wipe visible fan blades gently with a well-wrung damp cloth - never soak or spray the fan or motor
- [ ] Clean light covers once cool: wipe with a damp cloth, or remove, wash in soapy water, dry fully and refit
- [ ] Wipe buttons and switches with a barely damp cloth so no water gets inside
- [ ] Check the grease cup or drip tray if your hood has one - empty, wash, dry and refit it

Step 5 - Refit and test

1. Slide the dry filter back in until the latch or clips click firmly.
2. Refit the charcoal filter (new, if replaced) and any light covers.
3. Restore power, run the fan on each speed and check the lights.
4. Hold a tissue under the running hood - it should pull gently toward the filter. That is good suction.

Printable Checklists - Tick As You Go

After Cooking - 2 Minutes

- [ ] Wipe the underside and front of the hood while it is still slightly warm (not hot)
- [ ] Wipe splashes off the stovetop and backsplash
- [ ] Run the fan for 5-10 minutes after cooking to clear steam and smells

Monthly Deep Clean

- [ ] Power off and let everything cool
- [ ] Remove and soak the grease filter (20-30 minutes)
- [ ] Scrub, rinse and dry the filter completely
- [ ] Degrease the hood inside and out
- [ ] Wipe fan area, lights and controls
- [ ] Empty and wash the grease cup, if fitted
- [ ] Refit, restore power and test suction

Every 3-6 Months

- [ ] Replace the charcoal filter on ductless hoods - write the date on the new one
- [ ] Check the duct opening and outside vent flap for grease or blockages, if you can reach them safely
- [ ] Inspect the filter: replace it if the mesh is torn, bent or still greasy after two soaks
- [ ] Check lights and replace any dull or flickering bulbs with the correct type

Cleaning Schedule at a Glance

When	Job
After cooking	Wipe the hood underside, run the fan for 5-10 more minutes
Weekly	Wipe the outside, chimney, controls and light covers
Monthly	Soak and wash the grease filter; degrease inside the hood
Every 3-6 months	Replace the charcoal filter (ductless hoods); check vent and filter condition

If Something Is Wrong

Symptom	Likely cause	What to do
Weak suction, smells linger	Clogged grease filter	Deep-clean the filter; replace charcoal filter if fitted
Grease dripping onto stove	Saturated filter or full grease cup	Clean the filter and empty the grease cup straight away
Loud or rattling fan	Loose filter or grease on blades	Refit the filter firmly; wipe blades. If it continues, call a technician
Fan or lights not working	Power, bulb or switch fault	Check power and bulb first. Do not open electrics - call a qualified technician

Do and Do Not

Do

- Clean little and often - a monthly soak is easier than a yearly scrub
- Let the filter dry fully before refitting
- Use lids on pans and the right pan size to cut grease at the source

Do Not

- Do not wash a charcoal filter - replace it
- Do not use steel wool or harsh scourers on stainless steel or mesh
- Do not pour greasy soak water with food solids down the drain in large amounts - wipe grease into the bin first
- Do not run the hood with the filter removed

Notes

Tip: Set a phone reminder for the same date each month. A clean filter keeps suction strong, cuts cooking smells, and lowers grease build-up around the stove.