

HOME MAINTENANCE

There are many details to pay attention to when you live on your own - whether you're renting or owning, and whether it is an apartment complex or an actual house - it takes a responsible person to properly care for your home. It's an exciting time to learn about these household tasks because you get to make a home your own!



Housework is something you do that nobody notices until you don't do it.

~Author Unknown

Our house is clean enough to be healthy, and dirty enough to be happy.

~Author Unknown

It's all in the attitude - housework is exercise. Slim your way to a clean home!

~Linda Solegato

Thank God for dirty dishes, they have a tale to tell; while others may go hungry, we're eating very well.

~Author Unknown

Kitchens!

Cleanliness & Safety:

- Keep a soap dispenser (with a pump handle) by your kitchen sink and paper towels. You do not have to use antibacterial soap if you properly wash your hands: 10 seconds of scrubbing in hot water!
- Wash your hands after handling anything raw, including eggs. Use your wrist to push the pump down and release the soap.
- Most sponges can go into the dishwasher for sanitizing.
- Keep the handle areas of your kitchen trash clean, including any door handles you have to touch to get to the trash.
- Separate your dish sponges based on their use. Have a sponge or dish rag to use for dirty dishes that may be contaminated. Have a separate sponge to use on dishes that are not clean yet but are cleanly enough-free of contamination.
- Have at least two cutting board: one for raw foods and one for everything else.
- Every couple weeks or every time you've put something raw into your sink, you can disinfect it by mixing $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of bleach with a gallon of water and let it soak for two to five minutes.



- Close all plastic bags completely and try to smooth out all the air before closing them.
- Make sure your freezer's temperature is at zero degrees Fahrenheit.
- Do not eat straight out and then double dip - some foods will go bad very fast just from the contamination of your saliva.
- Run the dishwasher without any dishes in it and with a small dollop of dishwasher soap to rinse out food particles.

According to Lawrie Hall, director of external affairs at the Tupperware Corporation and the book *Ask the Experts*, by the Reader's Digest Association - the following guidelines apply to how long you store particular foods in your freezer.

Breads, rolls	6 – 8 months
Butter and margarine	9 months
Citrus fruits	4 – 6 months
Cut-up chicken (uncooked)	9 months
Frozen juice concentrate	12 months
Frozen vegetables	8 – 12 months
Fruits except citrus	8 – 12 months
Ice cream and sherbet	1 month
Lamb and beef roast (uncooked)	12 months
Pork and veal roast (uncooked)	8 months
Whole chickens and turkeys (uncooked)	12 months

* Label frozen items with the date they were put in the freezer!

Cleaning!

Don't think of cleaning as a chore to be dreaded...think of it as progress toward good health, organization that will help you think clear, and as a way to nurture your home - your personal space.

Dusting: Dust your wood furniture with a lightly damp rag to simply eliminate dust. Dust your wood furniture with a damp rag if there are smudges to remove and/or a dry rag just to remove dust. Wood cleaning/shining products are not necessary except for once in a while to give a good wax or shine.

Dust non-wood surfaces such as plastic or metal with a damp rag. You can find electronic dusting spray for televisions and monitors but it's very important you read the instructions before using it.

For thorough dusting, don't just dust around items on a shelf or counter; you should actually pick them up and dust under and behind them. Cleaning is not only about cleaning what you see - good cleaning is to clean everything you do and do not see, for the sake of cleanliness. This way you'll eliminate the possibility of developing (or reacting to) allergies created from dust. It also keeps the cob webs away.

You should dust behind furniture as well. You should vacuum under your bed, behind your bed, behind dressers, desks, shelves and other large furniture. If possible, buy a vacuum with a long hose (or buy the



part for your existing vacuum) because this allows you to reach ceiling fans as well as behind and under large furniture pieces.

Notice the trim in your home - there's usually wood trim around doors and on floor boards. These collect a lot of dirt and dust without people noticing.

Counters: Save some money and be environmentally conscious - clean with vinegar and water! Vinegar is a disinfectant. Buy straight 5% vinegar and put it in a water bottle. You can buy water bottles and vinegar at most grocery or drug stores for less than \$3.00 each.

Sinks, Toilets and Showers: Again, use vinegar and water! You can also use baking soda mixed with water (to make a paste) and an old toothbrush to scrub around faucets and the rings around drains. Add lemon juice down drains to freshen the smell and cut down more grime.

Complete Cleaning: When you wipe down your counter tops, you should make it a habit to wipe *behind* the sink faucets and on the actual faucets. You can use a Q-tip for hard to reach corners or cracks but toothbrushes work wonders.

Don't forget to clean door handles, toilet handles, light switches, keyboards, and steering wheels in your car- any place your fingers touch.



Never mix chemicals together!!!! Do not breathe in the chemicals directly; try to keep your mouth turned away while cleaning and get as much ventilation going as possible - always open a nearby window!

