

CLEANING ROUTINE

The number one complaint that I hear from moms is that they can't keep their homes clean. Their children's rooms are always a mess. Their closets are jammed pack. There is always clutter sitting on the tables. They can never find what they need. Clothing sits in piles with nowhere to go. Food gets wasted because they didn't realize what they had already in the refrigerator or pantry. The list of complaints goes on and on.

With a little organization and planning you can create a successful plan on how to keep your home running smoothly and remove the clutter and things that fill your life with too much stuff.

The general rule to remember is

Less Stuff = More Life

If we can simplify our lives and get rid of the "clutter" and the inefficient plans for doing things we can start experience more of life. This includes more time for yourself and more time with your family. More peace in your soul because your life is not so crazy.

STEP I

What's the first task you do? You start with a cleaning systematization. What's that you might say? A cleaning system, routine, something that becomes a "way of life" for you. It needs to be flexible enough to be resistant to change and interruptions in your life, but efficient enough that you don't overlook things that need to be done in your home.

How did I do it in our life? I started out by making a list of all the chores that I had to do in my home. Yes, it seems that my list was very long and took me a few days to complete. I had many little ones and it was hard to concentrate at times. I suggest you take time for each of your areas in your home that need cleaning. Write down everything from wiping the walls, cleaning carpets, to organizing the food pantry. Work on it for a few days. Look back at it and see if there is something that you think you missed. Walk into that room and get a visual of all the things that you need to do and write them down. I'm including plenty of space for you to write down everything that needs to be cleaned.

Areas of suggestion: living room, family room, kitchen, dining room, hallways, bathrooms, master bedroom, girls room, boys room, laundry room, basement, play room, garage, outside areas, etc.

Next to the job that you have written down, write whether you think you should do that task (D) daily,(W) weekly,(M) monthly, or (A) annually.

STEP II

You now have your list made of all of the cleaning tasks that need to be completed in your home. Looks like A LOT doesn't it? This is the part that you may get overwhelmed and think that it is just too much and you might not want to continue. But, I encourage you to just keep working with this technique. You will get there. It is hard in the beginning because you are in your planning stages. This is where you have to lay it all out and figure out exactly what it is you have to do. The next part will be the "when" you do it. I promise you that after you start this, it will work for you. Your life WILL BE full of LESS STUFF and you will have MORE LIFE! Stick with it!

As you continue on with this planning system, you may think about a few extras that you had forgotten, just keep adding them to your lists. I know myself I kept adding things that I had forgotten like washing the table legs and chair rungs, etc. You will get it!

Now for part two of our cleaning systematization. I want you to gather up all your DAILY chores and place them on a new list. These are all things that you feel is important to do each and every day. In our home these things include:

- picking up master bedroom and making bed
- picking up boys room and making beds
- picking up girls room and making beds
- quick wipe of the bathrooms
- sweep of the kitchen and dining room floors
- washing one load of laundry
- feeding cat and dog
- feeding the chickens
- empty the big trash can
- wash dishes/put away after breakfast
- wash dishes/ put away after lunch
- wash dishes/put away after dinner
- wiping the counters and table after each meal

Yours may be different depending upon the needs of your family. You just want to give yourself something in writing of things that NEED to be accomplished each and every day.

In the column on the right hand side put the initial of the person who is responsible for the chore. Give chores to children that are age appropriate. You may need to do some training with a child to help them learn how to do things properly. I know in our family, I had to endure a few "not perfectly" swept floors as my children were learning to sweep. At first it was not like that, they had to learn by doing. For children learning to wash dishes, start them out with the meal that has lesser dishes. We start ours out with lunch (because we don't normally have very many). As they do better, they can move up and help with breakfast dishes. This allows another child to step in and learn how to do them at lunchtime. Given time they did learn and I am thankful for their assistance now as they are older.

Some tips.....

As you write down your daily chores on the following page, scratch it off from your original list to prevent missing anything during transferring.

Looking over your list, do you feel confident that these are things you need done each and every day? If not take some off and put them back on your other list. Maybe you feel that you only need to vacuum once per week instead of everyday. Then again maybe you will decide that you need to do that two times per week to keep your home clean. If that is the case then leave that in the weekly category.

