

Find It Fast: Filing Food Appliance and Other Kitchen Gear Instruction Manuals

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- How should I clean this kitchen item?
- Is the warranty still good? Where IS the warranty?
- How EXACTLY do I use this appliance?

A product manual for kitchen items can be a cook's best friend. Finding it for questions like those above can be a problem.

Here's a quick way to set up a filing system that can be easily stored and accessed as needed.

First, find as many of your kitchen appliance and other manuals as possible and count the number. You can do other sections of the house later. If you're missing the manual for an item, try checking the company's website. Some companies make free copies of their manuals available online.

Getting — and staying — organized is then as easy as A, B, C:

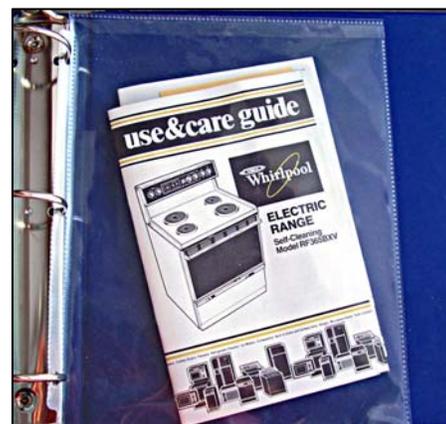
A. Go to an office supplies store or section of a store and purchase:

1. 1 or more 3- to 4-inch ring binders, depending on how deep the pile of manuals and related materials to file.
2. 1 or more packs — depending on the number of manuals to file — of clear, heavyweight, top-loading sheet protectors. One commonly available type is an extra heavyweight sheet protector with a fold-over top flap that helps secure items inside. It's helpful to always have a few extra sheet protectors on hand so new manuals can be filed as soon as items are purchased.

B. Place a separate manual, warranty and any other related materials in each sheet protector.

1. Staple the receipt to the warranty or to the manual, if there is no separate warranty paper.
2. Write the serial and model numbers on the front of the manual.
3. Decide how to organize your manuals in the notebook.
 - a. If you refer to the manuals infrequently, just placing them in a notebook with the most recently added item on top may be sufficient. The time it takes to search through them may be less than the overall time spent organizing them.
 - b. Alphabetizing them by name, such as blender, coffee maker, etc. is another possibility. Once you've alphabetized them, you may wish to buy some tab dividers and place ranges of letters — depending on how many manuals of each letter — behind each tab. Then, label each tab accordingly, such as A-D, etc. or whatever works best for your situation.
 - c. A combination of the previous two choices would be to file within the range of letters, but not worry about the exact order within that range. Searching through a smaller portion of your notebook is quicker than looking through the whole thing.

C. Review the notebook once a year and toss old manuals. Or, periodically skim through the notebook when you use it. When you replace an older kitchen item with a new item, replace the manual in your notebook at the same time. If you donate an item or give it away to someone else, include the manual with it.



Know how. Know now.



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