

# Cleaning House



***Some hints and tips, money & time savers for cleaning the house and keeping it sparkling fresh***



## **Cleaning House Contents**

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Doing a little often, means it never ends up being a huge task-wise words indeed,  
‘wisdom that worx’

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## 1. Tasks Required

Draw up a sketch of your house plan including verandas and yard. This is a great starting point and can be completed online now using fun apps. In each room, write the tasks you feel should be done each day to maintain the home. Example:

Bedrooms need the beds made, clothes put away either in drawers and cupboards or washing basket if dirty, and a general tidy up.

Then list the tasks you feel should be done on a weekly basis in each of the rooms.

Continue then for monthly and yearly tasks.

From this plan you can then write a list of tasks and when they need to be done.

### Daily

Try to get your dishes cleaned and put away. Wipe and sanitize your benches, stovetop, and sink. Sweep the kitchen floor. Pick up clutter.

(Mop if necessary.) Address any significant spills.

Empty garbage, once a day.

### Weekly

Try to do a little each day of the week to avoid having to do it all in one day. Dust and vacuum, mop your kitchen, bathroom and hard surface floors. Clean the bathroom.

Wipe windowsills, light switches, door handles, glass tabletops, and the fronts of the kitchen appliances and kitchen cupboards.

### Monthly

Break up these tasks over the course of a month. Wash windows. Polish furniture.

Vacuum under and behind furniture. Wipe doors, woodwork, around light switches and where ever marks are. Vacuum curtains and wipe blinds. Flip and vacuum your mattress. Polish metal surfaces.



## **Yearly**

Have your carpets cleaned. Check the maintenance of your hot water heater, air conditioner and heater. Clean and dust behind refrigerator, stove and other appliances. Wash your curtains. Have the air conditioners and remote garage opening system serviced. Have pest control done.

## **Allocating Tasks & Celebrating**

Try to give each member of your household some of the responsibility for cleaning. Consider their age and abilities and match it to appropriate tasks. Nobody is happy doing the same thing over and over again so roster each person to do different jobs each week or month. Rewards and consequences really work. Add a job for jobs not done, it soon get's the message across. Celebrate by enjoying downtime once tasks are complete and highlight why the household members all get to enjoy the time out.

## **2. Cleaning Schedule**

### **Lifestyle**

Write out a timetable of your days. For each day of the week, write down what you normally do during the day. Look at each day and how you allocate your time. Where in your lifestyle would the daily tasks best be fitted in. Do this with/for each household member if necessary.

### **Grouping Tasks**

Now look at the list of tasks you compiled and group similar jobs together. Example: mopping the bathroom floor, mopping the kitchen floor and mopping the laundry floor. By doing these tasks together you only have to get the tools required for these tasks out one day during the week. Remember that gathering the tools and putting them away again takes time.

### **Dividing Tasks**

By keeping a daily cleaning roster for your household chores: -

- You will keep up your cleaning so you won't be overwhelmed with too many tasks.
- Your house will be a healthier environment.
- You will not be so worried about a specific problem like dust on your shelves because you know it will be done at a rostered time.



- Most cleaning is much easier when done regularly, rather than waiting for it to get really dirty.
- Keeping furniture and carpets etc cleaned regularly can delay the need for expensive professional cleaning.

### **3. Motivation**

When doing the same chores over and over again the monotony of it can leave us with an ‘I can’t be bothered attitude.’ If we get behind on our house tasks, they can become so daunting that we struggle to find the motivation to get started. If our house chores are done on a daily basis, it is far easier to find the motivation as the job doesn’t get out of hand and become so big it is overwhelming. My Nan always said, ‘a little bit all the time’ and ‘a stitch in time saves nine.’ This REALLY works! The sense of satisfaction is wonderful and the added bonus is, you can have anyone drop in, or invite on the spur of the moment. It is a fantastic training ground for your children too!

Different things will motivate us all but some suggestions to help keep us motivated are:

- Find a cleaning ‘buddy’ – this may be a friend, family member or neighbour. The idea is to set aside a certain time each week when you visit each other and give encouragement. It may be a time to assist each other with an overwhelming task or simply to chat about how things are going and complement each other on the achievements in maintaining the house.
- Reward yourself – set yourself a time frame in which to maintain your roster. When you achieve this, reward yourself with something meaningful to you.
- Be kind to yourself – when it all seems too much, don’t look at the big picture, break it into small pieces. Set yourself 15 minutes in which you will get up and clean. 15 minutes is not a lot to ask. After the 15 minutes, take a look at what you have been able to achieve, this may then motivate you to do another 15 minutes. It’s amazing what can be accomplished in 15 minutes!
- Music is a great motivator. Put on your favourite ‘get up and go’ music, turn the TV off and leave your phone alone.



