

# 51 House Cleaning Shortcuts



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According to a survey done by the Soap and Detergent Association (SDA):

- 98% of people feel good about themselves when their house is clean.
- 97% of people believe their families appreciate a clean home.

That said, housecleaning can be a very overwhelming job. This ebook is designed to help keep your home clean without all the stress



## **ONE-MINUTE CHORES**

Only have a minute for cleaning? No problem. This first set of tips will give you some ideas for chores that take less than a minute.

### **1. Dust One Thing**

It only takes a minute to choose one thing and dust it. You can either use a feather duster, a dust spray and a rag, or a dust wipe. Here are some things you can dust quickly:

- TV screens
- Shelves
- Blinds
- Ceiling fans
- Air Vents

### **2. Change Vacuum Bag**

It doesn't take much time at all to change your vacuum bag, and it can make your vacuum run more efficiently. A good tip is to take your vacuum outside to change it so the dust from the bag doesn't go back into the room.

### **3. Clean a Mirror**

A clean mirror makes a room look cleaner. If you don't have glass cleaner and paper towels, try vinegar and old newspaper. This is a lot less expensive and it works just as well.

## **4. Change Towels**

Fresh towels make a room smell great, whether they're in the kitchen or the bathroom. It takes less than a minute, and it freshens up the whole room.

## **5. Change Trash Bags**

Even if you don't have time to take the trash all the way out, just taking full bags out of the cans and replacing them with clean bags can help tidy up when you only have a minute.

## **6. Sort Today's Mail**

Mail can really pile up if left alone. If you take 30 seconds every day to organize that day's mail, you'll have a lot less clutter. Don't be afraid to throw away junk mail.

## **7. Treat a Stain**

Got an extra minute? Treat that nasty stain that you noticed last week. Here are some tips:

- Flush stains with water.
- Blot the stain with a dry cloth.
- Apply a mild cleaner and let set.
- Blot again.

## **8. Take Care of Plants**

A minute is more than enough time to care for your favorite houseplants. If they need water, fill a pitcher so you can water them all faster. Take a pair of scissors with you to snip off dead vines or leaves.

## **9. Wipe Down Forgotten Areas**

Grab a wet washcloth and quickly wipe down areas that might be forgotten when cleaning. Areas like:

- Doorknobs
- Remote controls
- Light switches
- Handles
- Telephones

## **10. Sweep Entryways**

Most entryways are small and take less than a minute to sweep. Grab your broom and dustpan and you'll be finished before you begin. You can even cheat and sweep dust onto the carpet, then use the carpet-sweeper to clean it up.

## **11. Shake out a Floor Mat**

Floor mats are sometimes forgotten during cleaning. If you have an extra minute, grab a mat or two and shake them out outside. This will reduce the amount of dust in your home as well as keep those mats fresh and clean.

## **12. Collect Garbage in a Room**

If you don't have time to clean a whole room but want to make it look a little bit better, clear out the garbage. Grab a trash bag or a waste paper basket and start stuffing. You'll find that this improves the look of a room dramatically.



## **GOOD HABBITS TO START**

As you start developing simple housecleaning habits, you'll notice that your work will get easier and easier. This next set of tips will give you some great ideas of good habits to start.

### **13. Delegate**

Housework can be a huge job. Learn to delegate. Make chore charts for everyone in your house. Even small children can help pick up toys and other things. As you learn that you don't have to do it all, housework will become much easier.

### **14. Fill the Sink**

A good habit to start is filling your sink with hot soapy water every time you start to cook. This way you can "clean as you go." As you get done with each pot or dish, wash it quickly. This makes clean-up a snap.

### **15. Spray the Oven**

Time for take-out? If there's a day when you're not using your oven, give it a quick spray of oven cleaner and forget about it. The next day, before you turn on your oven, give it a quick wipe down. You'll find that the baked on stuff comes off much easier.

## **16. Have a Charity Box**

It's a good idea to keep a box or bag in your front closet that you put things you don't need anymore. This really helps get rid of clutter in your home. When the box is full, simply drop it off at your local good will store.

## **17. Rinse Your Plate**

This may be a small tip, but it can help in big ways. If you simply make it a habit to rinse your plate after dinner (and have all family members do the same), it will make washing them a lot easier. No one likes trying to wash dried food off of dishes.

## **18. Tackle the Small Jobs**

Housework can be overwhelming. Learn to break it down and tackle the smaller jobs first. As you do, each job will become easier. Also, if you clean the small messes before they get big, it'll be a lot easier to clean up.

## **19. Keep Cleaner in the Shower**

A great shortcut for cleaning your tub and shower is to keep a bottle of shower cleaner handy. After you take a bath or shower, spray it down. You can take it a step further and keep a squeegee in it as well.

