

Vacuum Maintenance

Steps

1. Unplug your vacuum cleaner before performing any maintenance on it. A vacuum cleaner that turns on unexpectedly while you are working on it can injure you.
2. Check the bag regularly and replace it when it is full. A vacuum cleaner bag that is only 1/3 full may be too full to clean efficiently. Look for a line on the bag and feel with your hand to determine about how full it is. Empty the bin or tray on bag-less models frequently. Most designs make it very easy to pop the bin out.
3. Clean the brush roll. Also called a beater bar, this is the spinning brush underneath that brushes dirt out of the carpets. Look under the machine and locate the brush roll. Generally, it will be across the front of the bottom. Remove the bottom plate. This cover may have clips or latches, or it may have a couple of screws holding it in place. Don't lose the screws. Notice the direction that the brush roll goes in. Usually, there will be a belt on one side and a corresponding track or space on the brush roll for the belt. This will help you to identify the direction. Remove the brush roll. Use scissors or just your fingers to clean the brushes. Pay special attention to the ends near the bearings and to the area around where the belt engages
4. Clean and lubricate the bearings on the brush roll. Spin the brush roll on its axle with your fingers, to verify that it spins freely. If it doesn't, you may need to clean out the bearings more thoroughly, lubricate the bearings, replace the bearings, or replace the entire brush roll (in ascending order of expense). Unscrew the cap on either end of the brush roll. You will need to hold the cap on the opposite end. Remove any debris around and in the bearings. Before you take the bearings out, notice which way they went so you can put them back in correctly. Remove the cap on the other end. Both caps are usually on one long axle, so you may need to hold the end of the axle still to remove the second cap. Clean and lubricate the bearing on the other end. Replace both bearings in the direction that they were before and replace both end caps.
5. Check the belt for signs of wear, and replace it if it is worn. Remove any cover plates on the bottom, as you would to clean the brush roll. Check that the belt is in the right place. If it has slid off the drive shaft on its own or shifted out of position, it is probably because it is worn and loose. Replace the belt every 6 months to 1 year, depending on how much use your vacuum cleaner sees. Remove the brush roll as above. Slide the belt off of the pulley or drive shaft. Slide the new belt on over the pulley or drive shaft.
6. Replace the brush roll. Put the brush roll back through the belt. It may be very tight. Replace the brush roll in its slots. Make sure that the belt is still over both the brush roll and the drive shaft. Replace the cover plates, reversing the process you used to remove them.

7. Replace or clean any filters on the vacuum cleaner. Many newer model vacuums have filters on the exhaust air to catch particles that remain in it. Read your manual to find out if yours has these, and clean or replace them periodically if it does. If the filter is made out of foam or plastic, you may be able to rinse it clean. Make sure it is thoroughly dry before replacing it in the vacuum cleaner. If the filter is made out of paper or fabric, you may be able to shake or pound out the debris between replacements.

8. Check the hoses for clogs and obstructions. It doesn't happen very often, but if you have lost suction, try pushing a broomstick gently through the hoses to dislodge any larger clumps of debris that are stuck. A hook made from bent coat hanger wire can also be used to pull out or loosen clogs. Be careful not to pack clogs in even more tightly. Handle a coat hanger wire carefully, or it could puncture the hose.