



Safe Environments

Healthy Workers

HOW TO KEEP A CLEAN HOUSE ALL WEEK LONG AND NOT GO CRAZY

If you are responsible for cleaning your home, chances are you're also the one with the burden of groceries, cooking, and working a job. The more people that are under your wing, the more exhausting balancing all the responsibilities can get. There are two types of extremes when it comes to housekeeping. One is to live in a constant state of mess, and the other is to be anxious over every untidy spot. Living in a mess is harmful for your physical and mental health, so cleaning is a must. But expecting that you will keep your dwelling spotless every day of the week is unrealistic. You have to accept that unless you stay at home all day and have no children, you cannot have an out of the magazine clean house at all times. There will be a messy room or spot every now and then. Consider the level of cleanliness that is both achievable with the time you have on hand, and acceptable for your comfort, and go from there. It is possible to have a generally clean house all week long however by having a systematic approach to cleaning.

WHY CLEANING IS A MUST FOR YOUR HEALTH:



- A kitchen with piled dishes over a long time will collect disease causing bacteria and attract rodents
- A dirty bathroom will build up mold which is associated with depression, as well as grow other dangerous bacteria
- Clutter will increase dust and aggravate respiratory diseases and allergies
- Clutter can also be a safety and a tripping hazard
- A messy house may cause stress, while cleaning reduces it

KEEPING YOUR HOUSE CLEAN ALL WEEK LONG

PART ONE: GENERAL CLEANING

Instead of dedicating one whole day to cleaning everything there is, consider doing small cleanings daily, and implementing a systematic approach based on your schedule and priorities. The goal is to save time by implementing daily tasks that keep your place clean all week long, and eliminate the need for hours of cleaning at the end of the week. This particular system goes task by task instead of room by room and includes the general cleaning steps that you can personalize and add on to in order to fit your schedule.

DAILY PRACTICES

- Wipe surfaces clean every day. Bathroom and kitchen countertops get wet and messy on the daily. Start or end your day by giving them a quick wipe, as well as sanitizing the toilet seat. This step should take no more than 5 to 10 minutes, depending on the size of your home.
- Keep countertops clear of items. Having minimal amount of appliances and items out helps to keep the cleaning time down. Place each item back in its place after use to eliminate the step of tidying up every room at the end of the week.
- Don't pile up the dishes. If you have a dishwasher unload it every morning to avoid back up. If you don't, wash the dishes every time you use the kitchen. It is mentally easier to do three smaller cleans in the day, then be intimidated by a giant load at the end of it.
- If you have a few extra minutes on hand, give your kitchen floor a sweep every other day
- Save up for a robot vacuum so you never need to worry about the debris on the floors. This will keep your weekly task of cleaning the floors to a minimum.

WEEKLY PRACTICES

- When starting you weekly clean, begin by loading the laundry machine, soaking your bathtub in the cleaning solution, or anything else that requires idle waiting time while you do the other tasks
- Vacuum carpets and floors, and follow by a sweep throughout the house
- Wipe the microwave to clean up the spills and crumbs
- Dust shelves and screens and give the mirrors and windows a wipe
- **Add in some motivation** - when the time comes for the weekly cleaning, make it more interesting by playing music or an audiobook. Start with the least desirable task so when you are finished you feel more accomplished and motivated. Watch/read an organizational video/blog to get you in the mood and give you a few extra tips

MONTHLY PRACTICES

- Dust ceiling fans and any hard to get to spots that you skip over during the weekly dusting including the air vents
- Wipe down walls and doors, focusing on the kitchen (and children's bedroom if you have kids)
- Give your fridge a clean to make sure there are no unknown foods breeding bacteria. This also gives you time to reorganize and throw away things past its expiration date
- Check if your fabric couch and carpet may need special attention or a spot clean

PART TWO: ORGANIZATION OF YOUR HOME

A well-organized house is easy to clean. In order to organize your space in a way that saves time and energy, you must think through how and how often you use each item and the most convenient place for storage.

- Optimizing space is easier with less clutter. Sort through items and see which you actually use and how often, and have a place for everything in the house
- Spend 5 minutes each day tidying up items that are most obviously displaced to the eye
- Spend some time after the weekly cleaning organizing items that are not in their place for a finished look of the home.

SAVE TIME BY USING LIFE HACKS THAT SIMPLIFY THE PROCESS. HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES:

- Use separate [laundry bins](#) for whites and colored clothes instead of one basket
- Substitute your multicolored socks for a set of same-color and same-type socks and eliminate the need to pair them up – each sock will match any other
- Stick washing symbols and their meaning on your detergent or washing machine for quick access when needed
- If you live with others get them in the habit of helping you. If you hate vacuuming but your family member hates doing the dishes, agree that most of the time you will be responsible for the dishes, while they vacuum each week. Get everyone in your household involved in the process, and make it fun by finding ways to turn cleaning into play to get children excited about weekly cleans.

SUMMARY:

1. Adapt daily cleaning routines instead of leaving everything for the end of the week
2. Keep your counters free of clutter and with minimal amount of items
3. Live with a roommate or family member? Create tradeoffs and assign tasks (split in a way that makes sense, even if it's not an equal distribution)
4. Have a spot for every item, and place things back to their spot after each use
5. Simplify your life but implementing small changes (life hacks) in your living space that can save you time

The most important trait of a home, whether you are home alone or are expecting guests, is not that it's squeaky clean, but rather that it's comfortable, and that its host looks inviting – not exhausted. Happy cleaning!

REFERENCES

¹ Shenassa E., Deskalakis C., Liebhaber A., Braubach M., & Brown MJ. (2007). Dampness and Mold in the Home and Depression: An examination of Mold-Related Illness and Perceived Control of One's Home as Possible Depression Pathways. *American Journal of Public Health*. 97(10).

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