

How to clean DEVICES

Our electronic devices can be a breeding ground for germs and bacteria. Many viruses, including coronavirus, can stick around for several hours or even days after being touched by or otherwise coming into contact with an infected person. With that knowledge, keeping them clean can be as important as keeping ourselves protected in order to avoid becoming ill and maintaining a high level of hygiene and cleanliness. We have therefore created this guide to help you clean your devices effectively.

Always

Never

Use wrung out alcohol wipes. Apple state that using a 70% isopropyl alcohol wipe or disinfectant wipe is ideal for the outside of a handset. To be on the extra safe side, power down the device before cleaning it. If you use a screen protector or protective case, you can clean these gently with warm water and soap. Just make sure you remove them from the phone first. While you CAN use general disinfectant spray, make sure it's sprayed onto a clean, soft cloth first, and not applied directly to the device. It will need to say something along the lines of 'kill 99.9% of bacteria' on it to be effective.

MOBILE PHONES & TABLETS

Don't submerge the device in bleach or soapy water. Similarly, do not clean the device whilst it's charging or otherwise plugged into another device. Using alcohol wipes on things like leather cases or other fabric and material should also be avoided as it could damage them. Don't clean phone cases with in-built batteries or other electronics with soap and water. A big thing to remember is to not use straight rubbing alcohol. It can damage the oleophobic and hydrophobic coatings that keep oil and water from damaging the display and ports. Finally, don't use regular house-hold surface cleaners (non-disinfectant ones) on phones and tablets – they are too abrasive and may damage them irreversibly.

Turn the laptop all the way off before starting any kind of cleaning and always unplug it from the mains. If you can remove the battery of the device, do so. Wipe the screen with a dry microfibre cloth, then thoroughly wring out an alcohol wipe and repeat before returning with a dry cloth. The rest of the laptop can be cleaned with an alcohol wipe, much like a mobile phone, but be careful to wring it out to avoid unnecessary liquid dripping into the inner circuits. Be sure to clean thoroughly on and around the keys and any other buttons, but not between any open cracks.

LAPTOPS & COMPUTERS

As with mobiles, avoid using water to clean the more delicate parts of your laptop such as keys and ports. While some of the more modern phones can be waterproof, laptops aren't and it will almost certainly cause damage and irreparable.

Remove any batteries the controller might use (Xbox controllers sometimes have batteries in the back.) Use alcohol wipes and be sure to get into the crevices around the sides as well as all the buttons on a video game controller, then dry it immediately with a microfibre cloth. On a console, pay specific attention to things like the power buttons and disc/cartridge eject buttons if there are any. If you have a vacuum cleaner with an appropriate attachment, use this to remove things like dust or food prior to using an alcohol wipe. A microfibre cloth will also do the job but make sure it's clean and dry before you use it.

GAME CONTROLLERS (& CONSOLES)

Do not use soapy water or bleach on the controllers and definitely not on the console itself. Make sure controllers are unplugged and inactive before cleaning them to avoid any problems with the electronics. Similarly, consoles should not be left on and need to be unplugged from the mains before being cleaned. Stay well away from the ports on consoles too, as any liquids could damage the interior.

Use alcohol wipes like with laptops and keyboards. Make sure they're unplugged and leave them to dry a little after using disinfectant wipes. If you have a Hoover with the right attachments, be sure to give it a once over first to remove food and debris. Compressed air is also great for keyboards. Use short, sharp bursts and aim to push dust towards somewhere you can Hoover it easily. Lightly dampen a cotton swab with rubbing alcohol and be sure to get between the keys as much as possible. Things like mice, headphones and microphones also need to be disinfected with wipes. If your keyboard is wireless, remove the batteries before you clean it. Don't let any moisture leak inside the keyboard and dry them with a clean microfibre cloth.

KEYBOARD & MICE

Don't clean them with warm soapy water. The electronics in these are not designed to be waterproof like some modern mobile phones and tablets. Also, don't use too much rubbing alcohol on keyboards as they could remove the lettering on top of keys.

NOS National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday

General Tips

1

Don't rub too hard. A gentle swabbing will be sufficient and excess cleaning could damage your devices. Wait a few minutes for the disinfectant to work, then wipe it clean.

2

How often you clean your electronics depends on a number of factors such as how much you come into contact with other people. Be sensible and practical.

3

Keep hands and faces as clean as possible. You'll have to wipe clean electronics less if you're nice and clean using them.

4

Remember, some germs are good and can help build a healthy immune system in children, but you can never be too careful with coronavirus.

5

Do not use regular kitchen sponges to clean devices - often they contain as many or more germs than our phones.

6

Consider using hands-free devices instead of pressing the phone to your face while making a phone call. If there's anything nasty on your phone, the last place you want it is near your face.

Meet our expert

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGbible. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.



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