





# Housekeeping in Japan



You can find most cleaning products and house-related goods at home stores like:

Nafco  & Komeri 

## 1. **Tatami:** Tatami is great to have, but it also requires special care.

### Caring for Tatami:

Don't wear shoes on tatami! You will damage it and get it dirty.	Wipe and vacuum your tatami on a regular basis.
Keep tatami dry to avoid mold/mildew.	Wipe & vacuum following weave of the tatami.

Tatami Mites (ダニ / *dani*) infest tatami and bite humans. *Dani* bites will be small, red, itchy, and come in pairs. **How to get rid of tatami mites:** use an anti-dani bug spray (ダニアース / *dani aasu*): **1)** Make sure room is well ventilated. / **2)** Insert the needle into the tatami. / **3)** Spray contents of can into the tatami for about 15-20 secs. / **4)** Spray each of the tatami mats. Leave your apartment for a few hours after spraying. / **5)** A few hours later go back and vacuum tatami. This should suck up the dead tatami mites.



You can spray your clothes/bedding/etc. with anti-dani spray. Make sure it's not the same spray you use on tatami! The bottle should have a picture of a teddy bear, couch, and clothing on it.



## 2. **Bedding:** The humidity in this country can destroy perfectly good bedding.

### Caring for bedding:

If you sleep on tatami, fold-up your bedding every day. This will prevent moisture from forming between the bedding and the tatami.	On sunny days, air out your bedding. Hang it up outside.
Each time you fold up your futon and bedding, move it to a slightly different location for the day. This will allow the area, it was sitting on, to breath..	


## 3. **Washrooms:**

### What to keep in mind:

Japanese plumbing can be fussy. Drains may or may not have a U-trap. This can lead to bad smells and things getting stuck in pipes. <b>So be careful of what goes down your drains!</b>	To identify bathroom products, look on the packaging. Many cleaning products will have a picture, of what they are supposed to clean, on the packaging.
<b>Don't mix cleaning products together &amp; make sure that the room is well ventilated.</b>	

Cleaning - Toilets: Treat your toilet room like you'd treat a toilet room in your home country. Clean it regularly and buy a plunger (because you never know).

Cleaning – Shower Room:

Buy something to go over your shower drains. The catchers will stop hair and other things from going down the drain and plugging it up.	
Bugs enjoy stagnant water. To deter bugs from your shower: 1) cover your drains whenever possible to prevent them from coming up through the drains, 2) get rid of any stagnant water, and 3) clean on a regular basis.	

Cleaning –Mold: Here are some tips when dealing with mold:

Clean your shower on a regular basis! Especially during the rainy season and in the summer.	Air-out your shower room whenever and however you can (fan, windows, etc.).
After having a hot shower or bath, spray down the walls with cold water.	Use mold killing products like: white vinegar or Kabi Kira (カビキラー).



**4. Kitchens:**

Plumbing: ***DON'T LET FOOD SCRAPS GO DOWN YOUR DRAIN!*** This will lead to: 1) clogged drains, 2) smelliness, 3) mold, and 4) an open dinner invitation for bugs.

Keeping drains clean: Like your shower, you can buy “catchers” for your drains. These will prevent food scraps from going down the drain.



If your drains seems plugged (or smells really bad), you can buy drain cleaner.



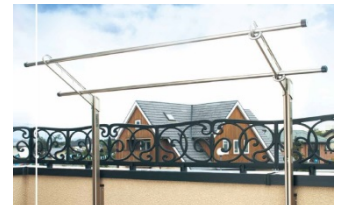
Food scraps: To avoid attracting bugs/the smell of garbage, put food scraps in a plastic bag in fridge/freezer.

## 5. Laundry:

Some Basic Washer Kanji:

<b>On:</b> 入	<b>Off:</b> 切	<b>Start:</b> スタート
<b>Pause:</b> 一時停止 / いちじていし	<b>Standard:</b> 標準	<b>Heavy (Blankets/Linen):</b> 毛布 / もうふ
<b>Gentle Wash:</b> 手洗い / 念入り	<b>Wash:</b> 洗濯 / 洗い / あらい	<b>Rinse:</b> すすぎ
<b>Dry:</b> ドライ/乾燥	<b>Water Volume:</b> 水量	<b>Water Level:</b> 水位

- Most homes in Japan don't have dryers. People air-dry their clothes or go to a laundry mat (usually during rainy season).
- Your place will likely have a laundry rack (like the picture to the right), to hang your stuff on.




Laundry Products: there are a lot of laundry products out there. Check out:

<http://japanistas.com/en/archives/20989> for a detailed explanation of laundry products in Japan.

## 6. Summer (なつ / natsu) & Rainy Season (つゆ / tsuyu) Challenges:

these are the two most demanding seasons when it comes to housekeeping. You will need to be on high alert for mold and bugs.

Keeping humidity at bay:

Ventilate your place whenever you can! Open windows, turn on fans, hang stuff out to dry, etc.	Use moisture collecting packets (し っけとり・湿気とり / <i>shikketori</i> ). These come in many different forms (tubs, hangers, etc.),	
--	--	---

Keeping mold at bay (more tips):

An environmentally friendly way to get rid of mold is to use white vinegar.	Put moisture packets in your closet and draws!
If you have clothes, blankets, etc. that you aren't using – <b>put them in vacuum sealed bags.</b>	

**7. Winter (ふゆ/ *fuyu*) Challenges:** The hardest part of winter, is figuring out ways to stay warm. Here are some tips: put bubble wrap on your winters & use one (or more) of the following to stay warm: electric heater, kerosene heater, aircon, electric blanket/carpet, or a kotatsu.

**8. Pests:** For a complete guide to pests in Japan (including a visual guide to pest eliminating products), check out Jonathon's (awesome) guide at:  
[http://kumamotojet.com/documents/Bugs\\_and\\_Pests\\_More\\_Info.pdf](http://kumamotojet.com/documents/Bugs_and_Pests_More_Info.pdf)

**9. Aircon (air conditioner):**

Some Basic Aircon Kanji:

<b>On:</b> 運転	<b>Off:</b> 停止	<b>Heating Mode:</b> 暖房
<b>Cooling Mode:</b> 冷房	<b>Dehumidify Mode:</b> 冷房	<b>Automatic Mode:</b> 自動
<b>Wind Direction:</b> 風向	<b>Wind Speed:</b> 風量	<b>Temperature:</b> 温度

For a more complete guide to Housekeeping in Japan,  
check out the KumamotoJET website under: "Kumamoto Orientation".