

Personal habits and outside work

One of the nicest things you can do to prepare yourself for your future bride, or just to help your mother out, is by learning to pick up after yourself and how to become self-sufficient. Even if you do not get married, learning how to be responsible in picking up after yourself is a good skill to have.

You don't enter a marriage with the presumptions that your wife should pick up after you. You should learn to be responsible to pick up after your own self. It shows manliness and strength. It takes a few extra seconds out of your day and will be a great blessing to your spouse.

Even if you don't intend on getting married, you are still going to have to know how to clean things up and take care of them. One thing that I have learned from having boys, is that they can get things clean once they set their minds to it. I don't usually have them do all the daily work that is indoors, but when I have a task that needs scrubbing, my boys will do a great job, it might not be up to "mom's standards" but I have seen them take rusty car parts back to shiny new original newness, I KNOW they can clean a shower from time to time.

Remember these personal habits:

1. When you take off your clothing, check your pockets before putting them in the laundry hamper. If you DO NOT check your pockets—you will be in danger of destroying MP3 players, money will become lost, and paperwork ruined—by going through the washer. Don't assume that your mother or sister will check your pant pockets—BE RESPONSIBLE do this yourself.
2. Don't leave dirty laundry laying around, put it in the hamper.
3. When you wake up in the morning, immediately make your bed—this takes seconds and will make your room appear to be cleaner.
4. When you use the bathroom—wipe any mess that you may leave on the seat. I think this has been a continuing joke for woman for years—but if you make a mess, wipe it up. If you can get in the habit of putting the toilet seat down—please do. You may have young children one day and an open toilet will lead to curious little ones.
5. In the shower, when you are finished, spray down the walls or wipe off any mess that you may have left.
6. When you brush your teeth or shave, wipe up your mess. Just as you would not want to have to wipe up someone's spit or tiny hairs—no one else enjoys it either.
7. When you are finished eating, take your dishes to the sink to be washed. Be sure your plate is cleaned off, scrape any leftover food scraps into the trash.
8. Everyone has their own rules about taking shoes off in the home—but NOT wearing shoes in the home, will help your floors last much longer through life. Get into the habit of taking off your shoes as soon as you come in the door.

Don't get into the habit of just setting your stuff down wherever you like. When you walk in the door, take the items to their place. Put trash in the waste basket, hang coats up, and put your wallet and keys in the same place each day. Have a designated place for all to ensure that you find it.

How to take out the trash

This might seem like a no brainer, but there are some tips that can help you take out the trash effectively:

- When emptying the cans indoors, make sure to wipe down any that are damp on the inside. Pick up any trash that might have fallen underneath the bag. This will keep bacteria from forming and prevent nasty trash smell.
- Keep the trash light. Don't over fill the bags, when you go to lift them out the bags will break and you will have a mess. Pay attention to how full the trash can is each day.
- When carrying the trash from the inside out, make sure that it is not dripping all over the floor. If it is, wipe it up immediately with some cleaner and a rag.
- When you place the trash outdoors in a larger can, put the lid on tightly. This will keep any animals or rain water that may enter the cans at bay.
- When you have windy days and things blow, make sure that your lids did not fly away. If they do, go look for them. Having a no lid trash can is NOT effective.
- When the garbage men take your trash, if you find your lids are blowing away—zip tie them to the handles. Make sure it isn't too tight to not be able to put the lid on.
- When you take the trash out—as you are walking to the road, look around your yard for any trash that you can pick up and add to your can.
- When you take the empty trash cans from the road back to the house, pick up any trash that may have gotten dropped by the garbage men. If you keep your cans nicely in bags and tied securely, you shouldn't have any problems.
- Be respectful to the garbage men. They don't want to have to lift super heavy cans, or ones that have open trash bags. If you have a lot of items to put out to the road, put them neatly stacked. Tie items together, help out the person who has to lift them up. Put yourself in their position. (Golden rule-smile)

Outdoor work

There is usually an abundance of outdoor work that can be done. It takes some paying attention and motivation to get things started. Here is a simple way to begin:

- Do your work in a clockwise pattern.
- Start in the front of your yard, going around picking up any trash or sticks that can be picked up.
- Grab a rake and clean out any flower beds or areas that need to be raked up.
- Keep a wheelbarrow or trash can handy for picking up debris and yard mess.
- Work all the way around your yard. You will be surprised at all of the little things that get left around in the grass. Pay attention to look for any rocks—they will ruin your lawnmower as you cut the grass.
- If you have a dog, pick up any dog mess
- If your parents allow you to cut the grass, then do so. Make sure you know what you are doing before you begin. When you cut the grass, change up the way you cut it each time. You can do crisscross cutting—like a checkerboard. You can work in a circle—starting on the outside working your way to the center. Or you can go back and forth, overlapping rows as you walk. Whichever way you choose, use caution to watch out for any people, animals, or objects.

