

Week 8 Homework

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In many households, spring is a cherished season. The sunlight increases by the day, new growth can be seen all around—the energy in the air is palpable. And what do so many households do with that new energy? They clean!

SPRING CLEANING IS DIFFERENT

Cleaning happens all year, but spring cleaning is a time to tackle all the projects that wouldn't be worth the effort on a daily, weekly, or even monthly basis.

In the next chapters we'll explore two categories of cleaning: washing/sanitizing and organizing. Below is a list of topics to be covered:

- Spring cleaning tasks
- Washing vs sanitizing
- Things that need to be cleaned on schedule and things that can wait
- Obstacles to getting your cleaning done
- Decluttering vs organizing
- Simple guidelines to declutter and organize

THE BEST PART...

...after you've tackled your list, you won't have to do it any of it again. Well, at least for a few months.

CHAPTER 2

Cleaning

“Housework can’t kill you....but why take the chance?” - *Phyllis Diller.*

A NECESSARY EVIL ?

Cleaning is often called a chore. For some it’s a loathsome activity. For others it’s an opportunity to see clear-cut results of their efforts. But does a home really need to be cleaned? And if so, how often?

Yes, a home needs to be cleaned, but what parts and how often are quite variable—in fact too many variables to list here!

Cleaning can help mitigate environmental factors that affect our health. However, almost everything is best in moderation. Cleaning beyond what is necessary can damage an item in addition to introducing more chemicals into the environment.

In the following chapter is a quick start guide to cleaning this spring. Before you know it, you’ll be sitting back enjoying the fruits of your labor.

SPRING CLEANING TASKS

A basic list to get you started. It's best to start small and get it done. When this list is complete, move to Chapter 3 *Decluttering and Organizing* on page 7 to tackle the next level of spring cleaning!

SPRING CLEANING LIST

1. Dust fan blades and vents
2. Wipe down walls and ceilings of bathrooms/kitchen, dust walls and ceilings of other rooms (stick a washcloth on the end of a Swifter for an easier job)
3. Clean/dust blinds, window sills and trims, and baseboards
4. Clean bedding (sheets, duvet, comforter)
5. Clean windows/mirrors
6. Deep clean floors (vacuum then scrub, mop, or carpet clean depending on the floor)
7. Replace air filter
8. Clean pillows (beds and couches)

Keep in mind this list is minimal. There are many more items that could be added, but being manageable is key. Also, there are several items on this list that in an ideal world would be happening weekly if not monthly (i.e. sheets should definitely be cleaned more than just in the spring).

WASHING VS SANITIZING

Washing, cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, sterilizing...is there a difference? There is.

- Cleaning (washing): Removes dirt and makes things *look* and *smell* clean.
- Sanitizing: Removes bacteria from surfaces (think kitchen surfaces).

- Disinfecting: Kills harmful bacteria and viruses on surfaces (think bathrooms or kitchen surfaces if your kitchen is a catch-all for eating and cleaning) .
- Sterilizing: Kills all microorganisms on surfaces (think hospital level cleaning).

When spring cleaning, the focus is on cleaning, not getting rid of bacterial and viral contaminants. However, if after cleaning certain surfaces you want to sanitize or disinfect, go to town!

In general, a good strategy for cleaning/sanitizing/disinfecting is:

-
- Step 1.** Remove loose dirt and or debris with a dry cloth or vacuum.
 - Step 2.** Wash item with appropriate cleaner
Dish soap, vinegar, baking soda, borax, and hydrogen peroxide are cheaper and easier on the lungs, eyes, and environment. However, they may take a little more elbow grease.
 - Step 3.** Rinse.
Often overlooked, it's important to remove the cleaning residue as it will attract dirt back to the surface.
 - Step 4.** Apply sanitizer or disinfectant
This could come in the form of a spray or a wipe.
 - Step 5.** Let the surface air dry or wipe after a set time.
The effects of either is often dependent on the amount and time spent on the surface being targeted.
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WHAT SHOULD BE CLEANED ON A SCHEDULE AND WHAT CAN WAIT?

This is a question that can only be answered by you (sorry!). Every person has a life schedule in varying environments with different family/pet dynamics that will dramatically alter what needs attention for cleaning.

