

# Cleaning & Caring For Your Sex Toys



Cleaning and caring for your toys is important, because if you don't it can make your toys fall apart or break sooner than they should. The most important reason to clean your toys properly is to stop the potential transmission of STIs, whether you use condoms on them or not.

## What are you going to be reading about?...

- Things to consider when cleaning a toy
- Cleaning and care needs of toys
- Normal mass-produced vibrators
- Silicone toys
- Jellies
- Vinyl
- Rubber
- Realistics
- Acrylic or Lucite
- Leather
- Electrical toys

## Things to consider when cleaning a toy

**What's it made out of?** - What the toy is made of can determine what it is cleaned with and how. For example, some toys can be boiled and others can't.

**Is the toy waterproof?** - If not, it shouldn't be soaked in water and you will need to limit the amount of water that goes anywhere near a seal in the toy.

**Do you have the proper liquids to clean it?** – For example, do you have soap and water, antibacterial solution or leather conditioner if you need it?

**Do you have a clean area to clean and dry your toys?** Is it a toy you should clean or is it a toy you should get rid of? - For example, toys used in electrical play should not be used with multiple partners.

**Do you have time to clean and dry the toy properly or should you leave it until you have more time?** – For example, if your mother is visiting in 10 minutes, it may not be a good idea to

clean a toy that needs to be airdried after it is cleaned, like a jelly toy.

**What is the toy made of?** - Before you throw out the packaging, check to see what the toy is made of, because this will affect how it is cleaned, the aftercare you'll need to perform on the product and what lube you can use to stop it deteriorating.

## Cleaning and care needs of toys

Toys will need to be cleaned in different ways and with different products depending on what they are made of, if they are waterproof and how they need to be dried. You also need to be careful which lube you use with a toy, because some lubes will cause them to degrade. Below is a guide on how to clean different types of toys and which are the safest lubes to use with them.

## Normal mass-produced vibrators

These are vibrators and plugs that every sex shop will carry and are usually very cheap. They are made of generic hard plastic, and usually the seals on them are fairly bad so they are prone to rusting where the water gets in and rusts the metal contacts the batteries sit on. If you want these types of toys to last, you generally need to take very good care of them.



1. Check to see if the toy is waterproof - If the toy is not waterproof, be careful when washing around the part of the toy where there is a seal, because if water gets in it can break the toy or cause it to rust.
2. What to wash them with - You can wash these in just soap and water in the sink.
3. How to dry them - Make sure the toy is dry, especially around the seals and inside the toy. It's a good idea to then let them air-dry by taking the batteries out and leaving the lid off them. This should dry them out better so there is less chance of them rusting
4. After care - Anti-bacterial, anti-viral and antifungal spray or wipes are a good idea to use once you have cleaned them with soap and water and they are dry. These products kill viruses, diseases, moulds, bacteria and fungi. It's one extra level of protection and is especially important if your toy has any ridges or seals that you may have not cleaned properly because they may not be waterproof. You can buy these solutions online, in sex shops and some chemists; brands include Pjur and Enviroclean and they come either as a spray or towelettes.
5. What lube to use - Whatever you like. Waterbased or silicone lube will work with these toys and will not cause the plastic to corrode or break down.



## Silicone toys

Silicone toys are considered superior to rubber or vinyl toys because they warm to the touch of the skin quickly, retain body heat and are non-porous and so are easier to clean and dry.

They carry vibration well, are very durable and are hypoallergenic. Silicone is also preferable for sex workers because it can be heated and boiled for an extended period of time without degrading or falling apart. If you're going to use a toy on multiple clients, this is a good toy to choose because it is so easy to clean, dry and sterilise.



1. What to wash them in - Silicone dildos, vibrators and butt plugs can be boiled for up to 3 minutes, put through a dishwasher and even cleaned using a diluted bleach solution. Remember, the harsher you are with cleaning your toys, the quicker they are going to degrade, so you may not want to boil them for 3 minutes. Warm, soapy water will do the job.
2. How to dry them - You need to be really careful that these toys are dry. Some silicone toys have folds or ridges in them and if you don't dry them properly or you don't use an aftercare product (see below), they can grow mould. Air-dry them once you have used them, but don't place them in direct sunlight.

3. After care - Anti-bacterial, anti-viral and antifungal spray or wipes are a good idea to use once you have cleaned them with soap and water and they are dry. These products kill viruses, diseases, moulds, bacteria and fungi. It's one extra level of protection and is especially important if your toy has any ridges, or seals that you may have not cleaned properly because they may not be waterproof. You can buy these solutions online, in sex shops and some chemists; brands include Pjur and Enviroclean and they come either as a spray or towelettes.
4. What lube to use - Silicone lubes can melt silicone, so it's a good idea to only use waterbased lubes. If you need to use a silicone lube, it's a good idea to spot test the toy first and ensure the toy is covered with a condom anywhere lube will come in contact with it. Try and check what lubricant the condom you are using comes coated in, and if it's silicone lube be very careful when using it with this toy.

