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Send Summer Soils Packing 7 Quick Tips to Keep Soils under Control

Summer is a time when everyone just wants to kick back and relax. So, while taking care of soil and grime "in the moment" may seem a bit contrary to how you want to approach summer, in fact, fast attention to the grime gremlins can be a real time-saver.

Grill Grime: Always check the owner's manual to learn more about cleaning your grill. A warm grill is far easier to clean than a cold one. So, once you're finished cooking, let it cool until slightly warm. Then take a small wire brush and scrape off any food particles that remain on the cooking grates. If there is still gunk on the grates and they are removable and your sink is large enough, soak them in warm water with soap. After they've soaked for a while, remove them from the water and brush clean with a wire brush. Let them air-dry and return them to the grill.



Pool Toys: While the chlorine in the pool may do a good job of keeping toys clean, a build-up of algae and mold can develop simply from being in a wet, damp environment. Make a solution of 3/4 cup of chlorine bleach to one gallon of water and scrub the toys. Because the bleach solution can damage your lawn, work on a concrete surface. Wear old clothes to avoid bleach damage on your garments, and rubber gloves to protect your hands. Goggles or sunglasses are a good idea so there's no chance of splashing bleach solution in your eyes. Once the toys have been cleaned, leave them wet for 5 minutes, then rinse the toys and hose down the work area. Place the smaller clean toys in a mesh bag and hang the bag and the larger toys on your clothesline or fence to air dry.

Outdoor Cushions: Although fabrics designed for outdoor use are generally soil-and stain-repellent, this doesn't mean they are 100% impervious to spots and spills. Since treatment is dependent upon the fiber content of your cushions, check the care label and, if necessary, contact the manufacturer. Many manufacturers of outdoor fabrics have information on their websites about how to properly care for their fabrics. If you have a few minutes on a rainy day, you might just go ahead and download this information so you'll have it on hand when you need it.

Sandy Beach Chairs: The hose is ultimately your best friend. Even if it's possible to brush off most of the sand, little particles are often left behind. So, give the chair a good brushing or a vigorous shake and then hose it down. You can wipe it dry with a soft cloth or—even easier—leave it outside to dry. Make sure it is thoroughly dry before putting it away so there's no chance of mold or rust vacationing on your chair.

Suntan Lotion: Suntan lotion can get on clothes, bathing suits, canvas beach chairs, poolside cushions. If the item can be laundered, treat it with a prewash stain remover and then launder with the hottest water that's safe for the fabric. If it can't be laundered, check the manufacturer's care instructions for the fabric.

Bathing Suits: While it's tempting to simply hang bathing suits out to dry because they will just be used again, left-in chlorine and suntan lotion can cause the fabric and the elastic to deteriorate before their time. Minimal care is to thoroughly rinse them before hanging them out to dry; laundering is preferable. Check the swimsuit's care label for laundering instructions.

Common Food Stains: Whether it's a backyard barbeque, a picnic on the beach, a family reunion or a party on the patio, some foods are recurrent visitors on the summer menu. Many are eat-with-your-hands fare, which compounds the opportunities for food stains. Nancy Bock, Senior Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®, offers some [tips](#) on how to trip the more common culprits. Check out the tips at cleaninginstitute.org/clean_living/cm_julyaug2010_clean_ideas.aspx.