## **20. Fast Pick Up Before Bed**

If you make it a habit to do a quick pick up before going to bed, it'll really help. You'll find that it's easier to wake up and feel good about the day if even one room is clean.

## **21. Line Your Fridge**

If you make it a habit to line your fridge shelves with paper towels, it'll make it a lot easier to clean. This will work especially well in the crispers, as the paper towels will soak up any extra wetness.

## **22. Take a Trash Bag With You**

As you leave the house, make it a habit to take the trash out. This is a simple tip, but why make extra trips if you don't need to? This is also a great job to delegate to a teenager. They're always coming and going anyway.





## KITCHEN

Your kitchen gets used every day. Without maintaining small messes, you can have a big cleaning job every day. This next set of tips will help you keep your kitchen clean and manageable.

### 23. Microwave

Here's a good shortcut to cleaning your microwave: Fill up a cup of water and put it in there on high for a few minutes. The steam from the cup will loosen any stuck-on food, and then you can just wipe it away.

### 24. Baking Soda

Baking soda has many practical uses, especially in the kitchen. Here are a few ideas:

- Put an open box in your fridge and freezer to eliminate odors and bad tastes.
- Sprinkle some in the bottom of your trashcans.
- Sprinkle some down your drain and garbage disposal to eliminate odors.

### 25. Fridge

Cleaning your fridge can be a big job, but here are a few tips to make it a bit easier:

- Toss out any bad food.
- Start with wiping down the top shelves and work down.
- Baking soda and water make a great cleaner and won't leave your fridge smelling like harsh cleanser.
- After you wipe out the crisper, line them with paper towels for easier cleaning next time.

## **26. Washing Dishes**

Washing dishes can really be overwhelming. Here are some tips to make this grueling task a bit easier:

- Invest in a scrubber that you can put soap in the handle. This way you can “wash as you go,” eliminating huge piles of dirty dishes.
- Soak all dishes that have dried on food. This lets you use less elbow grease.
- Wash in groups—silverware, glasses, bowls, plates, pots and pans.

## **27. Wipe Down**

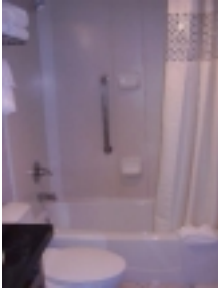
After the dishes are done and put away, don't forget the wipe-down. This makes your kitchen have that extra clean look. When you're wiping down, don't forget:

- Counter tops
- Stove
- Sink
- Faucets
- Cupboard doors
- Table
- Chairs

## **28. Sweep and Mop**

The very last thing you need to clean in your kitchen is the floor. There are lots of brooms and mops on the market these days. Make sure to use a broom and mop that best fit the needs of your floor.

# BATHROOM



Cleaning the bathroom is something that nobody likes to do. Unfortunately, it needs to be done, not only to make it look better, but to eliminate germs that can cause illness. Below you'll find a few tips to make cleaning your bathroom more effective and easy.

## 29. Toilet

Cleaning the toilet is a grueling job, but fortunately, it can be done fast. Here are a few steps to follow to get it done quickly:

- 1<sup>st</sup>—Pour some cleaner in the bowl to soak.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>—Wipe down the seat and outside of the bowl with an antibacterial wipe or spray cleaner.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>—Scrub the bowl with a toilet brush.
- 4<sup>th</sup>—Wipe down everything again with a dry cloth to make it shine.

## 30. Mirrors

Mirrors can be very tricky to clean because if you don't have the right tools, they can look worse than before you started. Make sure you use glass cleaner (usually blue) or vinegar, and use paper towels or newspaper to wipe them (not cloth as it will leave residue).

## **31. Bathtub**

Bathtubs can be awkward to clean, because there are many hard-to-reach places. Here are a few things that may help:

- Use a cleanser that will foam or bubble. This allows you to “soak” your tub or shower, even if it’s a vertical wall.
- Shop around for a tub scrubber that fits your needs. Whether it’s a long-handled one or an extra firm one, pick a scrubber that will be easiest for you to use.
- As mentioned earlier, spraying the tub or shower down after each use can make deep cleaning easier.

## **32. Wipe Down the Sink**

Wiping down the sink and counter is easier if you first fill the sink with hot soapy water. Keep dipping your washcloth or sponge into it until everything is clean. Don’t forget to dry everything so it’ll really sparkle.



## LIVING ROOM

The living room is usually the first thing that visitors see when they come to your home. It's also the room that can get the messiest. This next set of tips will help you keep your living room clean and inviting.

### 33. Pick Up

First do a quick pick up. Here are some important points:

- Put everything in its place (remotes controls, magazines, etc.).
- Throw trash in the trash can.
- Put things that don't belong into laundry baskets, so they're easier to put away later.

