



A Neat and Tidy Home *In 8 steps*



*My idea of housework is to sweep the room
with a glance.*
Anonymous

I don't know too many people who love to clean, but I know a lot of people who like a clean house. If a cleaning service is not in your budget, here are eight ways to find the time to get it done, and make the job easier.

1) Schedule it! One technique is to break down all of the components of cleaning a house and assign each day its own task. Spreading the work out makes it seem less burdensome.

Arrange your days in a manner that makes sense to you. Here is one method : Tidy up the bathroom each morning. Put dishes in the dishwasher and tidy up the kitchen counters before you start your day. Then:

- On Mondays, do the laundry and tidy up the laundry room.
- Handle garbage and recycling on Tuesdays.
- Clean the kitchen on Wednesdays .
- Mop and vacuum the floors on Thursdays.
- Deep clean the bathrooms on Fridays.

For some people, this is a better alternative than saving all the work for cleaning day. One giant cleaning day is enough to fill you with a sense of dread!

2) Determine your standards. Everyone's idea of clean is different, so everyone's schedule will be different. Some hate a dirty bathroom, but can live with dust. Figure out what is important to you.

Here are the basics:

- Clean the kitchen and bathrooms.
- Shake or vacuum area rugs.
- Mop floors.
- Vacuum remaining floors.
- Change bedding.
- Put away groceries and clean out the refrigerator.
- Dust.

3) Daily tasks. Make a list of things you will do each day. Think of *your* cleaning standards. What do *you* need to do each day to feel comfortable? Factor in things that are specific to your family. Do you cook nightly? Do you have pets? Do you share a bath? Keeping those things in mind will help you tailor a schedule that fits your specific needs. If you cook every night you might need to unload the dishwasher more frequently. If you have pets, you may need to use the Swiffer more than people who don't have pet hair to contend with. If you share a bathroom you may need to tidy it more frequently than people who live alone.

4) Manage clutter. Once or twice a day, I spend a few minutes putting things away. *The trick is to stay on top of it.* You know where your clutter collects. Straighten this area every night before you go to bed. I know this is hard. I can have everything straightened up before my two young cyclones come home from school. In minutes, they have something laying on nearly every available surface. But, its so much easier to clear things away before the piles gets too high.

5) Eliminate knick knacks. The less you have, the easier the dusting!

6) Process Mail. Don't let it pile up. Deal with it the minute you bring it into the house. I stand over the recycling bin, with my hand held shredder nearby. I put bills in the "to be paid" slot, and toss the magazines in the magazine basket.

7) Time Yourself. What a motivator! This has become a very popular technique. The first time I timed myself, I was amazed. For some reason I thought that cleaning the house would take all day. No wonder I was reluctant to get started. When I saw how much I could do in 1 hour, I didn't mind cleaning nearly as much.

8) Find help. Many smaller jobs can be delegated to kids. They can be quite helpful in taking out garbage or recycling. My boys like to help put groceries away. They make their own beds, put their dishes in the dishwasher and throw their own laundry down the chute. Even these seemingly small jobs help.

Copyright ©2006 Come2Order

Karen Henke is the owner of Come2Order in Minneapolis, MN. Visit www.come2order2day.com and request a *free* Time-Savers Kit which is loaded with time-saving tips and services. *And* sign up for a subscription to the *free* monthly newsletter.