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# HOUSEKEEPING 101

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A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO KEEPING HOUSE



BY MELISSA RINGSTAFF, AUTHOR OF  
*FROM CHAOS TO CALM: 15 WEEKS TO A HAPPY HOME*

# HOW TO KEEP A CLEAN HOUSE

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## DAILY

- Make Beds {5 minutes per bedroom}
- Start Laundry: Wash {2 minutes},
- Fold {5 minutes},
- Put Away {5 minutes}
- Sweep Floors/ Vacuum {5 – 10 minutes}
- Tidy Kitchen {30 minutes or less per meal}
- Wipe Down Bathrooms {2 minutes per bathroom}
- Straighten House {30 minutes}
- 10 Minute Declutter {10 minutes}
- Take Out Trash {2 minutes}

## WEEKLY

- Mop Floors
- Wash Bedding
- Dust Furniture and Bookshelves
- Scrub Bathrooms
- Clean Out Refrigerator
- Clean Stove/ Oven/ Appliances
- Clean Mirrors
- Clean Out One Drawer or Closet Space

# HOW TO CLEAN THE KITCHEN

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## DAILY ORDER AFTER EACH MEAL

1. Tidy up by returning any items out of order back to their place.
2. Place dishes in dishwasher if using one.
3. Hand wash dishes, pots and pans as required.
4. Wipe down countertops, backsplashes, table, stove, and inside microwave.
5. Scrub sink until it is shining and return dried, hand washed dishes where they belong.
6. Sweep the floor.
7. At end of day, rinse out sponges, dishrags, or brushes with hot sudsy water using a little bleach to disinfect. Hang to dry. Replace used rags, towels, sponges, and brushes with fresh ones for the next day.

# HOW TO CLEAN THE KITCHEN

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## MONTHLY

1. Scrub top of stove vent.
2. Wipe down outside of cabinets, around light switches.
3. Dust baseboards and wash with warm, soapy water.
4. Clean top of refrigerator.

## WEEKLY

1. Throw out any old food.
2. Wipe down inside of refrigerator.  
This is best done the day before you do your weekly shopping.
3. Clean out freezer.
4. Scrub Stove Top.
5. Wash inside of Microwave.
6. Wash small appliances such as toaster, toaster oven, and can opener.
7. Mop the floor.

# HAND WASHING THE DISHES

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## MEALTIME CLEAN UP: TOOLS NEEDED

- Dish draining rack and mat
- Clean dish towel
- Rubber dishpan (keeps dishes from breaking)
- Dish Cloth, Clean Sponge, or Dish Brush (for Cleaning the dishes)
- Bottle Brush
- Pot Scrubber
- Rubber gloves if you prefer
- Dish liquid soap

## MEALTIME CLEAN UP: THE ORDER

1. Clear Table.
2. Brush off tablecloth and pre-treat spills with stain remover. Or wipe down table.
3. Stack dishes next to sink.
4. Begin Washing (instructions below)
5. Glasses and Mugs
6. Flatware, Silverware
7. Plates, Bowls
8. Pots, Casseroles

# H A N D   W A S H I N G T H E   D I S H E S

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## WASHING THE DISHES

1. Begin by making sure your sink is clean. Empty the sink if needed. Squirt a small amount of your favorite cleaner into the sink and scrub with a clean sponge or cloth. Rinse the sink.
2. Place your drying rack on the right hand side of the sink with a drain mat or clean towel underneath.
3. Fill sink about  $\frac{1}{2}$  full with hot water adding liquid dish soap to the water while the sink is filling. The water should be as hot as your hands can stand. Be sure the soap has dissolved. Swish you hand in the water if needed. Use enough soap to eliminate grease in the water, but not so much that it does not rinse off your dishes easily. Note the manufacturer's instructions if you are not sure.
4. Use a clean dishcloth or fresh sponge. For bottles and vases, you should use a good bottle brush.
5. Begin washing dishes that are least soiled first. Generally, this would be your drinking glasses, and flatware. Rinse each item and place in the drying rack, or on a clean towel.
6. Next wash plates and bowls. If your dishwater becomes too soiled, you should stop and refill the sink with fresh hot water and dish soap. If the water has become lukewarm, you'll need to add more hot water or fresh water.