Congratulations!!! You have successfully created a cleaning systemization for daily tasks. You can now put into practice your daily cleaning from this day forward. Take note, you may notice things that you forgot to add to your list that need to be done each and every day. Maybe you realized that you forgot to add "get the mail" to your list. Go ahead, add them and delegate it to someone. Get as detailed as you would like. I recommend for someone who struggles with getting it ALL done, that you be as specific as possible. When I first did this, my daily list was long. Now after doing it for 25 years I have my daily list memorized and I just routinely know what to do in the morning. You will get to that place as well. Just as you remember to brush your teeth and get dressed each day, you will start to form habits to complete your daily chores as well.

For the next few days, you will have to reference this list quite frequently and help remind your children until you can get them something just for them to look at. This is just a temporary list. Place it in an area that you can see it like on the refrigerator or by your work station.

Don't get overwhelmed with all the other tasks at hand in your home. You are beginning with a small step. Start implementing this step. Don't worry about doing all of the other chores each day. Over the next few weeks, you will get to everything that needs to be done in your home. It is okay if you are just able to get your daily chore list done. Dust will still sit on the tables. Mirrors can have streaks on them. The children's bedding will be okay if it sits for more than a week without being washed. Relax and just get used to your daily chore list.

Living room

- dust all wood items
- vacuum –two times per week
- wipe the windows
- straighten bookshelf
- water the plants

Boys bedroom

- organize toys back to proper place
- put away laundry
- dust furniture
- wipe off tablets
- vacuum the floor ---two times per week

Outside work

- straighten the decks
- sweep the porches
- pick up the trash cans from the road
- clean out the van
- wash the van
- clean out the chicken coop

Remember to keep working at your daily chore list each and every day. You are beginning to form habits of doing something on a regular basis. You will start implementing this weekly list as you finish with it. Don't hurry through it, just work diligently. You want a better system for your life. You want a clean house that doesn't overwhelm you will "stuff." Putting this into effect will help you.

STEP IV

You have your weekly chore list complete. It has everything that you want to get done each week but not necessarily each day. Now you are going to have to make some decisions and choose which days you work on which tasks. For our family we choose a couple areas each day.

Monday we focus on floors and playroom. This means that we sweep and steam all the hard floors in our home. We also vacuum every inch of carpet. After the weekend, things tend to get dirty. We start the week out fresh by doing this. We also do a thoroughly cleaning of the play room. Things get organized properly and put away. The floors should be picked up as that is part of our daily routine. If I see an item that belongs to someone, I remind them to please pick it up.

Tuesday we focus on bathrooms. This day I deep clean and do all of the bathroom tasks that need to be done. Each day, I do a quick wipe but today, I get the tub scrubbed, mirrors polished, toilet disinfected, and trash emptied.

Wednesday is our kitchen day. We normally do extra baking this day, so I choose to deep clean it as well. As we are going about our baking, I do a scan of my cupboards and make sure that things are organized properly. I look through the drawers and see if the proper items are in each one. I straighten my pantry so that I know what foods I have to eat. I fill my sink up with some cleaner and wipe off the front of all of my cabinets when we are done baking. This removes food and finger grime. Make sure to wipe the cabinets on the bottom. Sometimes those are overlooked and they can get very dirty. I wipe the back splash to remove any splatters or grease. After all of our food is cooked and baked, I wipe down the stove and microwave and give it a good shine. I clean out the inside of the refrigerator, throwing away any old food and wiping each shelf. The outside gets a wipe as well. We also rinse and scrub out our water bottles for the week this day. We constantly keep them filled but once a week I sanitize and scrub them out. The floor gets a sweep and a spot hand wash to remove any food that we may have dropped during our baking. Our trash gets picked up tomorrow, so we make sure to empty all of the household cans and put the trash out to the road this day.

Thursday we focus on doing all of our dusting and window cleaning. We also straighten our school items. This means we straighten the books, clean out our homeschooling area---return pencils to their proper place, throw away any paper, put library books in bags, etc. I have a child that goes around and wood cleans everything in the home. Another child takes the window/mirror cleaner and goes around and cleans all the windows from the inside and wipes all the TVs, mirrors, tablets, computers, and phones.