### Jellies

These toys are made out of translucent (you can see through them), soft, flexible rubber. The rubber often looks like it has air bubbles in it and has become quite a common material for toys to be made of. These toys are extremely porous, meaning they have little holes in the skin, so you need to be very careful with how you wash, dry and care for them.



1. What to wash them in - They are made out of porous rubber, so wash them thoroughly with disinfectant soap and warm water. Be sure to rinse them as carefully as you can. Because they are porous it can be difficult to get all of the soap and water out of them, which can cause infections the next time you use them, or cause the toy to degrade.
2. How to dry them - Because they pick up fluff easily, try and wipe them down with a non-fluff towel or allow them to drip dry, so you don't get fluff or lint all over them. Because they are porous, they don't dry quickly, so air-drying them out of direct sunlight is a good idea.
3. Aftercare - Anti-bacterial, anti-viral and antifungal spray or wipes are a good idea to use once you have cleaned your jelly toys with soap and water and they are dry. These products kill viruses, diseases, moulds, bacteria and fungi. It's one extra level of protection and is especially important if your toy has any ridges or seals that you may have not cleaned properly because they may not be waterproof. You can buy these solutions online, in sex shops and some chemists; brands include Pjur and Enviroclean and they come either as a spray or towelettes.
4. What lube to use - Use only use water-based lube with jellies because silicone lube can cause them to disintegrate. Because they tend to be sticky to the touch and collect lint, you may want to put them back in the original packaging they came in after you've washed and dried them. If carrying them with you on an escort job or to work each day in a brothel, put them into a plastic bag so they don't collect fluff from your bag. Try and check what lubricant the condom you are using comes coated in, and if it's silicone lube be very careful when using it with this toy.

## Vinyl

Vinyl toys are light in weight, easy to clean and come in lots of different colours and shapes. Vinyl toys sit in between jelly toys and silicone toys in everything from how porous they are, how hard they are to the touch and their performance level.



1. What to wash them in - Vinyl products are porous, but not as porous as jelly rubbers, so they must be washed well and only with mild soap and water. Do not boil these toys.
2. How to dry them - Be sure to air-dry these toys out of direct sunlight. Because they are porous, you won't be able to use a towel to dry them completely.
3. Aftercare - Anti-bacterial, anti-viral and antifungal spray or wipes are a good idea to use once you have cleaned them with soap and water and they are dry. These products kill viruses, diseases, moulds, bacteria and fungi. It's one extra level of protection and is especially important if your toy has any ridges or seals that you may have not cleaned properly because they may not be waterproof. You can buy these solutions online, in sex shops and some chemists; brands include Pjur and Enviroclean and they come either as a spray or towelettes.
4. What lube to use - You can use any lube you like with vinyl toys. Be sure to use condoms with the toys, because they are porous they have tiny holes in them and you don't want anything nasty living in there being inserted inside you or your client.

## Rubber

Rubber toys are firm, inflexible and often heavier toys designed for heavier use. They aren't as flexible as silicone or jelly toys so they don't feel as life-like to the touch. The major downside to these toys is that if someone has a latex allergy, the chances are that they will be allergic to these toys. Rubber toys are also extremely porous, so you need to be careful how you clean and care for them.



1. What to wash them in - They are made of porous rubber, so wash them thoroughly with disinfectant soap and warm water. Be sure to rinse them as carefully as you can. Because they are porous, it can be difficult to get all of the soap and water out of them, which can cause infections the next time you use them, or cause the toy to degrade.
2. How to dry them - You can dry these off with a towel or soft cloth and then leave to dry in a well aired space out of direct sunlight. Because they are porous, water will try and hide in little holes, so you must be sure they are completely dry.
3. Aftercare - Anti-bacterial, anti-viral and anti-fungal spray or wipes are a good idea to use once you have cleaned them with soap and water and they are dry. These products kill viruses, diseases, moulds, bacteria and fungi. It's one extra level of protection and is especially important if your toy has any ridges or seals that you may have not cleaned properly because they may not be waterproof.

You can buy these solutions online, in sex shops and some chemists; brands include Pjur and Enviroclean and they come either as a spray or towelettes.

4. What lube to use - Only use water-based lubes with these toys and take special care not to use silicone lubes because they will degrade the rubber. These toys should only be used with condoms because they are porous and so they can hide STIs and water in the pores. Anything with oil in it, including oil-based lubes, will cause rubber to degrade. Try and check what lubricant the condom you are using comes coated in, and if it's silicone lube be very careful when using it with this toy.

**Realistics** (Cyberskin, Futurotic, NeoSkin, Soft Touch, UltraSkin, Fauxskin). This material is soft and supple, feels, and depending on colour, looks remarkably like skin.

These toys are considered top of the line because they feel almost exactly like real skin in touch, warmth and the way they move around. Depending on the toy, they can be extremely difficult to clean and store safely and can also be extremely difficult to replace. An example of a realistic toy is a Flesh Light.