Windows & Mirrors: For some reason it is so easy to ignore cleaning windows, and yet when they are clean they make a dramatic difference in making a room feel clean. Use a window cleaning product, or lemon juice mixed with water. You can use newspapers to wipe the windows instead of paper towels if you want. Dry windows and mirrors in a circular motion to avoid streaks.

Bathrooms: The toilet is the least fun thing to clean in a home. Wear cleaning gloves and make sure your cleaning space is set up properly around the toilet: have a garbage can (for dirty paper towels), toilet bowl brush and holster, the toilet bowl cleaner, and a spray for the surface.

Toilets: Clean around the base of **toilet** (the stand that sits on the floor) and all around the outside of the bowl- a lot of dust is collected here as well as the very top of the toilet. To clean the inside of the bowl, apply the cleaning agent inside the bowl and then use the toilet bowl brush to scrub around the *inside* of the bowl. Shake the brush off inside the bowl and then place it back in the holster. Regular clean that holster with bleach or vinegar! (Same with your garbage cans!)

Showers: Keep a squeegee in the **shower** to wipe down the shower walls after you shower. This helps prevent mildew. Rinse the bathtub after using it to prevent soap build-up and water deposits from forming.

Remove toothbrushes, razors and other items from the counter before spraying cleaning agents.

Leave shower curtains open after a shower to prevent mildew.

Do you know what porcelain is and what is fiberglass in your bathroom?

- Porcelain should be scoured with a non-abrasive cleanser.
- Fiberglass is easily scratched so you should not "scour." Instead, scrub with a soft cloth and non-abrasive cleanser, or baking soda and water.
- Plastic toilet seats also scratch easy so clean thoroughly, but gently.

Rugs: Wash rugs frequently if they are washable or shake them outside. You can add baby powder or spritz lemon water on them to freshen them up. NOTE: Baby powder is not good for your lungs. Rugs get a lot of dust, powders and hair in them.

Plumbing - Preventative Maintenance:

- **What if I have a flood???** Keep an emergency shut-off wrench handy to turn off water at the main valve. The main valve is usually in the basement, garage or on the side of the house.
- **To help keep your drains clear,** pour a teakettle of boiling water down the kitchen, laundry, and bathroom sinks. (Do not pour down toilet!)
- **Use chemicals as a last resort - try vinegar!**
- **Do not pour anything into storm drains, specifically chemicals.** In most cities, this water does not get treated.



Consider using natural cleaning agents – those trusty products people have been using for decades!
Baking soda, lemon juice, white vinegar and fabric softener sheets are favorites!

Laundry



Washing machines need to be cleaned too! Run it on a rinse cycle now and again to clean it out. You can add bleach or vinegar for a good cleanse.

Rule number 1 to washing your clothes: separate the lights and darks. You can take it a step further by separating the darks between lighter darks and darker darks. For example, wash your red clothes with your black clothes.

Rule number 2: read the label on your clothes, especially if you aren't sure what the material is because it may need to be washed gently or not put in the dryer.

You can use new or used fabric softener sheets to freshen up your drawers!

Dry cleaning isn't always necessary. Keep Woolite on hand and try washing your delicates in the sink with Woolite. Rinse well and *gently* ring out the water and then hang the clothing item in a place where the water can drip without ruining anything or soaking your floors.

Stains! It's usually worth the effort of trying to remove stains with water before applying anything else. Remember to blot, not rub out the stains (because rubbing usually rubs it into the garment more)!

If water does not get the stain out, try Dawn dish soap!





If Dawn does not work try the following for the corresponding stains:

Blood: Mix ammonia with the water. Then, if the fabric can be bleached, try hydrogen peroxide.

Candle wax: Scrape it off with a butter knife. Then put a clean, absorbent cloth over and under the spot and iron the cloth to melt the wax onto the cloth.

Grass: use alcohol unless it is wool, silk or acetate. Otherwise, use Dawn, or a spot remover, or a laundry detergent.

Ink: If water, Dawn or spot remover does not work, try spraying it with hair spray and then blot it out. If that doesn't work, try alcohol or nail polish remover.

Leather & Suede: Dry clean only!



According to Don Aslett, author of *The Stainbuser's Bible*, here are Tools of the Trade that you should keep in your home:

- A spotting brush.
- A butter knife to use as a scraper.
- Clean white terry cloth.
- Liquid dishwashing detergent (Dawn).
- Clear household ammonia.
- White vinegar.
- Hydrogen peroxide (3% solution).
- Isopropyl alcohol.
- Enzyme digestant cleaner for extra tough stains. Soak fabric with this cleaner unless it's a dry clean only fabric. Otherwise you will need to mix the cleaner into a paste with water and apply for 15 – 30 minutes to the stain. Rinse out the stain area only.