- When you are finished, hose off the lawnmower to remove any grass. Park it where it goes. If it needs a tarp, put that on securely. Put away gas containers or any other item you brought out.
- Take a broom and sweep off any walkways or porches. You may need to hose them off, depending upon how dirty they may be.
- Coil up any hoses to make them look neat.
- Put away any tools and wind up any cords that you used.
- Wash any windows on the outside. You can use window cleaner and a microfiber cloth. Some people recycle and use black and white newspaper to wipe them. It doesn't leave behind any lint. If the window sills are dirty, you can wipe them with a separate rag.
- Clean out sheds and garages on a weekly or monthly basis. Throw away old items and keep it organized and neat. Again, work in a clockwise pattern when cleaning these areas.

Every week you should take the responsibility and make sure that the vehicles in the home are clean. It is good to do this on Saturday, so that it is clean for church. This is a good step in showing responsibility for things.

Here are some tips for washing a car

- Use soap that is specifically made for washing cars. Using household soaps may strip off the protective wax on your vehicle.
- Apply the suds with a large, soft sponge or lamb's wool mitt.
- Use a separate sponge to clean the wheels and tires, which may be coated with sand, brake dust, and other debris which could mar the car's finish. You can also use a special wheel cleaner that you spray on separately.
- Don't wash when the body is hot, such as after it has been driven or is parked in direct sunlight for awhile. Heat speeds up drying of soap and water, which will increase chances of spots while washing.
- Don't move sponge in circles, this will create light, but noticeable scratches. Instead, move lengthwise across the hood and other body panels.
- Do rinse all surfaces thoroughly with water before you begin with a new section. Wash and rinse each section. This will ensure you have plenty of time to rinse before the soap dries. Start at the top and work your way around the car.
- Don't let the car air dry, this will leave watermarks. Use a chamois or soft towel. Blot up the water instead of dragging it across the vehicle.

Here are some tips on how to clean the inside

- Pick up all trash and throw into a trash can. Remove all items that do not belong in the vehicle.
- Vacuum up the seats, carpets, and all nooks and crannies.
- Clean the mats. If you have material mats, you can use a spray on foam and then scrub off with a brush. This will keep them looking new. If you have material seats, you can do the same thing to keep them clean.

- You can use Armor All and spray on and wipe the dashboard and all hard surfaces. Make sure to wipe off thoroughly. If you have leather seats you can also wipe these off. Just be sure to wipe up as much excess as possible.
- If your floors are rubberized, you can use Armor all or Tire cleaner for the floors. After they are dirt free, spray on and wipe off. They may get slipperly depending upon the texture so give warning to family members.
- Clean windows on the inside with window cleaner. Make sure not to get any Armor All on the windows as it will fog up when it encounters rain?!?!?
- Doing this more often cuts down on the amount of time it takes the first time.

Cleaning the dog house

If you have a dog, it is a good idea to clean out the doghouse at least once per month. Check for spider nests and be sure to remove them. If you have any other small animals, it is a good idea to clean out their areas as well.

Here are some tips to help you do a thorough job:

- Wear rubber gloves when you clean as you will most likely remove feces and urine from the bedding.
- First remove feces around the doghouse. It is counterproductive to clean the inside of the doghouse if you leave feces around, since your dog will track it into the doghouse later.
- Remove all toys' and place into a container of warm, soapy water and allow them to dry.
- Remove all bedding. You should always use disposable bedding, inside of the doghouse, as it may become wet with urine or feces, and water or mud. Remove all bedding and dispose of it.
- Sweep the structure of twigs, branches, leaves, and debris.
- Fill a large bucket with hot, soapy water. Using a stout brush, scour the entire doghouse, inside and out. Pay attention to the inside corners, as debris, feces, and urine easily collect in corners.
- Completely rinse out the structure from your garden house and use a hard spray.
- Disinfect the doghouse with a household disinfectant.
- While the doghouse air dries, clean the pet's toys.
- Inspect the doghouse to determine if you need to make any repairs.
- Replace fresh bedding once it has dried.
- Place toys on porch of doghouse.
- Never place food or water inside house, this draw rodents and pests.

Depending upon your yard you may have responsibilities in keeping the pool clean or maybe you help in the garden. Whatever the job, take the initiative and keep it maintained. Take pride in the things that you own. Don't make your parents have to remind you that the yard needs cleaning up, do it every night. Walk around your yard, putting away items that may have gotten left out. Going that extra mile, will make a huge difference in keeping things clean. Plus, sometimes other people will notice the job that you do. That could potentially be a job for you in helping a neighbor maintain their yards.