### 34. Dust

As mentioned earlier, dusting doesn't take very long, but it can really help make your living room look great. Here's a list of things not to forget:

- Blinds
- Air Vents
- TV screens
- Shelves
- Ceiling fans

## **35. Vacuum**

Vacuuming really finishes a clean room. Use your vacuum's attachments to make sure you get the hard to reach places. Don't forget:

- Couch cushions
- Room edges
- Under the couch
- Curtains
- Window sills



## **BEDROOM**

You spend almost half of your life in your bedroom, so keeping it clean is important. Here are some tips to keep your bedroom looking great:

## **36. Make the Bed**

Making the bed will make any room cleaner. It doesn't take very long, and it really pulls the room together. It helps to have a thick, lightweight comforter that can easily be thrown on without a lot of smoothing or tucking. Pillows really make a bed look good as well.

## **37. Put Away Clothes**

Put away all clothes. Whether they need to be folded and put in a dresser, hung up, or put in the dirty clothes hamper, managing clothes is very important.

### **38. Clean off Dresser**

You dresser top can get cluttered very quickly. Make it a habit to clear it off every time you clean your room, and it will get easier each time. It's also a good idea to wipe down your dresser with a damp cloth.



### **GENERAL SHORTCUTS**

You're almost there! This last set of tips will give you additional shortcuts for cleaning the house. Some of them are hardly conventional, but sometimes you just have to get creative—especially when you're in a hurry.

### **39. Fast Window Cleaning**

Got a big window that needs to be cleaned super quick? Try only pulling the blinds up halfway, and only cleaning the bottom half of the window. As stated earlier, vinegar and newspaper work well in a pinch.

### **40. Carpet Sweeping**

It helps to have a carpet sweeper or a cordless hand vacuum handy. This way you don't need to drag the big vacuum out every time your floor needs a quick clean-up.

## **41. Pet Hair**

Pet hair can be hard to control, especially on furniture. Here are a couple of ideas for fast clean up:

- Ball up an old pair of pantyhose and rub them all over your furniture—they're really great at picking up pet hair.
- Buy a cheap lint roller (the kind with sticky tape) and roll it over the furniture.

## **42. Do the Towel Shuffle**

Who would have thought a house-cleaning tip would mean doing a dance? If your floor needs a good mopping but you don't have time, simply wet two towels, put one under each foot, and "shuffle" them across the room. You'll find this quite effective as well as fun.

## **43. Cleaner Alternatives**

Out of cleaners? Here are some things that you can use to clean instead of store bought cleaners:

- Vinegar
- Baking soda
- Lemon juice



## **44. Laundry Baskets**

Laundry baskets aren't just for laundry anymore. You can get them at almost any dollar store, and they can really speed up housework. Here are some ideas:

- When cleaning a room, put all the things that don't belong in that room in a basket. Then put the baskets in the rooms that they go in.
- Use a basket to carry dishes from the dining area to the sink.
- Use baskets to separate magazines.
- Give each household member a basket. When cleaning, line up the basket in the room you're cleaning and put belongings in corresponding baskets. Have each family member put away the things in their basket.

## **45. Decorative Baskets**

Decorative baskets are a great way to hide clutter. Take a trip to your local dollar store and invest in some fancy baskets of all sizes. Use them to organize. Here are some things you can use them for:

- Mail
- Magazines
- Couch pillows
- Remotes

## **46. Go Paper**

Don't be afraid to use paper plates and plastic utensils. This reduces the clean-up time to almost nothing. You can even dress up paper plates with wicker holders, and utensils with colorful ribbon.

## **47. Spray Dust Mop**

No time for a full mopping? Try giving your floor a good spraying with your favorite cleaner, then go over it with a mop. Depending on the cleaner, you may need to then spray your floor again with just water, and mop again to remove any residue.

## **48. Music**

Every grueling task is easier when music is involved. Find yourself some good music to clean to, and you'll find that time goes by much faster. In no time, the CD is over, and your house is clean.

## **49. Good Smells**

A clean house may be the first thing people see as they come to visit, but what are they smelling? An inviting smell in your home is just as important as keeping it clean. Here are some things you can use:

- Spray air fresheners
- Candles
- Plug-in air fresheners
- Scented pine cones
- Scented oil lamps
- Potpourri

## **50. Make a Plan**

Housework is a lot less overwhelming if you have a plan. If you divide chores up into specific time blocks, or even days, they will be a lot easier to tackle. Don't forget to make fun chore charts for the kids.

## **51. Know When to Quit**

With housework, there will always be something else to clean and organize. It's important to know when to quit. When wiping down a cupboard door, resist the temptation to pull everything out of that cupboard and reorganize; save that for another day.