The Dirty Truth About The Nation’s Least Loved Chores

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We may be a house proud nation, with three quarters (75%) of Brits really caring about their house being clean, but new research from the experts in Mintel Household & Personal Care reveals some jobs remain slightly less palatable, with almost three in ten (27%) households admitting their windows hardly ever get cleaned and around a quarter of consumers (23%) hardly ever attempting to clean their oven.

And while a quarter (24%) of Brits spend two and a half hours or more every working week day on household chores, for many this is a fruitless exercise as Mintel finds three in ten Brits (28%) admit their house is frequently a mess. While ovens and windows are a job too many for Britainâ€™s households, strong increases in the value of sales of furniture polishes and carpet cleaners reflect the fact that todayâ€™s consumers are willing to spend more money on products that help to protect and maintain the look of household items that are expensive for them to replace. Today, the total household cleaning market is worth an impressive Â£1 billion.

Richard Caines, Senior Household Care Analyst at Mintel, said:
â€œFor the most part, Brits are enthusiastic cleaners, but some jobs remain too much for even the most devoted cleaner. Cleaning the windows and oven top the least loved tasks, and the windows of more than a quarter of adults hardly ever get cleaned, suggesting the market for window cleaners is not realising its full potential.â€•

The research reveals the murky truth about the state of the nationâ€™s windows, as today, almost three in ten (27%) of Britainâ€™s households admit their windows hardly ever get cleaned. While a quarter (24%) of the nation say they like to always have sparkling and smear free windows or mirrors, almost a third (32%) of Brits regularly employ the services of a window cleaner (amounting to 8.8 million homes) and less than one in five (16%) Brits opt for good old fashioned soap and water.

And it seems that the nationâ€™s older households are particularly keen to have sparkling windows, as less than a fifth (18%) of over-55s say their windows hardly ever get cleaned and more than four in ten (44%) regularly employ the services of a window cleaner. By contrast, those least likely to clean windows are aged 16 to 24, just 22% of this age group regularly cleaning their windows.

Regionally, itâ€™s sparkling news for the Scots who take the greatest pride in their windows, as just one in five (20%) Scots say they hardly ever clean their windows, while things are a little murkier for the one in three (34%) Londoners who admit their windows hardly ever get cleaned. The next culprits for grimey panes are those living in the South East and East Anglia and those in the South West and Wales, with as many as three in ten (29%) confessing to hardly ever polishing the panes.

And when it comes to cleaning ovens, the mood of the nation is what can only be described as lukewarm. Indeed, while a third (33%) of Brits love to have a sparkling clean oven and hob, almost a quarter (23%) admit they hardly ever clean it. Over one in ten (13%) are fortunate enough to have a self-cleaning oven, while one in twenty (5%) have sought help from the professionals.

Regionally, things are looking a bit sticky for those in the South West and Wales, with almost three in ten (28%) admitting they hardly ever clean their oven, compared to Yorkshire and Humberside, where just one in five (20%) neglect this chore and 21% of Scots.

In an effort to keep the nationâ€™s carpets spotless, 40% of all Brits resist from wearing shoes indoors to help keep the carpets clean, while almost three in ten (27%) clean their carpets with carpet shampoo or cleaner at least once a year. One in five (19%) has a vacuum cleaner they use to wash their carpets while 13% have hired specialist carpet cleaning equipment and 12% have paid to have their carpets or upholstery cleaned professionally.

Regionally, shoe wearing in the home is the biggest â€œno, noâ€• in the South West and Wales (45%) South East and East Anglia (44%) and East & West Midlands (41%). Meanwhile, if you are visiting a home in the the North West, youâ€™ll be least likely to slip off your shoes, as just a third (33%) of Brits donâ€™t wear shoes indoors to help keep the carpets clean.

â€œCarpet cleaners have been a star performer in the household cleaning products market, sales of carpet and upholstery cleaners did well between 2010 and 2011 boosted by product innovation seen from some major brands and an effort to look after carpets as opposed to buying new floor coverings.â€• Richard continues.

Finally, some 16% of Brits would consider a specialist cleaner or polish for their gadgets while 14% admit they often have a problem with blocked sinks, plugs, toilets or drains in their home.

Just 8% of those living in Scotland complain about often having a problem with such blockages compared to almost one in five (18%) in Inner and Greater London.

Whizzing sales for furniture polish
Overall the household polishes and specialist cleaning products market was worth Â£171 million in 2011, growing a healthy 16% between 2006 and 2011. Despite the squeeze on household budgets, value sales grew by 3% to Â£171 million between 2010 and 2011. Furniture polish has shown the greatest growth, increasing a spectacular 45% between 2006 and 2011, increasing from Â£22 million in 2006 to reach a sparkling Â£32 million in 2011. As many as one in two Brits (49%) use furniture polish at least once a week. Carpet and upholstery cleaners did well between 2010 and 2011 increasing from Â£21 million to Â£23 million.

While all cleaning products have experienced growth since 2006, floor polishes have suffered, sales having shrunk 33% over the same 5 year period from Â£12 million in 2006 to Â£8 million in 2011. Meanwhile, drain care has experienced a surge in sales over the past 5 years increasing 17% from Â£24 million in 2006 to Â£28 million in 2011.

â€œStrong increases in the value of sales of furniture polishes and carpet cleaners suggest that consumers are willing to spend more money on products that help to protect and maintain the look of household items that are expensive for them to replace. In contrast to the strong performance seen in furniture polishes, sales of floor polish have declined and those people with real wood floors that need polishing represent a small minority of households.â€• Richard concludes.

Source: Mintel Oxygen Reports

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