Fridays we focus on the bedrooms and putting away all of our laundry. I don't designate one day to wash all of our laundry because we have so much. Plus our septic couldn't handle all that water. Each day I wash and dry one load of laundry. I place the dried clothing in baskets: one for girls, one for boys, and one for my husband and myself. Towels get placed in a basket on top of the washer when they are dried. If a child needs an extra chore for the day due to disobedience or I find that I am running low during the week and can't wait till Friday, I will have them fold this basket and put them away. Everyone works at separating and putting away their own clothing. The older children can fold and hang their own. The younger ones can put away in their proper areas once I fold them. Each bedroom gets a good cleaning. I will clean under the beds, straighten desks, shelves, and drawers. I will wipe down anything that maybe got forgotten during the dusting day. The girls wipe down their shelves. The boys organize their toys in their proper bins. Closets are checked to be in order. We thoroughly vacuum the bedrooms again this day. I also run the vacuum through the living areas again to get them cleaned for the weekend.

Saturday we focus on outside chores. We will empty and clean the van. We sweep and straighten the porches. We clean out the chicken coop. We wash the pet bowls out and clean up any dog mess. We catch

Step IV

Now that your daily and weekly chart is all done, it is time to work on our monthly chores. These are the chores that you need to do only once per month. In our family these chores consist of:

- washing the girls bedding
- washing the boys bedding
- washing our bedding
- washing the throw blankets
- organizing the freezers---to know what I have for meals
- wiping the dining room table legs and bench legs
- wiping the washer and dryer off
- spot wipe all high traffic areas on walls
- wipe switch plates
- wipe fan blades
- wipe down bathroom cabinets
- wipe and dust wall decorations
- vacuum behind/under/inside couches and chairs
- dust light fixtures
- clean oven

Typically you get 4 weeks out of the month to do these chores. In our home, I divided up the chores by the number of weeks that I had. I then made a list.

<u>Week 1</u>	<u>Week 2</u>	<u>Week 3</u>	<u>Week 4</u>
wash our bedding	wash girls bedding	wash boys bedding	wash throws
wipe the dining table	spot wipe all walls	deodorize trash cans	wipe down bathroom
wipe fan blades	wipe switch plates	vacuum out couch/chair	clean oven
dust light fixtures	wipe/dust wall décor		

Notice that I grouped similar chores together. Instead of getting out the vacuum each week, I put all the “vacuuming” jobs on week 3. When I was going to wipe all the walls, I decided to do all the extra chores that were similar to that chore for week 2. We have a large family and I cannot do too much laundry, so I space out when I have to wash everyone’s bedding.

Now when do I get all these chores done? Do I have a “set day?” Not always. Typically I will have my list all printed out and then on Monday, I will look at my list of what I have to do for the week. If I get a few free minutes here or there, I will tackle a job. Sometimes I wait and designate it all to be done on Saturday when I have extra time. These jobs are good for children who don’t obey☺ They are not much fun and work well if I have someone who has an attitude problem. That isn’t always the case, so we just tackle them and get them done somewhere in between life.

You can also delegate who does that by placing their initial after the chore. Do what is best for your family.

Wow! Can you believe that you have organized all of your cleaning tasks into something tangible that you can actually use? I know it may seem like a lot, but all you have to do is implement it into your life. It will be okay if you forget to dust one day during the week. Know that the following week you will get to it again.

This method or systemization takes time. It takes time to sit and write everything out. It takes time to learn to implement and see what works and doesn't work. As with everything in life, time spent doing things that are important are well worth it in the end.

You want a smooth-running home where your husband comes home and can sit at the table and have dinner with his family without all the clutter. A home where you won't be afraid if your friend just drops in for lunch. A home you won't be embarrassed to entertain others in. A place where your children know what is expected of them and they help contribute to it. A place that they value and love because they work together to keep it nice. All this starts with us and our willingness to make our homes a place of peace for our families.

*She watches over the ways of her household,
And does not eat the bread of idleness*

Proverbs 31:27