How to Clean Ceiling Fans and Blinds

Dust-free fans, streak-free blinds — without damaging the motor, the wood, or the fabric.

Ceiling fans and blinds are two of the dustiest things in any home — and two of the most ignored. Fans fling dust into the air every time they spin, and blinds trap a fine grey film on every slat. Both jobs are quick once you know the right method, and neither needs special products. Allow about 30–45 minutes for one room.

SAFETY — PLEASE READ FIRST

Turn the fan OFF before you touch it, and wait until the blades have stopped completely. Never clean a spinning fan.

Use a stable step stool or ladder. Never stand on a chair, a bed, or a wobbly stool, and never overreach — move the ladder instead.

Check your blind material first. Wood blinds must never be soaked; fabric blinds must never be scrubbed hard. Always test a hidden spot before using any cleaner.

Never spray cleaner directly onto a fan motor, a light fitting, or blinds. Spray it onto your cloth instead, so liquid cannot drip into the motor or soak into wood.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- An old pillowcase (for fan blades); a microfibre cloth and a feather or electrostatic duster
- A step stool or sturdy ladder; a bucket of warm water
- Mild dish soap — 1 teaspoon per 4 litres of warm water
- White vinegar — optional, 60 ml per 4 litres, for greasy kitchen fan blades
- A soft sponge (non-scratch); clean dry towels; rubber gloves (optional, for deep cleaning blinds)

PART 1 — CEILING FANS

1. Dust the blades with a pillowcase

- Slide an old pillowcase over one blade at a time, press it gently around the blade, and slowly pull it back. The dust stays inside the pillowcase instead of falling on your furniture and floor. Repeat for every blade, top and bottom.
- No spare pillowcase? Use a damp microfibre cloth, wiping from the centre of the fan outward, and hold a damp cloth underneath to catch falling dust.

2. Wipe the blades clean

- Dampen a soft cloth in the soapy solution (1 teaspoon of dish soap per 4 litres of warm water), wring it well, and wipe each blade top and bottom.
- For greasy kitchen fan blades, add 60 ml of white vinegar per 4 litres of solution.
- Dry each blade immediately with a clean towel — never leave blades wet, especially wooden ones.

3. Clean the motor housing and light fixtures

- Wipe the motor housing and downrod with a barely damp cloth, then dry. Never spray water or cleaner onto the motor.
- For glass light covers, remove them if you can, wash in warm soapy water, rinse, and dry completely before refitting. For fixed covers, wipe with a damp cloth and dry.
- Replace dusty bulbs with clean ones while you are up there — it makes a surprising difference to the light.

4. Switch on and check

- Turn the fan back on at low speed and check for wobbling or rattling. If it wobbles, check that all blade screws are snug (do not over-tighten).
- Dust fans every 2–4 weeks; in a dusty home or with pets, every 2 weeks is better. Deep clean every 3 months.

PART 2 — BLINDS

1. Dust first, always

- Close the blinds fully, then dust from top to bottom with a microfibre cloth, a duster, or a dry sock on your hand — about 5 minutes per window.
- Then tilt the slats the other way and dust again, so you catch both sides. For vertical blinds, dust each vane top to bottom.
- Dusting first is essential: wiping dusty blinds just turns dust into muddy streaks.

2. Wipe with a damp cloth

- Dampen a soft cloth in the same soapy solution (1 teaspoon of dish soap per 4 litres of warm water), wring it well, and wipe each slat, working top to bottom. Rinse the cloth often.
- Dry each section with a clean towel as you go. For most blinds, this is all the cleaning they need.

3. Deep clean by material

- **Faux wood and vinyl blinds:** the toughest. Wipe with a damp soapy cloth; for heavy grime, take them down and soak in a bathtub of warm water with 1–2 teaspoons of dish soap for 20–30 minutes. Scrub gently with a soft sponge, rinse, and hang to air-dry fully before rehanging. Never use hot water on vinyl — it can warp.
- **Aluminium (metal) blinds:** wipe with a damp soapy cloth and dry immediately to prevent water spots. Do not use vinegar or abrasive cleaners — they can dull the finish. A bathtub soak (20–30 minutes, warm water, mild soap) is fine for heavy dirt, but dry thoroughly straight away.
- **Real wood blinds:** NEVER soak, and never use a dripping cloth. Wipe with a barely damp cloth and dry immediately. For stubborn marks, use a cloth dampened with a tiny amount of wood cleaner, and test a hidden spot first. Keep wood blinds away from steam and bathroom humidity where possible.
- **Fabric blinds (including Roman and roller blinds):** dust with a vacuum brush attachment on low suction. For spots, dab — never rub — with a cloth dampened in mild soapy water, then blot dry. Check the care label first: some fabric blinds are dry-clean only, and roller blinds should never be soaked or machine washed unless the label says so.
- **Vertical blinds:** dust each vane, then wipe with a damp soapy cloth. Fabric vanes can usually be wiped the same way; check the label before any soaking. If individual vanes are very dirty, unhook them, wipe flat, and rehang once dry.

4. Clean the cords, headrail and windowsill

- Wipe the headrail and cords with a damp cloth, and wipe the windowsill underneath.
- Check cords for fraying and make sure cord cleats or tension devices are secure — a small safety check that is worth doing every time.

HOW OFTEN

- Ceiling fans: dust every 2–4 weeks, deep clean every 3 months.
- Blinds: dust weekly or fortnightly, wipe monthly, deep clean every 3–6 months.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Never clean a fan while it is spinning. Never soak real wood blinds, and never use a steam cleaner on any blinds. Never use bleach, oven cleaner, or abrasive scourers on fans or blinds. Never spray cleaner directly onto a fan motor, light fitting, or blind headrail. Never stand on furniture to reach a fan — use a

proper step stool or ladder.

TICK-OFF CHECKLIST

Tick each step as you finish it.

- [ ] Fan switched off and blades fully stopped
- [ ] Step stool or ladder set up safely — no standing on chairs
- [ ] Fan blades dusted with a pillowcase (or damp cloth), top and bottom
- [ ] Fan blades wiped with soapy water (1 tsp dish soap per 4 litres) and dried
- [ ] Motor housing and downrod wiped and dried (no spray on motor)
- [ ] Light covers washed or wiped and dried before refitting
- [ ] Fan switched on and checked for wobble; blade screws snug
- [ ] Blind material identified before cleaning
- [ ] Blinds dusted top to bottom, both slat directions
- [ ] Blinds wiped with wrung-out soapy cloth and dried section by section
- [ ] Deep clean done by material (soak only faux wood, vinyl, or aluminium — never real wood or fabric unless the label allows)
- [ ] Cords, headrail and windowsill wiped; cords checked for fraying
- [ ] Everything dry before closing blinds or switching the fan back on

NOTES