7. Finally, wash your serving dishes, pots, and pans. Changing the water as needed.

8. If dishes are rinsed in hot enough water, they should air dry almost immediately. Once you have washed everything, or as you run out of needed space in your drying rack, put dishes away in their respective places. Dry dishes with a fresh and clean drying cloth if water is still present. Drying your dishes by hand will also remove any streaks or spots left by the water.

9. Dishes should be put away as soon as you have finished washing. Your kitchen will look much more pleasing and orderly without stacks of dishes sitting on the counter.

# HOW TO CLEAN THE REFRIGERATOR

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## WEEKLY

1. Unplug refrigerator. Manufacturers warn to unplug the refrigerator before washing. Be careful not to splash lights and wires while you are cleaning.
2. Remove food from refrigerator to the counter top.
3. Remove drawers and shelves.
4. Using hot sudsy water, wipe down the inside of the refrigerator. Be sure to clean the walls and inside the gaskets. Work from top to bottom.
5. For nasty stuck on spills, make a paste with water and baking soda.
6. Really hot water may crack glass shelves so be careful.
7. If you have mold or mildew in your refrigerator, use a bleach solution to disinfect. Using too much bleach will cause the refrigerator to smell like bleach. 3/4 cup bleach to 1 gallon of water. Do not clean and disinfect in one step. Clean first, and then disinfect.
8. Wash the shelves and drawers with hot sudsy water and replace them when finished.
9. Wipe off any sticky food containers before replacing them in the refrigerator.
10. Plug the refrigerator back in when you are done.



# HOW TO CLEAN THE STOVE

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## WEEKLY

1. Remove electric burners or gas burner grates and burner drip pans.
2. Place grates and drip pans in the sink. Spray with a fume free oven cleaner or other heavy duty cleaner and let soak.
3. Remove any excess food crumbs or spills.
4. Using a mild abrasive such as Bar Keepers Friend, sprinkle powder over baked on grease (often found around drip pan edges).
5. Wet a sponge or other cleaning cloth.
6. Squeeze out most of the moisture so it is not dripping, but leave very damp.
7. Begin scrubbing until the moisture is gone. Rinse and Repeat as needed until the stove top is clean.
8. Using a clean cloth or sponge, wipe down the entire outside of the stove, as well as under knobs.
9. Raise the stove top to clean underneath and proceed in a similar fashion until the underside is clean.
10. Line with aluminum foil, to prevent this step in the future. If you have already been lining your stove with the foil, simply replace with fresh foil.
11. Lower stove top.
12. Using hot sudsy water and your cleaning cloth or sponge, wipe the walls and cabinets around the stove to remove food and grease splatters.
13. Fill sink with hot water and scrub drip pans and/ or gas burner grates. Rinse.
14. After drip pans and/ or are dry, return them to the stove.
15. Wipe electric burners, while cool, with a damp cloth and return to stove.

# HOW TO CLEAN THE OVEN

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## WEEKLY

\*If you have a self cleaning oven, you should follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning. Do not use commercial cleaning products in these ovens.\*

1. For non-self-cleaning ovens, use my natural recipe below or use a good commercial oven cleaner. The fume free ones are more pleasant to use. Be careful not to breathe the fumes, wear a dust mask if you need to.
2. Evenly coat the entire surface of the oven.
3. Allow to soak for the recommended amount of time.
4. Wearing rubber gloves, wipe out the oven using paper towels or an old rag.
5. Using a damp cloth, wipe out the oven to remove leftover residue.
6. Line oven with aluminum foil for easier clean up.

## NATURAL OVEN CLEANER

1. Make a paste of baking soda and water.
2. Spread paste over the bottom of your oven and on any burnt on splatters.
3. Sprinkle baking soda paste with vinegar and allow it to fizz and foam.
4. Scrub oven with a rag or sponge and wipe out residue.

