

Spring Cleaning

Ahh, spring! It's the time of year when the grass starts turning green, flowers start to bloom and people's moods get brighter. And, it's the time of year to clean. WHAT! Yes, along with the rebirth of nature, it's also the perfect time for a rebirth of your home. With a fool-proof game plan to guide you, you can clean the whole house quickly and efficiently, with plenty of time to get outside and enjoy the fresh spring air.

Before You Start

First and foremost, wear comfortable clothes. Cleaning is messy, hard work. Wear something you won't mind getting dirty and possibly staining.

It is also a good idea to take stock of your supplies. Make sure you have everything you need for every room before you begin. Stopping to run to the store can put a real damper on your routine.

Prepare a cleaning caddy of supplies to bring with you to every room. A few rags, paper



towels, furniture polish, one good all-purpose glass and counter cleaner and a couple of trash bags will get the job rolling. If your house has multiple levels, keep a fully stocked caddy on each floor. Also, store specialty cleaners in the room they will be used instead of weighing your carrier down. For example, toilet bowl cleaner should be kept under the bathroom sink.

Opening the windows is a good idea to feel the inspiration of spring, while also protecting you from inhaling dust and dangerous fumes from the cleaning products.

Getting Down And Dirty

Some, fun and lively music will help motivate you to keep at the job. Cleaning is an exercise to burn calories so make the most of it and dance the time away.

To protect your hands from the harsh hot water and drying chemicals, be sure to wear rubber gloves.

Remember to clean from the top down. This means starting on the top floor of the house as well as starting at the ceiling and working to the floor of

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Tips & techniques to clean every room in your home

Living Room: Dust and vacuum every crevice and corner. Vacuum furniture, lampshades and pictures. Vacuum and wash curtains. Dust wood furniture and dust-mop floors. Vacuum carpet. Take plants outside for a gentle washing with a fine water spray.

Bedrooms: Clean curtains. Take blinds outside for a bath with a mild ammonia solution and rinse with the garden hose. Strip bed linens and dust ruffle. Vacuum mattress and box spring. Flip and rotate mattress. Polish wood furniture and dust knick-knacks. Vacuum everything. Clean mirrors and wipe down light fixtures and lamps.

Kitchen: Spray oven with cleaner the night before making it simple to sponge off grease and grime. Clean microwave. Vacuum stove vents, refrigerator coils, floor and counters. Defrost the freezer. Clean

freezer and fridge with a homemade solution of 3 tablespoons of baking soda and one quart of warm water. Clean outside of fridge with glass cleaner. Clean counters, appliances and stove top with an all-purpose cleaner. Wash out the trash can and spray with disinfectant before putting in a new bag. For linoleum floors, spray with a foaming tile cleanser and take a 5-minute break. A quick run of the sponge mop will make them sparkling clean.

Bathrooms: Spray shower and tub with strong cleanser. Pour cleaner into toilet bowl and spray outside with same cleaner. Let sit while you continue with the other steps. Clean mirrors, chrome and light fixtures with glass cleaner. Vacuum everything. Empty and clean wastebasket. Clean sink and wipe off cleanser applied to shower and tub. Clean outside of toilet and brush and flush the inside. Scrub floor with a strong cleanser.

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every room. Dust falls downward so you'll be adding effort to the job to start at the bottom.

Another great tip when cleaning any room is to think dry, then wet. Start with the dusting and sweeping and then move on to mopping and using an all-purpose cleaner. This ensures there will be less dirt floating around to cling to the wet surfaces.

When cleaning a room, work in one direction to make sure you don't miss anything or zig-zag back over something you've already done.

This is an important time to toss everything you don't use. While cleaning up each area, be ruthless in getting rid of clutter. Just think of how easy dusting would be if there weren't so many knick-knacks on every table or shelf. These items can be sold at a yard sale or donated to a thrift store.

Wrapping Up

When you're done with the cleaning and need to put things back in order, here are a couple of things to keep in mind. The only necessary appliances on the kitchen counter are ones you use every day. Stash everything else in cabinets. In the living areas, try rearranging the knick-knacks you did keep and photos on different tables, shelves, or even another room. This is a quick and easy way to give the room a fresh look.

In order to keep your home fresh and clean all year round, be sure to tidy up on a regular basis. Spring cleaning will be a breeze if your home is on a maintenance schedule for every other season. With these simple tips and a determined attitude, the tough job will be tackled in no time. And then, you are free to enjoy the sparkle of spring, inside and out.