

Ask Jon Eakes

How to clean grease off walls without bothering the paint.

Last Updated: Sunday, May 9th, 2010, Created: Sunday, January 14th, 2001

One of our viewers was wondering how to clean cooked-on grease off of kitchen walls around the stove, without bothering the paint. The reality is that it all depends on the quality of the paint you have on the wall. Regular latex paint can't stand much scrubbing. That is why we use latex acrylic enamel, a "scrubbable" paint, in kitchen areas -- or oil-based paints. Your best bet is to try cleaning in a painted area that is not seen, like behind the stove. Start with the mildest cleaner you have and see if it does anything to the paint. If not, then try it on the grease. If it won't touch the grease either, work your way up to stronger and stronger cleaners, degreasers and the like, but always testing first on a hidden paint surface. Watch out -- TSP, the wonder cleaner, will take the shine right off of the paint. That is precisely why we like it for preparing the wall for painting. But not for general cleaning. It is too abrasive.

Keywords:

Finishes, Kitchen, Walls, Cleaning, Grease, Paint

Article 1112

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