

Excerpts & adapted from [How to Keep Your Stainless Steel Clean](#) - Bonnie McCarthy - Houzz

http://www.houzz.com/ideabooks/51225359?utm_source=Houzz&utm_campaign=u1601&utm_medium=email&utm_content=gallery1

Stainless won't rust easily in spite of daily wear and tear. Unfortunately, that doesn't mean rust and stains can't happen. However, if the protective film on stainless surfaces is scratched with a steel pad or wire brush, comes into contact with hard water that is allowed to puddle or sit, or is exposed to chlorides from household cleansers, it becomes vulnerable to damage.

Safety first.

- Start with the right tools: soft sponges and microfiber cloths as the first line of defense.
- Don't use pastes and sprays meant for cleaning decorative stainless steel elements on pots, pans or surfaces where food is prepared.
- Do not use silver dip polishes, like the ones used for cleaning jewelry, because they are corrosive to stainless steel.
- Don't clean with steel scouring pads, which can scratch. Instead choose plastic scrubbing pads for tough jobs.

Go with the grain - always wipe and scrub in the same direction as the "grain" lines in the metal.

Stainless solutions. When it comes to choosing cleaning products, whatever you decide, the key to cleaning is sticking to it. "Stay consistent," "Most cleansers don't blend together well, and it makes it much harder to keep perfect. For appliances, we use CLR [Stainless Steel Cleaner]. It will clean off any hard-water stains from the water and ice dispenser and any drips or food."

Naturally clean. For a DIY approach to cleaning using pantry items, the sustainable-living team at Eartheasy advises dampening a cloth with undiluted white vinegar or olive oil and wiping in the direction of the grain.

Since products containing chloride can be harmful to the protective finish on stainless steel, the ESDA advises using the following:

Diluted vinegar (for cleaning limescale)

Baking soda (to remove coffee deposits)

Alcoholic solvents, such as acetone (for removing adhesives)

Chloride-free glass sprays (especially efficient for polished, mirror-like surfaces)

Commercially manufactured pastes and sprays that specify use on stainless steel

To clean a stainless sink, pour club soda on an absorbent cloth to scrub, then wiping dry.

Shine on. Spray cleansers made specifically for cleaning decorative stainless steel surfaces usually contain silicone oil, and although they will remove fingerprints and smudges, they will not prevent them. The ESDA says the silicone oil can be completely removed by washing with mild soap and water.

Using a polishing paste is another way to keep stainless sparkling. Commercially sold pastes, such as 3M Marine Metal Restorer and Polish, will create a microscopic wax layer on the surface that will make it easy to clean. Since the pastes are resistant to detergents, treatment with a polishing paste may last several months. It can be removed using alcohol on a soft cloth.