## 4. Cleaning Methods and Products

### Prior and Post Cleaning

- Have a specific area set aside for your cleaning supplies. It will be easier and more enjoyable to clean if your supplies are easy to find and ready to go.
- Ensure you recharge the vacuum battery ready for the next clean.
- Keep your tools clean. Finish your job by cleaning your equipment and storing it properly. Wash out mops, sponges, cloths, etc. and hang out to dry. Store your brooms and brushes off their bristles to prevent deformation. Keep your chemical products properly sealed and out of children's reach.
- Replace items as soon as they are worn or empty. Nothing is more frustrating than wanting to start a job but not having the proper supplies available.
- Don't keep old, expired, or useless items to clutter up your supplies.

### Cleaning like a Professional

- Always start at the top (highest point) of the room and work your way down.
- Take all your cleaning tools with you into each room to avoid unnecessary trips back and forth.
- Leave the phone and turn off the TV.
- Eliminate clutter. An uncluttered home looks better than one that is dust-free but strewn with odds and ends.
- Clean as you go. It is far easier to clean and put away items as you use them rather than let them pile-up.
- A house that smells fresh will give the impression of cleanliness.
- Keep a mat at the front door to cut down on tracked in dirt. Even consider bringing in – no shoes in the house rule depending on where you live.
- Keep a basket in the kitchen for mail, newspapers and car keys to help cut down on clutter.
- Keep a dirty clothes basket in the bathroom or laundry.
- Make everyone in charge of making his or her own bed and picking up his or her own things.



- Always straighten up the lounge room/kitchen before you go to bed. It is much nicer to get up to a tidy room first thing in the morning.
- Make a checklist, when a job is completed, check it off and you will feel as though you are really accomplishing something. I love checklists so much! They are so encouraging. I have even been known to add things to the list that I have already completed, just so I can cross them off! In 'notes' on mobile phones you can do it all digitally too.

### **Alternative money saving cleaning products**

Needing to cut some expensive cleaning product costs off your shopping lists...consider these useful but inexpensive cleaning products. They include bleach, vinegar, baking soda, salt, lemons, toothpaste, cheap baby wipes and mustard. Yes, mustard!

- Bleach can be used to clean your toilet, tub, shower and floor.
- Vinegar is a very effective degreaser best used to clean your floors and windows.
- Baking soda can be used to clean your stovetop, refrigerator, kitchen sink and kettle/coffeepot, deodorise your carpets and fridge.
- Salt can be mixed with vinegar to clean copper and brass, mixed with lemon juice to clean soot from fireplaces and mixed with water to prevent mildew on shower curtains.
- Lemon juice can be rubbed onto a washed shower curtain, which after being them left in the sun, will remove mildew.
- Toothpaste (paste not gel) can be used on light coloured fabrics as a stain remover. Toothpaste will also remove small scratches on glass.
- Cheap baby wipes are a fast, effective way to dust furniture, televisions and ornaments.
- Mustard can be used to remove grime and grease built up on non-stick or copper cooking ware. Spread the mustard on the area to be cleaned and then leave for half an hour, wash as usual. Crazy but it works!



## 5. Cleaning Tips

### Bathroom Cleaning

Everything in the bathroom except the mirror can be cleaned with a disinfectant or sanitizer in just a few minutes a day.

Clean your bathroom after a steamy bath or shower. The walls and fixtures will be much easier to clean as the steam will have softened the dirt.

#### Basin

For light stains, rub the basin with a fresh cut lemon.

For dark stains, like rust, rub the basin with a paste of baking soda and lemon juice.

#### Bathtub

To avoid bathtub rings, don't use oily bath products. Rinse the bathtub out immediately after bathing ensuring you wipe around the bath where the water level came up to.

To clean the 'ring' off the bathtub, use a wet sponge generously sprinkled with baking soda. Rinse clean and wipe dry. For a more stubborn 'ring' scour with automatic dishwashing detergent or rub with a cloth dipped in vinegar. Rinse thoroughly.

#### Shower

Rub glass shower doors with a sponge soaked in white vinegar, to remove soap residue.

To clean the shower door track, pour white vinegar into it and leave it to soak for a few minutes, then rinse.

Remove mildew from tiles and make them sparkle by sponging with a solution of ammonia and water.

If your bathroom tiles are dull, wash them with a solution of vinegar and water then polish them with an old towel.

Rust stains on tiles can be removed with baking soda and vinegar.

Before hanging shower curtains soak them in salt water to prevent mildew.

To remove mildew from shower curtain, wash in hot soapy water, rub with lemon juice and hang in the sun to dry.

#### Drains

To freshen the drains in your bathroom, pour 1/2 a box of baking soda down the drain, add 1/2 cup of white vinegar. Cover the drain tightly, a plug will do this, for a fifteen minutes and flush with cold water.

#### Air Freshener

To freshen the air in the bathroom, place a fabric softener sheet in the waste bin or dab fragrance on the light bulb so the heat releases the aroma whenever the light is



on. Essential Oils are great too.