# HOW TO CLEAN THE LIVING ROOMS

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## DAILY

1. Pick up clutter.
2. Fluff pillows.
3. Straighten quilts or throws.
4. Vacuum or sweep floor as needed.

## WEEKLY

1. Vacuum or sweep floor.
2. Dust tabletops, bookcases, shelves and piano.
3. Throw out accumulated clutter.
4. Vacuum upholstery if needed.
5. Remove musty odors by washing slipcovers and blankets. Or, use a product such as Febreze®.
6. Clean windows and mirrors.

# HOW TO CLEAN THE BEDROOM

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## THE BEDROOM LINENS

1. Mattress Cover and Pad - protects the mattress from dirt, perspiration, spills, and all other types of soil
2. Rubber or Vinyl Mattress Pad - protects the mattress for fluids  
\* Necessary if you have a young child prone to wetting the bed \*
3. Fitted Sheet - protects the mattress pad
4. Flat Sheet - protects the skin from the scratchy blanket as well as protecting the blanket from dirt and oils on your skin
5. Pillow Cover and Case - protects the pillow from, oils, hair, perspiration, drool, and tears
6. Blanket(s) - used in the cooler months for warmth
7. Bedspread, Comforter, or Duvet - used during the day to make the bed attractive

## DAILY

1. Air and make the bed.
2. Put away dirty clothes.
3. Straighten personal belongings.
4. Put away reading materials, glasses, dishes, toys, etc.

# HOW TO CLEAN THE BEDROOM

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## WEEKLY

1. Dust nightstand, vanity, dressers, chests.
2. Vacuum carpets and rugs or sweep floor.
3. Clean mirrors.

## MONTHLY

1. Rotate mattress with someone's help.
2. Wash comforters, bedspreads, and pillows.
3. Air throw rugs and pillows in the sun occasionally.
4. Vacuum underneath the bed.
5. Wash curtains.
6. Dust tops of wood moldings around windows and doors.
7. Air bedroom by opening windows.

# HOW TO CLEAN THE BEDROOM

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## HOW TO CLEAN THE KIDS BEDROOMS

*\*Excerpted from the book, From Chaos to Calm: 15 Weeks to a Happy Home by Melissa Ringstaff\**

Cleaning the children's rooms is similar to keeping your own room clean. Follow the same basic steps as listed in the "Caring for the Bedrooms" post. The trick to keep kids rooms neat is really in how to train them. Diligent training will pay off in the end!

When your child wakes up in the morning, immediately make the bed. When he or she is old enough to help, have them help you make the bed. And when they are old enough to do it alone, have them make the bed alone (or with a sibling if they share a bed, as is the case in our household). Instilling a love for neatness in your child early on will benefit both of you!

From the time your child is old enough to walk, he should be helping to keep his things in order. Schedule regular clean up times each day and help your little one to put his toys away. I suggest that you have clean up times just before lunch, just before supper, and again before bed. The one hold out on this would be if your child is creating a large project – for instance, a grand Lego® castle, or building a tower with his Lincoln Logs®, or painting a masterpiece. In this case, I would tell my child that everything but that one thing has to be put away.

When it is time for a bath or time to change into pajamas at the end of the day, train your child to place their discarded clothing in the proper place, whether it be the hamper, a laundry basket, or perhaps they are to hang their clothes in the closet or return to a drawer to wash next time. Show them how to do it immediately rather than later.

Training means being involved. Training your children means you are aware of what is going on in their lives on a daily (even hour to hour) basis. You will never train your children properly if you are a distracted mother. Books, TV, the internet, work, hobbies, etc. should never take your attention so much that you fail to instill proper life skills in your children.

