Stack a dishwasher

Do your parents ever ask you to stack the dishwasher? Many homes have one and they can save a lot of time and effort compared to washing up your dirty dishes in a sink. Loading the dishwasher can be a great way to help out around the house. However, stacking the drawers properly takes a bit of time and some thought.

Lots of people have their own system for loading a dishwasher, and surveys have revealed that disagreements over how to do it are a common source of family arguments. It's easy to see why. Try to put too much in and you could find that your crockery comes out dirty, so you have to wash it all over again. Underfill it and you're wasting energy and water, which is not good for the environment.

So here's our step-by-step guide to loading the machine so it cleans the dishes efficiently.

AMAZING INVENTION
The first mechanical dishwasher was created in 1850 by American inventor Joe Hoghton.

A well-stacked machine cleans dishes properly.

Perfect prep

Make sure you have scraped off any leftover food into the bin or your food recycling container. This stops the machine's filter getting clogged and allows the water to drain out. If you like you can give some items a quick rinse in the sink but you shouldn't need to. You can sort your items into groups too, if you wish – such as cups, plates and pans. Some things can't go in a dishwasher, such as delicate glassware, so ask an adult what to leave out.

Everything has a place

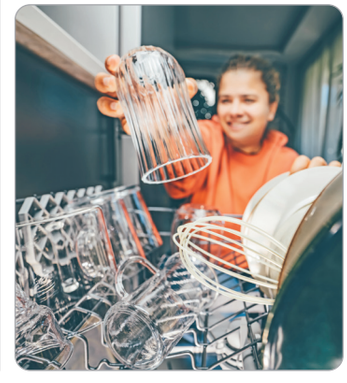
Fill the cutlery basket with your forks, knives and spoons. Make sure that the handles are in the bottom and the dirty part is sticking up ready to be cleaned. Be extra careful with knives or ask an adult for help. Don't overfill the basket. If there is too much cutlery, leave it out for another cycle. Some dishwashers don't have a basket, but instead have slots for cutlery. Make sure you put the cutlery in the correct place or it could fall into the bottom of the machine.

Stack plates like a pro

Plates, boards, baking trays, pots and pans tend to go on the bottom rack. Make sure you load the items in size order – the bigger items at the back of the drawer and the smaller ones towards the front. They should tilt slightly. Anything that can hold water, such as a saucepan, goes face down so it doesn't fill up during the cycle. Be sure not to put things too close together to allow the washer jets to get in and clean every item.

Cups and bowls on top

On the top level, put bowls, cups, glasses and mugs – these must also go face down so they can't collect water. This area is also where any large utensils can go, such as big serving spoons, spatulas and tongs. Once you're done, have a last check that nothing has fallen over and everything is nicely spaced out. Put a tablet or washing powder into the compartment and ask an adult which programme to select to get the wash started.



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