

Home Odor Source Finder

Match the smell to the most likely source before adding fragrance or cleaning the same surface again.

1. Identify the smell pattern

Smell	Common sources	First check
Musty or damp	Wet textiles, high humidity, leaks, closets, carpet edges	Humidity, exterior walls, towels, under sinks
Sour	Laundry, mop head, damp cloths, washer residue	Washer gasket, hamper, towels, cleaning tools
Sewage-like	Dry drain trap, drain film, plumbing or vent issue	One drain or several? Run water and ventilate
Rotten egg	Drain issue, water heater, gas or electrical concern	Stop and identify whether it is plumbing or gas
Fishy or burning	Overheating electrical part, outlet or appliance	Turn off power if safe and call a professional
Urine-like	Toilet base, grout, bath mat, pet area, hidden splash	Check seams and porous surfaces at floor level
Sweet or chemical	Cleaner residue, paint, new materials, refrigerant	Ventilate and stop adding products

Safety stop

Leave the area and get qualified help for a gas smell, burning plastic, strong chemical fumes, sewage backup, dizziness, nausea, breathing symptoms, or a smell that becomes stronger near electrical equipment.

2. Describe what changes the smell

Strongest room or zone

Time it appears

What makes it stronger

What was cleaned or changed recently

Room-by-Room Odor Check

Work from the strongest-smelling room outward. Check one source at a time so you know what actually solved it.

Kitchen

- ☐ Trash lid, rim, bottom seam and floor
- ☐ Dishwasher filter and gasket
- ☐ Grease on hood filter and cabinets
- ☐ Sink drain and overflow opening
- ☐ Fridge drawers, seals and drip area
- ☐ Damp cloths, sponges and mop head

Bathroom

- ☐ Toilet base, hinges and nearby grout
- ☐ Bath mat, towels and shower curtain
- ☐ Fan cover and weak airflow
- ☐ Shower and sink drains
- ☐ Under-sink cabinet and pipe joints
- ☐ Corners, caulk and slow-drying surfaces

Bedroom and living spaces

- ☐ Bedding, pillows and mattress surface
- ☐ Carpet edges and under furniture
- ☐ HVAC filter or dusty vent
- ☐ Closet against an exterior wall
- ☐ Pet beds and upholstery
- ☐ Shoes, bags and hidden spills

Laundry and utility areas

- ☐ Washer gasket, drawer and filter
- ☐ Dryer vent and lint area
- ☐ Hamper and stored damp towels
- ☐ Wet laundry left in the drum
- ☐ Floor drain or standpipe
- ☐ Leak or condensation behind appliances

Source-first rule

Clean one suspected source, dry the area completely, then wait before changing several other things. Recurring odor usually means the source is still active or moisture has not been corrected.

7-Day Odor Test Log

Record one change at a time. Use a 0-5 odor score where 0 means no odor and 5 means very strong.

Daily test

Day	Room / source tested	Action taken	Before 0-5	After 0-5
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

Result

If the score drops and stays low for 24 hours, keep the prevention habit. If it returns, inspect the next matching source. If it is sewage-like, electrical, gas-like, or linked to symptoms, stop the test and call a professional.

Most likely confirmed source

Prevention habit to repeat

Professional follow-up needed