It is easy for kids to become overwhelmed once their room becomes super messy (which for some kids could mean in a single day if mom doesn't stay on top of their messy habits.) So, what do you do if your child's room looks like it was hit by a tornado? Yelling doesn't resolve the real issue and getting frustrated with your child when they don't want to clean their room only creates an atmosphere of anxiety in the home. Instead, you can offer help in the following ways:

1. If the room is really bad, sweep everything into a pile on the floor or have your child pick up everything that is out of place and put it on the bed. It is much easier to sort things from a central location than it is to move from place to place all over the room.
2. Give your child orders. For example: Pick up all the Legos®. Pick up the books. Now put away your dirty laundry. Now, I want you to put your shoes in the closet. Clean your mirror. Sweep the floor. Straighten the bookshelf.

Children do not instinctively know how to clean up a really messy room. They need your loving guidance. It is also much easier to keep a neat room clean than it is to clean up a messy room. This is why it is better to have regular “tidy up” times throughout the day. That way, things are less likely to get out of control in the kids rooms as well as the rest of the house!

God has given us as mothers such an awesome responsibility to train our children to become productive, kind, loving adults. Let's not squander the opportunity!



# HOW TO MAKE THE BED

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## WASHING THE BED LINENS: WEEKLY

Note: In the summer months, you may wish to launder your sheets twice a week to keep them fresh.

1. Choose a day each week to wash the sheets.
2. On wash day strip the bed and pillows of all linens, including mattress cover.
3. Place linens in washing machine following the manufacturer's directions for the care of your linens.
4. While the sheets are washing, allow the mattress to air for a while.
5. Rotate mattress if needed.
6. Make the bed following the method below.

# HOW TO MAKE THE BED

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## DAILY

1. Upon waking, turn the covers down to allow the sheets to air for an hour or two. Allowing the bed to air helps to retain a fresh smell of the linens and the bedroom.
2. After breakfast, continue making the bed.
3. Smooth fitted sheet of any wrinkles.
4. Pull flat sheet up and smooth wrinkles.
5. Pull up blanket and/or bedspread.
6. For bedspread, place the pillow at the head of the bed and pull spread over the pillow tucking the excess underneath the pillow.
7. For comforter, turn down the top of the comforter as well as the top of the flat sheet and place pillow at head of the bed.
8. Smooth any wrinkles.

# HOW TO MAKE THE BED

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## WEEKLY

1. Place mattress cover on mattress if you are using one.
2. Take fitted sheet and stretch over mattress, pulling sides down and smoothing the sheet across the top with your hands.
3. Place flat sheet on top of fitted sheet making sure that the sides are even. When using a comforter, often the flat sheet is placed with the right side down so that when you turn it down at the top, the right side of the sheet is visible.
4. At the foot of the bed, tuck the flat sheet underneath the mattress tightly. The sheet should be smooth without rumples.
5. To correctly make a hospital corner at the foot of your bed, lift the side of the sheet and tightly tuck in the portion that is hanging down.
6. Now you may either leave the side of the sheet hanging down or tuck in the entire length of the side.
7. Place bedspread or comforter on top of flat sheet checking for even lengths on the sides.
8. Tuck the pillow into a zippered pillow cover and then into the pillow case.
9. If you have a bedspread, place the pillow at the head of the bed and pull spread over the pillow tucking the excess underneath the pillow.
10. If you are using a comforter, turn down the top of the comforter as well as the top of the flat sheet and place pillow at head of the bed.
11. Smooth any wrinkles.

# HOW TO CLEAN THE BATHROOM

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## DAILY

1. Rinse tub after bathing.

\* Optional: Spray a Daily Shower Spray formula in the shower to help prevent soap scum build up. \*

2. Wipe down sink, faucets, with a fresh cloth.

3. Wipe down toilet seat with another fresh cloth.

4. Clean mirror after everyone has brushed their teeth.

5. Hang fresh hand towels.

6. Spray air freshener and leave the room.

## MONTHLY

1. Clean under the sink.

2. Clean out medicine cabinet.

3. Throw out old medications and old make up.

4. Take inventory of toilet paper, paper towels, soaps, shampoos, etc.

Add those items that need replenishing to your shopping list. Purchase items when on sale and stock up.

