

The Proper Care and Use of a Garbage Disposal on the 4th Floor Terrace and Inside Your Unit

Now, in case you don't already know, here's the proper way to use a disposal:

- Scrape clean your plate into the trashcan before rinsing any food residue (less than the size of a dime) into the disposal.
- Turn on the cold water – not hot. Cold water keeps the motor, bearings and shredder assembly from overheating.
- Turn on the garbage disposal.
- Feed the disposal a little at a time. Keep utensils and your hands out of the drain.
- Let the food clear the disposal – you can hear when it's clear.
- Turn the disposal off.
- Let the water run 10 seconds more to flush the pipe.
- Turn the water off.

Not everything can be safely put in the garbage disposal. Here is a list of items you shouldn't put in your disposal:

- Grease – Pour excess grease into an old metal can. After the grease has cooled and solidified throw the can and the grease into the trash.
- Bones – Any type of bone can jam a disposal, even chicken bones.
- Rice or pasta – No matter how much water you run or how long you run the disposal, you can never break rice or pasta down small enough. Both items swell when they are in contact with water, so the small pieces will eventually gather in the trap and swell until it's closed.
- Hard shells from shrimp, crabs and other shellfish
- Unpopped popcorn kernels
- Banana peels
- Celery
- Potato peelings
- Corn husk or corn cobs
- Artichokes
- Coffee grounds (in quantity) or coffee filters
- Fruit pits and hard seeds from things like avocados or peaches
- Onion skins
- Egg shells – they turn into a sand-like substance that clogs pipes
- Trash, including twist ties, steel wool, pull tabs, rubber bands, glass, screws, nails, utensils, cigarette butts or bottle caps, paper, plastic, or other trash, fabric, string, rags, or sponges, plant or flower clippings, children's toys, hair
- Harsh chemicals like bleach or drain cleaners. They can damage blades and pipes. Borax is a natural sink cleaner and sanitizer that effectively works on odor-causing mold and mildew that accumulates in garbage disposals. (See more below).

Keeping Your Garbage Disposal Running Problem-Free

Ice is an extremely effective and inexpensive method for cleaning your garbage disposal, breaking up any grease build-up which has accumulated. Just toss a few ice cubes into the garbage disposal and run it. As the garbage disposal chops into the ice cubes, the ice chips will effectively scour all the hard to reach areas of the unit, and melt down the drain. Try this once or twice a month to keep your garbage disposal in fine working order.

To Remove or Prevent Nasty Garbage Disposal Smells

Here are some natural methods to clean your garbage disposal that are good for the environment and very inexpensive.

- Periodically, take a small lemon or orange peel and toss it into the disposal. The oils from the peel naturally clean the walls inside the garbage disposal and create a fresh, long-lasting scent.
- Freeze vinegar in ice cube trays and run those down the disposal. This will safely kill odor-causing bacteria.
- For stubborn odors pour baking soda into the drain and let it set for several hours before running the water and garbage disposal.
- For really stubborn odors, use a safe cleaning product like Borax. Just pour 3-4 tablespoons of Borax down the drain and let it sit for an hour. Then turn on the hot water and flush the borax away.