How to Remove Pungent Kitchen Smells

We all enjoy good aromas in our kitchen. But let’s face it, there are just some smells which we can’t avoid and have to work hard to get rid of. Did you cut up some fish and now your cutting board has that fishy smell seemingly permanently permeated on it? Did you cut up onions and now have that onion smell tearing you up on your hands? We’ve all been there.

But, you’re not stuck. Here is how to tackle some common kitchen odors.

1. Fish smells - Use lemon. Rub a lemon over your cutting surfaces and your hands to cut that fishy odor. Or if you don’t have a whole lemon, mix lemon juice and water and rinse your hands and cutting surface. The citric acid will turn the amines which cause that “fishy” smell into ammonium salts which are less offensive to your nose.

2. Garlic smells - Try used coffee grounds. Wash your hands and then scrub with the coffee grounds. This exfoliates the skin, removing the dead tissues which is where the stink resides. If you’re not a fan of coffee, this might not be the trick for you, though. You will just be switching one smell you don’t like for another smell you don’t like.

3. General odors - Baking soda is a great tool for removing odors all over the kitchen. Do you have one in the back of your fridge? Try putting some on your hands to remove any food odors you’d like to vanish. Or create a paste with a little water and baking soda and apply to your cutting board or other cooking services to remove the smell. You can even wash your garbage with a mixture of water and baking soda.

4. Onion smells - Use toothpaste. This will work for any of those strong fish and garlic smells too. Wash your hands with toothpaste and it cuts those harsh smells.

5. Wash your hands in cold water. This opens the pores and allows the oils to seep out of your hands, removing the smell.

6. Have you ever used parsley to combat your garlic breath? Rub it on your hands to remove that garlic smell, too. Not just parsley either - other fresh herbs will also absorb those odors.

7. Table salt rubbed on your hands can remove smells. Watch for cuts, though, because it’s going to hurt if you get salt in a cut. Rub your hands with salt twice and then wash with water to remove smells from your hands.

8. Put olive oil on your hands before cutting garlic or onions. Don’t use too much, though, or you’ll make it difficult and unsafe to use a knife. Having the olive oil on your hands can prevent the stink from sticking to them.

9. Bleach it. When in doubt you can always clean something with bleach - assuming you don’t have an aversion to bleach. Make sure you rinse your cutting surfaces well. This is great for the garbage disposal.

10. Put vinegar down the garbage disposal. Pouring vinegar down the garbage disposal will cut out bad smells coming from there. Pour half a cup of distilled white vinegar down the drain and chase it with cold water.

What are your tips for cutting the smells in the kitchen and from your hands?