A good rule of thumb to keep from going insane with the number of cleaning activities or conversely, by the dirt in your home, is set aside an hour over the weekend or fifteen to thirty minutes a day during the week to clean and organize and prioritize the spaces you spend the most time.

It's good to keep in mind that a home worth living in isn't necessarily the one without dust, dirt, bacteria, and viruses, but instead a place where people feel comfortable, breathe at ease, and have time to enjoy each other.

CHAPTER 3

Decluttering and Organizing

“Strive not to get more done, but to have less to do.” -*Francine Jay*

CLEANING OBSTACLES

One obstacle to cleaning is the *stuff*. Mopping the floor would be a breeze if you didn't have to move all the shoes piled up by the door.

Vacuuming would happen every day if the kids toys were lined up against all four walls.

Cleaning the bathroom sink could happen twice a day if it weren't for every manscaping product known to man (times three) sitting on the counter.

Cleaning (washing) isn't all that hard, but the cleaning (decluttering and organizing) that can come with it makes it seem insurmountable.

Spring cleaning is the perfect time to address the *stuff*, making cleaning easier to tackle on a more consistent basis.

DECLUTTERING VS ORGANIZING

This table best describes/shows the difference between decluttering and organizing.

TABLE 3-1

Decluttered, Organized, Both, or Neither

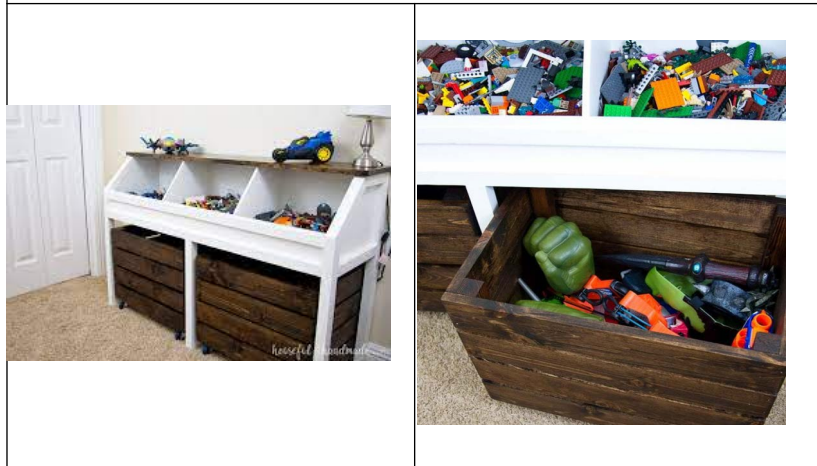
Neither! This is a space that has everything, but where is anything?

TABLE 3-1 (Continued)

Decluttered, Organized, Both, or Neither



Organized but cluttered. Maybe we are giving the gentleman in the photo a pass, but it does appear that the books are organized by size and style. However, it's unlikely another book could fit onto that table.



Decluttered. It looks like a tidy area. But upon closer inspection, it is not very organized.

It boils down to this...getting rid of what doesn't belong because it is either excessive or should be placed somewhere else (like a toothbrush in the flatware drawer) is decluttering. Organizing is having a system for placement that allows one to find things easily.

SIMPLE GUIDELINES TO DECLUTTER AND ORGANIZE

When starting remember, it's a process. Rooms will get cluttered and disorganized again and the next time you approach it, your standards might have changed. So don't hold yourself, the room, or the people you live with up to too high a standard. It's all about making life easier for you do to the things you need to do so you can spend more time doing the things you want to do.

Decluttering and Organizing Guidelines:

- Declutter first. Get rid of what you don't need or want and you'll have less to organize!
 - Create four piles
 - * Keep
 - * Give away/throw away
 - * Maybe
 - * Put back where it belongs (bring that toothbrush back to the bathroom).
 - Remember, decluttering is about eliminating the superfluous, the things that get in the way. If something doesn't fit literally or figuratively, it may fit someone else great.
 - Keep in mind that you are letting go of a physical item, not what you thought that item would do for you.
- Organizing is about streamlining and efficiency. Though we often think of organized as aesthetically pleasing, it doesn't have to look good as much as it has to work well.
- What works for person A may not work for person B. Try a method, and tweak it as you need to.

- Containers, dividers, label makers...all good things, but don't go to the container store just yet. See what you can do without all the extra gadgets (too often they become the clutter down the road).