How to clean and store your pleasure toys for lasting use

Why proper care matters

Keeping your pleasure toys clean is one of the simplest ways to protect your health and extend the life of the products you own. Body-safe materials can hold onto bacteria, oils, and residue from lubricants if they are not washed after each use. Over time, that buildup can lead to irritation or infection, especially when toys are shared between partners. A consistent cleaning routine removes the guesswork and keeps everything ready for the next time you reach for it.

Storage is just as important as cleaning. Tossing toys into a drawer with other items can expose them to dust, lint, and accidental contact with materials that may degrade their surface. Silicone toys, for example, can react with other silicones if stored touching them, and porous materials can absorb smells or stains from nearby objects. A little attention to how you put things away saves you from having to replace them sooner than expected.

What you need to get started

Before you begin, gather a few basics. You do not need anything fancy. Mild soap and warm water work for most toys. A dedicated toy cleaner is a convenient option when you are not near a sink or want something formulated for sensitive skin. You will also need a clean, lint-free cloth or towel for drying and a storage pouch or container that lets the toy breathe.

Check the product instructions that came with each toy. Manufacturers sometimes specify a particular type of cleaner or warn against certain ingredients. Silicone toys, for instance, should not be cleaned with silicone-based products because the toy can absorb the silicone and swell or break down. If you have lost the original packaging, look up the brand online or contact the retailer for guidance.



Step one: prepare the toy

Remove any batteries if the toy is battery-powered. Even water-resistant toys can have moisture seep into the battery compartment over time, causing corrosion or damage. If the toy is rechargeable and has a charging port, check whether the port has a waterproof seal. Some models are fully submersible, while others are only splash-proof. When in doubt, stick to wiping the surface with a damp cloth instead of running it under the tap.

Take apart any removable pieces. Toys with separate sleeves, attachments, or caps should be disassembled so you can reach every groove and seam. Bacteria love hiding in the tiny spaces where two parts meet, so do not skip this step.

Step two: wash with the right cleaner

Use warm water and a mild soap that is free of perfumes, dyes, and harsh chemicals. Antibacterial soaps are fine, but plain liquid hand soap or a gentle castile soap works just as well and is less likely to irritate skin. Lather the toy thoroughly, paying attention to textured areas, ridges, and any indentations. Rinse until all soap is gone. Soap residue can cause discomfort during future use, so be generous with the rinse water.

If you are using a toy cleaner, follow the directions on the bottle. Most are sprays that you apply directly to the toy and then wipe off with a clean cloth. Some require a short dwell time to disinfect, so read the label. A toy cleaner can be handy for travel or for a quick refresh between partners, but it is not a substitute for a full wash if the toy has visible debris or lubricant residue.

Step three: disinfect when needed

For nonporous materials such as silicone, glass, stainless steel, or hard plastic, you can go a step further and boil the toy or wipe it with a diluted bleach solution. Boiling works best for solid silicone toys that have no electronics or moving parts. Place the toy in boiling water for about three to five minutes, then let it cool completely before handling. Do not boil toys with motors, batteries, or seams that could trap water.

A bleach solution is another option for nonporous toys. Mix one part bleach with nine parts water, soak the toy for about ten minutes, then rinse it thoroughly with clean water and let it air dry. Be careful with colored silicone: bleach can sometimes cause fading. Porous materials like TPE, jelly rubber, or cyberskin should never be boiled or soaked in bleach. They absorb liquids and can be damaged by high heat or strong chemicals. For those toys, a thorough wash with mild soap and water is the safest approach, and you should replace them more often because they cannot be fully disinfected.



Step four: dry completely

Moisture is the enemy of both the toy and its storage. After washing, pat the toy dry with a clean, lint-free towel or let it air dry on a fresh towel. Make sure every crevice is dry, especially around any seams or ridges. If the toy has a sleeve or hollow interior, turn it inside out if possible, or prop it open so air can circulate. Drying can take an hour or more for complex shapes, so do not rush it.

Storing a toy while it is still damp encourages mold and bacteria to grow. Even a tiny bit of moisture trapped inside a storage pouch can create a musty smell that is hard to remove. Let the toy sit out until it feels completely dry to the touch before you put it away.

Step five: store with care

Choose a storage pouch or container that protects the toy from dust and light while allowing some airflow. Cotton or satin pouches work well for individual toys. If you keep multiple toys in the same drawer, wrap each one separately or use dividers so they do not touch each other. Silicone toys stored against other silicone toys can stick together or develop a reaction that damages the surface. Placing a piece of lint-free cloth between them prevents that.

Keep toys away from direct sunlight and extreme temperatures. A cool, dark cupboard or a dedicated drawer is ideal. If you have toys made from different materials, store them in separate compartments. Porous toys can leach oils onto nonporous ones, and some plastics can cause staining. A little organisation upfront saves you from discovering a sticky mess later.

For rechargeable toys, check the battery level before storing them for a long period. Some manufacturers recommend storing them at a partial charge rather than full or empty. If the toy has a removable battery, take it out and store the battery separately. This prevents leakage and keeps the contacts clean.

What to watch out for over time

Even with good care, toys wear out. Check regularly for changes in texture, color, or smell. Silicone that becomes sticky or tacky has started to degrade. Porous toys that develop a permanent odor or visible spots should be thrown away. Cracks, tears, or rough edges can trap bacteria and cause irritation, so replace any toy that shows signs of damage.



If you share toys with a partner, consider using a fresh condom on the toy for each person, or wash and disinfect it thoroughly between uses. This is especially important for porous toys that cannot be fully disinfected. A dedicated toy cleaner used as a quick spray between partners is better than nothing, but a full wash is safest.

Cleaning and storing your toys does not have to be a chore. Once you build the habit, it takes only a minute or two after each use. The payoff is peace of mind, better hygiene, and toys that stay in good condition for years. A little routine keeps your collection safe and ready whenever you want it.