

Trilogy Cooking Club

How to Load a Dishwasher

by Gary Swieso

Dishwasher Features

Stainless Steel Shell

Dish Racks- Top, bottom, silverware shelf

Freestanding Silverware Basket

Spray Arms- Top, bottom and mid-rack

Soap dispenser

Rinse Aid dispenser

Filter

Heating Element

Door gaskets

Dishwasher Control Panel

Dishwasher Feature Details

Stainless Steel Shell

The shell is insulated for sound and should be cleaned from time to time. Run an empty dishwasher with a glass of white vinegar, placed in the top dish rack to help clean the tub. Clean around door gaskets and if there is calcium build up on shell bottom use a solution of CLR to remove deposits or rust.

Dish Racks

Usually there is an upper and lower rack although some models have a third upper shelf tray for silverware and other flat items. The normal upper rack is typically adjustable in height and may have tines that can swivel and lay down to accommodate larger dishes.

The bottom rack is typically not height adjustable but may also have tines that can be rotated to lay flat.

Some dishwashers have an upper silverware wash shelf. Silverware and other utensils lay flat on shelf basket and are washed by top and mid rack spray arms.

Most dishwashers have a removal silverware basket in the lower rack for cleaning of utensils etc. These typically have racks designed to keep silverware from touching, or nesting, and these are often operable to allow placement of larger items such as serving utensils.

Both upper and lower racks are removable-check your owner's manual for the process.

Spray Arms

Generally speaking, most dishwashers have an upper, mid and lower spray arm arrangement. These are designed to cover as much of the dishes as possible with hot soapy water. The lower and mid-rack arms are generally removable and should be examined from time to time to be sure the spray holes are not clogged. This can happen with hard water deposits or from bits of food that get recycled when the dishwasher is cleaning.

Soap Dispenser

The soap dispenser is a hinged door that opens to dispense detergent during the wash cycles. It is generally located on the door at mid-height. It should be cleaned periodically to assure it operates properly and is not clogged with un-used detergent. For the door to operate properly, it should not be blocked by tall items such as cake pans or cutting boards placed in the pull out tray racks.

Rinse Aid Dispenser

The Rinse Aid Dispenser is also generally located in the door and contains a removable cover for loading of the aid. Generally, there is an indicator system of some kind that shows volume of aid remaining in the reservoir. This tank should be filled regularly for best performance. Rinse aid is a valuable addition to the cleaning process and should not be ignored for the best results.

Tub Filter

Most dishwashers have a filter located in the bottom of the dishwasher which can be opened/removed for cleaning. The filter is a fine steel mesh and does not need to be replaced unless damaged. It should be checked and cleaned periodically depending on usage levels.

Heating Element

All dishwashers have an electric heating element in the bottom of the shell. The element helps in heating water for the wash cycle and is the element that helps to dry the dishes when the wash cycle is complete. These are replaceable but best done by an experienced appliance repair person.

Door Gaskets

These are usually a rubber gasket that prevents leaks around the door during operation. They should be cleaned, along with bottom of the door as needed and replaced if cracked or damaged.

Dishwasher Control Panel

This panel offers a selection of cleaning modes and wash time from quick rinse to full sanitary cleaning. Quick rinse may take a little as thirty minutes with the sanitation setting taking several hours with multiple cycles. Various drying cycles may also be offered. The control panel is usually located either at the top front of the dishwasher door or may become visible when the door is opened on the top of the door. There is generally a status light on the front of the machine to indicate when the wash/dry cycle is complete.

How to Load the Machine

Make sure detergent and rinse aid are loaded.

Rinse large bits of food from dishes

Upper Rack

The upper rack is usually for glassware, small plates, bowls, or larger flat items such as mid-size casserole dishes etc.

Glasses should be placed between rack tines, not over them to prevent damage and marks left behind by the tines.

Some upper racks will have stemware racks designed to keep delicate stemware from banging together and becoming damaged or broken. As mentioned, the upper rack height may be adjustable to allow for taller stemware.

If stemware racks are not provided wine glass should be placed at the back of the dishwasher and held in place by a normal glass or mug to prevent tipping.

Small bowls/plates should be placed between the tines and nested so they are facing to the middle of the rack, arranged front to back, not facing away from the direction of the water spray. Larger bowls placed in the top rack should be sloped to permit better water flow around the top racks.

Plastic items should be placed in the top rack only. The heat of the lower rack is too much for many items.

Lower Rack

The lower rack is for larger plates and bowls. Plates should be loaded to face the center of the dishwasher and small plates can be staggered with larger plates for better water flow.

Larger serving dishes, sheet pans, etc. should be placed along the outside and back of the lower rack. Pots and pans should go in the lower rack and also be angled or sloped to better clean and not to block spray of bottom spray arm.

Silverware Basket

Load silverware in basket sorted by type, forks, spoons, table knives, etc, and place in individual spaces in the basket's top racks. Not all trays will have individual spaces, so spoons-knives should be placed back-to-back to prevent nesting.

Table and other knives should be placed point down to protect the user. Other large utensils can also go in the basket taking care to ensure they don't interfere with operation of the mid-rack spray arm. If so lay them flat in the upper tray.

Other Tips

Things not to put in the dishwasher:

Kitchen/Chef knives

Wooden utensils to me, this is optional.

Filigreed dishware-gold trimmed for example

Insulated mugs

Delicate crystal

When dishwasher is emptied, load soap dispenser and close the door. This indicates the dishes are dirty and other can be added.

New detergents do not require hot water to clean the dishes and rely on enzymes rather than phosphates so no need to run hot water at sink prior to washing.

Do run the garbage disposal briefly to prevent back wash of food particles in to the dishwasher.

Empty the lower rack first to avoid water stains/food residue from ponded water in the top rack falling onto clean lower rack dishes.