

DIY: Cleaning Refrigerator Coils

Priority: Medium

Difficulty Level: Medium - Each model differs

Time Commitment: 15-30 minutes

Physical Requirements: Ability to move a refrigerator slightly in order to access coils

Purpose

Cleaning the refrigerator coils has been reported to save up to 6% on the total energy used by the fridge. The coils dissipate heat away from the fridge, which allows the inside of the fridge to be cooled. Over time, dust and debris become trapped in the coils and can decrease the efficiency of the fridge by decreasing the dissipation of heat. The fridge compressor needs to kick on more often (cycling on) and stay on longer to keep the fridge cool, which uses more energy.

Indicators that this Action is worth doing in your home

- If the refrigerator doesn't stop running/humming, and any indication that it's struggling to reach target temperature.
- Feel the sides of the cabinet or the floor near the front kickplate. If it feels unusually warm or hot, the heat is being trapped by a layer of dust on the coils instead of being dissipated into the kitchen air.
- If temperatures of either the fridge or freezer are inconsistent.
- Take a flashlight and look behind the bottom front grille (the kickplate) or behind the unit. If you see a thick mat of gray lint or pet hair, your coils are definitely suffocating.

Video:

[The Best Way to Clean Your Refrigerator Coils](#)

Materials Needed

- Refrigerator or appliance brush
- Screw driver or socket wrench
- Flashlight
- Broom and dustpan, or (optional) vacuum cleaner
- Can of compressed air (electronics duster)

Directions

- Unplug the fridge
- Locate the coils based on the type of refrigerator it is. The coils could be: under the fridge, exposed behind the fridge, behind the fridge in left or right corner, on top of fridge
- Determine configuration of coils, as this will determine how to clean them.
- If there is a grille, determine how to remove (some snap on/off, some need to be screwed off).
- Gently clean the dust/debris off the grille using a feather duster or similar product.
- Sweep up or vacuum the debris. Replace grille and turn fridge back on.

Tips

- Be careful: do not use a vacuum to clean the coils themselves, as this can easily damage them.
- Consult your refrigerator's Owner's Manual. Most models' manuals can be found online if you do not have the paper copy.