# HOW TO CLEAN THE BATHROOM

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## WEEKLY

1. Use a small hand held whisk broom or brush and sweep the floor, dusting the baseboards as you go.
2. Fill a bucket with warm or hot water and add a disinfectant to the water.
3. Add a disinfectant to the toilet bowl. Swish it around with the toilet bowl brush and allow to soak while you clean the rest of the bathroom.
4. Wear rubber gloves to protect your hands.
5. Use separate cloths or sponges for cleaning the toilet and sink and floor.
6. Begin by cleaning the sink and cabinets. Use a mild detergent or abrasive for cleaning inside the sink, around the fixtures, the cabinets, and the walls around the sink.
7. Rinse and clean soap dish. Wipe off the light switch.
8. Dust vanity light bulbs.
9. Clean mirrors.

10. Sprinkle a mild abrasive or spray your preferred bath tub cleaner into the bath/ shower. Use a sponge to scrub away soap scum build up and water marks. Doing this weekly instead of once the tub is gross will reduce the effort! Liquid bleach gets rid of mildew. Rinse tub well.

11. Saturate a sponge in the bucket of water. Squeeze excess moisture out and begin scrubbing the baseboards. Because of the moisture in the bathroom, dust tends to dry and stick to the baseboards causing them to look dingy and unattractive. Move around the room, rinsing your sponge as needed. Dust window sills, cobwebs, top of door molding, and top of shower.

12. Saturate a sponge in the bucket of water. Squeeze excess moisture out and clean around top of toilet, working your way down the sides of the toilet. Rinse sponge as needed.

13. Using a sponge and a product such as Mop and Glo, scrub floor until it sparkles. Begin mopping in the corner of bathroom and work your way out of the room. Leave the room and make sure no one goes in until the floor is dry – about 20 minutes. You can place a fan on the floor to speed this drying time.

14. Pour dirty water outside or down the toilet. Disinfect sponges or cloths in a bucket of fresh water and bleach. 1/2 cup of bleach per gallon of water. Soak them for at least five minutes. Rinse well and air dry.

# HOW TO CLEAN THE LAUNDRY

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## DAILY OR WEEKLY

1. Collect soiled laundry from around the house.
2. Sort the laundry if it hasn't already been sorted: whites, colors, sheets/towels, delicates, etc.
3. Decide which laundry to wash and put a load in the washing machine.
4. When washing machine has completed cycle, place wet items in dryer or hang on the line to dry.
5. Remove laundry from the dryer or off the clothes line.
6. Fold laundry.
7. Place laundry back in closets or drawers.

## HOW TO SORT AND WASH LAUNDRY

- **Whites and Tans:** Permanent Press, Hot
- **Towels and Rags:** Normal, Hot
- **Bed Linens and Pillowcases:** Normal, Warm
- **Jeans and Dark Colors:** Normal, Cold
- **Light Colors:** Normal, Cold
- **Delicate Items:** Gentle Cycle, Cold or Hand Wash
- **Wool:** Gentle Cycle, Cold or Hand Wash - Lay Flat to Dry

# HOW TO CLEAN THE LAUNDRY

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## HOW TO REMOVE STAINS

*\*Treat stains as soon as possible for easier removal.\**

Products to have on hand for easy stain removal:

- 3% Hydrogen Peroxide
- Spot Shot or Shout Stain Remover
- Liquid Dish Soap
- Oxy Clean
- Chlorine Bleach and Color Safe Bleach
- Lemon Juice

**White garments** should be laundered with bleach on a regular basis to keep the white bright.

**Oil Based Stains:** Pre-treat with a liquid dish soap such as Dawn.

**Organic Stains:** (such as baby spit up or breast-fed poo) Treat garment with lemon juice and hang or lay in the bright sunshine until stain disappears.

**Blood:** Saturate stain with 3% hydrogen peroxide and wait 15 minutes before washing. Be sure to check for color-fastness.

Treat other stains with commercial stain remover before washing.