### **The Toilet**

Clean the toilet bowl while you're away by pouring in 1/4 cup of bleach and leaving it until you return.

Keep the toilet bowl ring-free by pouring a litre of white vinegar in it once a month.

Dish detergent is great for getting rid of your toilet 'ring'. Squeeze a small amount of dish detergent into the toilet and let it sit for 5 to 10 minutes. Rub with the toilet brush then flush.

Pour a full can of coke around the inside of the toilet bowl, leave overnight and flush to make bowl sparkle. Coke is great!!

To avoid clogging and odours, pour one cup baking soda down the bowl weekly.

***\*Safety Tip\* Never mix cleaning products such as ammonia and bleach. They can be toxic.***

### **Kitchen Cleaning**

#### **Bench tops and cupboards doors**

First remove everything from the bench then use a mild dishwashing liquid, sponge it on undiluted to the bench and splashback. Allow to set on the surface for a few minutes to soften hard droplets then wipe with a dish sponge. Rinse well afterwards to prevent residue from getting on food. Sanitize regularly.

Use a mild dishwashing liquid to wipe over the cupboard doors on a weekly basis to avoid food splashes becoming baked on.

If your bench top has lost its shine, try furniture polish to give a temporary shine. For stone, laminate bench tops, Windex and paper towel is brilliant!

#### **Tile Floors**

Mop with a white vinegar water with floor cleaner added.

To remove black heel marks on floors, rub with a pencil rubber.

#### **Sink**

To remove water spots on stainless steel sinks, rub the area with a clean, soft cloth dampened with white vinegar. Then wipe dry to avoid spots.

To bring back the shine to stainless steel sinks, rub with a steel soap pad, rinse and then polish with a soft dry cloth.

To freshen the drain, pour 1/2 a box of baking soda down the drain, add 1/2 cup of white vinegar. Cover the drain tightly, a plug will do this, for a fifteen minutes and flush with cold water.



### **Dishwasher**

Expensive rinse aids can be replaced with white vinegar

### **Fridge**

A little vanilla poured on a piece of cotton and placed in the refrigerator will eliminate odours.

After cleaning the fridge with a mild dishwashing detergent, add a dash of lemon extract to the rinse water for a fresh scent.

***\*Disinfectant\* Always disinfect remotes, doorknobs, handles, light switches and phones. They collect germs from everyone who touches them.***

### **Carpet Cleaning**

If spot is wet, blot it don't rub it. Rubbing spreads the dirt

If spot is dry, loosen soil and vacuum away prior to moistening it.

Always rinse cleaned area thoroughly. If not removed, cleaning products may cause the cleaned area to attract soil.

When taking out stains, always use a white cloth.

Clean spots and stains immediately. You will have a much better chance of removing them.

For wax dropped on carpet, place a clean absorbent cloth over stain and hold a hot iron on it. Lift cloth away and wax should come away with the cloth.

### **Carpet Stains**

Coat less stubborn greasy stains with aerosol shaving cream or carbonated water.

Use a hair dryer to speed dry. Then vacuum.

Sprinkle a greasy stain with baking soda, cornstarch, cornmeal, or talcum powder, and then leave on at least 6 hours before vacuuming.

To remove water soluble stains, apply some detergent solution (1 1/2 teaspoons mild detergent per litre of water), working from the edges to the center of the stain. Place several layers of paper towel over the spot and weight down with books. Let stand about an hour. Replace with fresh paper towel and leave overnight. Then fluff up the carpet pile with your fingers.

***\*Dusting Tip\* Use paint brushes to dust cracks and hard to reach places in computers, sliding door and window tracks, etc.***



### **Window Cleaning**

Wash windows on a cloudy, but not rainy day. Working in direct sunlight causes streaks because the cleaning solution dries before you can wipe it off. This is the best time to vacuum the frames and sills. Cool, clear water is the choice of most professional window washers. If windows are very dirty you can add 2 to 3 tablespoons of vinegar per 4 litres of water. Use horizontal strokes on the inside and vertical on the outside so you know which side the streaks are on. For drying windows, a wad of crumpled newspaper works just as well as expensive paper towels. Wear rubber gloves to keep your hands free of newspaper ink.

### **Cleaning Glass Table Tops**

Clean by rubbing with a little lemon juice, dry with paper towels and polish with newspaper for a sparkling table.

Toothpaste will remove small scratches from glass. How great!

### **Cleaning Blinds**

Slip your hands into a pair of socks for cleaning the blinds. Dip one hand into a bucket of warm, soapy water and hold the blinds between your two hands. Rub back and forth until you've cleaned the whole surface. Then reverse sides so the dry sock dries the blind.

Wipe miniblinds with damp fabric softener sheets to eliminate static that collects dust. The same trick works on your TV screen.

***\*Scent Freshener Tip\* Try tucking a fabric sheet under your throw rugs for a fresh scent and under your car mats instead of buying hanging deodorizers.***