

# hokkaido *Life*

## HOUSEKEEPING

*The links in these documents information to make your life in Hokkaido easier and more enjoyable. Access each link and add it to your favourites list.*

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Most things in your new home are pretty much the same as what you are used to, with a few exceptions.

### **Tatami**

Clean along the grain when vacuuming as it is less likely to be damaged. For spills, wipe with soft cloth before it soaks in. If the stain remains, brush along the grain with an old toothbrush. Old stains can be removed using a cloth soaked in milk. The biggest task of maintaining healthy tatami is preventing moisture build-up from humidity. Once a year or so, air both sides in the sunlight outside. It refreshes your tatami, and helps prevent mould.

If you cannot air your tatami outside, lift up your tatami and use a dehumidifier to dry both sides. Tatami blocks are like puzzle pieces; they are about 10cm thick and can be lifted up relatively easily.

### **Futons**

Pack your futon away and store it in the cupboard when not in use (i.e. every morning!). If left out, it will become mouldy very quickly. Air it out occasionally, by hanging it over your washing line or veranda on a sunny day. Bash it with a stick to make it fluffy again. Ensure you use a cover for the futon and the comforter and wash these regularly.

### **Clothes Drying**

It is very rare to have a clothes dryer in your home, though if required, Laundromats do have them. In winter and when rainy you'll need to dry your washing inside. If

you don't already have one, rig up some sort of indoor clothes line. Be careful not to hang any items too close or above heaters, and be careful of the humidity created (see below). Some people hang them in their bathroom with the air-extractor fan on.

## Mould

Can be a big problem in some homes. Prevention is so much easier than the cure. Ensure the small air ducts are open in each room, use the air extractors in the bathroom/toilet, use a window scraper 'moisture collector' for the condensation (500 円 at Homac), air rooms as much as possible, put moisture beads in each room (400 円 for pack of 3), or use a dehumidifier.

Once mould starts growing, remove with mould killer (kabi kira / 黴キラー). If it isn't too bad, the old wives' tale is to use lemon juice or vinegar to help remove mould from walls, clothes etc. Just put some in a spray bottle and spray directly on the mould and blot carefully with a damp cloth.

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## GENERAL CLEANERS

Most products have pictures to help you identify what type of cleaner it is. Most will fall into one of three categories, laundry, kitchen, and bathroom.

- Laundry detergent      *sentakuyousenzai*      洗濯用洗剤
- Kitchen cleaners      *daidokoroyousenzai*      台所用洗剤
- Bathroom cleaners      *furoyousenzai*      風呂用洗剤

*Be sure to wear gloves with anything that has danger or caution on them.*

- Danger      *abunai*      危ない
- Caution      *kiken*      危険

If the vast selection of cleaning products is too overwhelming – go to the 100円 shop and buy a spray pack containing baking soda ( *juusoo* / 重曹 ) – *it's cheap, environmentally friendly and cleans everything.*

As always, the official [hajat|forum](#) is where you will find all the answers to any questions you may have regarding life in Hokkaido.

*HAJET kindly asks you to use paper wisely and only print this document if you really, really must. LOVE HOKKAIDO, LOVE THE ENVIRONMENT!*

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## USEFUL RESOURCES

HAJET | Forum  
Go Japan  
JNTO  
Japan Visitor

[www.hokkaidojets.org](http://www.hokkaidojets.org)  
[www.gojapan.about.com](http://www.gojapan.about.com)  
[www.jnto.go.jp](http://www.jnto.go.jp)  
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