Agricultural Extension Service
The University of Tennessee
SP459-B

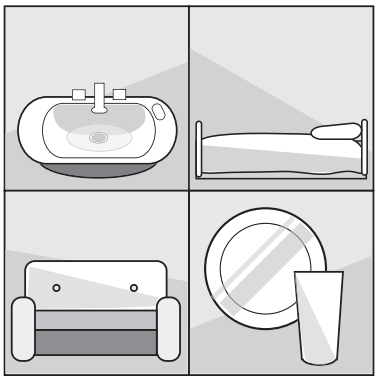
Household Cleaning

Planning Your Housework

Look for Easy Ways to Clean

It's easier to keep your house clean if you make a plan for all the cleaning jobs. People work at different speeds and have their own ways of doing household tasks. Does cleaning wear you out? You may be doing it the hard way!

- Don't try to do too many jobs in one day.
- Look for tools and ways to work that make the job easier.
- Bend, reach and stoop less. Let your tools work for you.
- Use long-handled tools to help.
- Work with both hands.
- Take fewer steps.
- Try new ideas.



What's Your Best Work Time?

There is no one best plan for cleaning. Some people feel better if they start by getting the dishes washed, the beds made and the living area put in order before doing other work. Others prefer to complete all the cleaning in one room before going on to another.

Cleaning Schedule

- Make beds every day.
- Wash dishes and put them away after each meal.
- Straighten up the living room once each day.
- Vacuum carpet at least once per week, or more often.
- Polish furniture once a week.
- Wash out refrigerator with warm water and baking soda at least once each month.
- Clean oven as needed.
- Mop floors when soiled or at least once per week.

Get Your Family to Help

Members of a family share the same home. Everyone should help keep the home clean, neat and safe.

If you have always done all the cleaning alone, perhaps no one else knows that housework needs to be shared by all.

Meet as a family group. Talk about the work that needs to be done to keep the home clean and neat. Help your family make a plan. When family members help make a plan, they work harder to do the work. Decide:

- What must be done.
- When it will be done.
- Who will do each job.

Young children enjoy helping. If you have small children, let them work along with you at least part of the time, even if you could do the job faster by working alone. Don't insist that everyone meet the highest standard, particularly when they are learning. Children like to try different jobs. Older children often like being completely responsible for certain jobs, rather than just helping.

Make a List

1. Make a list of household tasks which need to be done.
2. Check them off as they are completed.
3. Put the list where everyone can see it.

Day	What to do	Who will do it	When to do it
Monday	wash dishes	Jane	after each meal
	sweep kitchen floor	Tom	after breakfast
	mow grass	Father	after work
	make beds	Each make own	before breakfast
	wash & dry clothes	Mother	after work
	fold clothes	Jane	after school
	hang clothes & place in closet	Jane	after school

Keep all cleaning products away from young children.

This factsheet was originally developed by Nayda I. Torres, Associate Professor, Family and Consumer Economics, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. The material has been adapted for use in Tennessee by Martha Keel, Associate Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences – Housing and Environmental Health.

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