1. What to wash them in - Thoroughly wash them with warm water (not hot) and liquid antibacterial soap. Be careful to rinse these products completely. If you are using a Flesh Light, penis sheath or another toy where the penis is inserted inside the toy and without a condom, then the toy can only be used on a single client because it is impossible to wash and disinfectant them properly.

2. How to dry them - These toys tend to be quite sticky and pick up fluff and lint, so dry them with a lint-free cloth before air drying them out of direct sunlight.
3. Aftercare - Once dry, sprinkle them with corn starch, or you can buy "renewing powder", but never use talcum powder on them because talcum powder can cause irritations when you use the toy again. Corn starch will ensure they are completely dry and keep the toy soft and supple.
4. What lube to use - Water-based lubes should be used, never silicone or oil-based lubricants. This means you may want to check what lubricant the condom you are using comes coated in, and if it's silicone lube be very careful when using it with this toy.

### Acrylic or Lucite

These toys are rock hard, which may not make them sound desirable, but it does make them perfect for Kegel exercises, prostate stimulation, chastity devices and vibrators. They are non-porous, so they can be cleaned effectively. They can simulate the look and feel of glass or be dull in colour.



1. What to wash them in - Wash these toys in hot soapy water.
2. How to dry them - These can be dried clean with a cloth, and it's a good idea to air dry them out of direct sunlight.

3. Aftercare - Anti-bacterial, anti-viral and antifungal spray or wipes are a good idea to use once you have cleaned them with soap and water and they are dry. These products kill viruses, diseases, moulds, bacteria and fungi. It's one extra level of protection and is especially important if your toy has any ridges or seals that you may have not cleaned properly because they may not be waterproof. You can buy these solutions online, in sex shops and some chemists; brands include Pjur and Enviroclean and they come either as a spray or towelettes.
4. What lube to use - You can use water-based or silicone lube with these toys; however, you may find the silicone-based lube doesn't adhere to the toys, so water-based lube can be a better option.

### Leather

Leather is extremely porous and difficult to clean. It is not recommended that sex workers use leather toys or aids, for example, leather harnesses for strap-ons or leather cock rings, unless they have the time to clean and provide the appropriate aftercare of the toy.



1. Wash the toy with a strong foaming cleaner and scrubbing brush. Do NOT soak leather toys in water.
2. Wipe down with a 70% isopropyl rubbing alcohol solution or spray with antibacterial solution.
3. Allow to dry VERY well or the leather will rot and go mouldy.
4. Continue cleaning by using saddle soap and do a saddle soap clean.
5. Use a leather conditioner to ensure the leather does not crack or deteriorate and to keep the leather as close to its original condition as possible. The harsh cleaning required means that you must use leather conditioners to keep the toy in good condition.

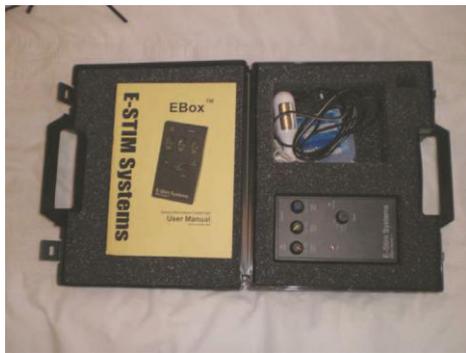
Be very careful when using and cleaning leather toys. They are the easiest toy to transmit an STI because they are so difficult to clean effectively. They are also the toy that can deteriorate the fastest and need replacing the most frequently. This is problematic because leather toys can also be the most expensive toys to buy.

### Electrical toys

Electric toys are difficult to clean because they have many components, some of which can be submerged in water, but the electrical unit itself cannot be. Condoms cannot be used on attachments because if you put a condom on, then the electric current doesn't flow and there will be no stimulation. Unless they are made of acrylic or silicone, you cannot boil them to sterilise them clean. Therefore when it comes to sex work, attachments tend to be single-use and the electrical box must be kept away from contaminated toys.



If you do incorporate these toys into your service, it's a good idea to only use the toys once per client because you cannot use condoms. This is problematic because these toys are extremely expensive. If you do decide to offer this service, ensure you wipe down the box and all cords with antibacterial sprays or antibacterial cleansing wipes.



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## Respect Inc contacts:

### Brisbane Office

28 Mein Street  
Spring Hill QLD 4000  
07 3835 1111 (phone)  
07 3835 1122 (fax)

### Gold Coast

4 Bay Street  
Southport QLD 4215  
07 5657 0857 (phone)  
07 5564 0929 (fax)

### Cairns Office

7/24 Florence Street  
Cairns City QLD 4870  
07 4051 5009 (phone)  
07 4051 0009 (fax)

### Townsville Office

118a Charters Towers Road  
Hermit Park Townsville QLD 4812  
07 4724 4853 (phone)  
07 4724 1122 (fax)

[www.respectqld.org.au](http://www.respectqld.org.au)  
[info@respectqld.org.au](mailto:info@respectqld.org.au)