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7 Tips for Burning the Perfect Candle

By Chere Deshayes

7 Tips for Burning the Perfect Candle

by: **Chere Deshayes**

Tapers, columns, votives, containers, pillars and novelty – chances are you have at least one of these types of candles in your home. Surveys done by candle manufacturers suggest that 7 out of 10 U.S households use candles, 96% of which are purchased by women. The basics for candles are easy, just light them! However, if you want to get the most out of your candles and not watch your money go up in smoke (literally), here are seven tips to follow.

1. KEEP THE WICK TRIMMED

One of the best things that you can do for your candles is to keep the wick trimmed to ¼ of an inch. Wicks that are allowed to get larger than ¼ of an inch tend to burn faster and smoke. If you are noticing black soot accumulating on your container candles, the wick is too long. Nail clippers are a great tool for trimming wicks that can't be reached with scissors.

2. AVOID DRAFTS

Burning candles in drafty areas can cause uneven burning and excessive smoking. Not to mention that your candle will burn faster. If you notice the flame of the candle flickering in any direction other than straight up, there is a draft. Prevent drafts by keeping burning candles away from heating and air-conditioning vents and open windows.

3. REFRIGERATE THEM

Candles that are cold will burn slower. To cool you candle, first wrap in foil or cling wrap to prevent the wick from absorbing any moisture. Pop them in the fridge for about an hour and light! Make sure you don't put them in the freezer instead. They will break!

4. BURN THEM LONG ENOUGH

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Have you ever seen a three-wick candle that looked like Mickey Mouse? For pillar candles, make sure you burn them for at least one hour for every inch in diameter. Skip this step and you'll end up burning a tunnel through your candle.

5. EXTINGUISHING THE FLAME

To blow out a candle, a candle snuffer works best. If you don't have a candle snuffer readily available, you can blow out the candle by placing an index finger in front of the flame and blowing gently. This causes the air to surround the flame and minimizes splattering of hot wax from the wax pool.

6. SAFETY FIRST

Keep all lit candles out of the reach of children and pets. Never leave a burning candle unattended.

And always burn candles in a well-ventilated room.

7. CLEANUP

If wax has spilled on the carpet the best way to remove it is with paper and an iron. Place a paper towel or brown grocery bag over the spill. Place a heated iron over the paper towel. The heat from the iron will cause the wax to melt and be absorbed into the paper towel.

Chere Deshayes is the president of Bath Plantation, a company that specializes in fine handcrafted bath and body products. Subscribe to her FREE newsletter at

or visit her site at

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Getting The Most From Your Candles

By Sharon Jacobsen

I love burning candles and have them all around the house. Long ones, short ones, fat ones, thin ones, in a plethora of colours. I burn them in the evening when I'm relaxing; I burn them at mealtimes; and I burn them in the bathroom when I'm pampering myself. Any excuse to light a candle really.

But candles don't always fit the holder, and sometimes they burn down too far and the wax gets stuck! It's at times like this that candles aren't quite as much fun!

Here are some candle burning tips I've picked up through the years:

1. Cold candles will burn more slowly. Wrap them in foil or cling-film to prevent the wicks from absorbing moisture then pop them in the fridge for an hour.

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2. When burning pillar candles, let them burn long enough each time to create a pool of wax that almost covers the diameter of the candle. This will ensure that the candle burns evenly each time you light it. If it doesn't create a large enough pool you'll end up with a tunnel through the candle and eventually it will either melt through one side or you'll simply not be able to get down far enough to light it. And even if you did, it would give off very little light.

3. Never stand a lit candle in a wind draught as they'll create a larger, more irregular flame and your candle will burn unevenly.

4. Never expose candles to sunlight or indoor spotlights. They will fade the colour and if left for too long, the candles will bend.

5. If your candle is too narrow to fit snugly into the holder, wrap cooking foil or tissue paper around the bottom of the candle to make the base thicker. Don't worry, the tissue paper won't burn even if you do allow the candle to burn right down into the holder as the melted wax will soak the paper. Having said that, it's never a good idea to allow candles to burn right down; they should be extinguished when they're about 2 inches over the holder.

6. If you've allowed the candle to burn right down and the wax is stuck in the holder, put the holder into the freezer for a couple of hours and the wax should be considerably easier to dig out.

7. If you like votive candles, try buying the type that have metal cases as these are easier to remove from holders after use. If you only have the uncovered type, pour some water into the holder before lighting the candle. Once extinguished and the wax hardened, it should be easier to pop it out of the container.

8. Spilled wax should always be allowed to solidify before being removed. Once hard, cover the area with brown paper and gently press with a warm iron. The wax will be absorbed into the paper.

9. Extinguish candles by pushing the wick into the liquid wax (don't use your fingers - a used matchstick is a good tool for this). Leave it for about a minute then re-center the wick. Using this technique both eliminates smoking from the extinguished wick and covers the wick with a layer of wax making re-lighting easier.

Sharon grew up in East London but moved to Norway at the age of 19, returning to England in 1998. She now lives in Cheshire with her partner and two of her three children. Besides writing, she is currently studying Social Science with The Open University, runs a web site where women in the UK can meet other women for platonic friendship (

), potters in her garden, knits

and reads everything she comes over.

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