

Down the Drain: Garbage Disposal Dos & Don'ts

If your kitchen has a garbage disposal, you know how easy it makes mealtime clean up. But what you may not realize is that your disposal comes with some pretty important rules. Here are some of the most vital:



Do:

- **Insert food slowly.** Stuffing it all into your disposal at once can cause clogs and shorten the life of your system.
- **Grind hard materials.** Many people think food like chicken bones or small fruit pits are a no-no, but they can actually help clean the walls of the disposal.
- **Use cold water for at least 20 seconds.** This will solidify grease so that it can be ground up. Also, make sure that all food particles are washed completely down the drain.
- **Keep it clean.** One good way to eliminate drain smells is by grinding citrus fruit peels. You can also add a few drops of dish soap and let the disposal run for a few minutes.

Don't:

- **Use hot water.** This will make grease liquefy and build up, which can clog the drain.
- **Grind fibrous or expandable foods.** The former, like celery stalks and onionskins, can tangle up the disposal. The latter, like pasta and rice, can clog it.
- **Turn off the motor too quickly.** You'll want to make sure all food particles are completely ground. Once done, continue to run the water for at least 15 seconds to flush out particles.
- **Wash coffee grounds down the drain.** While they won't harm the disposal itself, they can clog pipes and drains.
- **Forget to use it.** Lack of use can cause rusting and corrosion, which can lead to premature system replacement.