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House Care and Cleaning

MARY B. SETTLE

Home Improvement Specialist

Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute
and the United States Department of Agriculture, Cooperating.
Extension Division, Jno. R. Hutcheson, Director,
Blacksburg, Virginia.

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“Cleanliness is next to godliness” and “order is the first law of beauty.” These old sayings point out the truth of the fact that cleanliness and order are means to important ends rather than ends in themselves. We desire both because they contribute to freedom from irritation in our immediate surroundings, health of body, repose of spirit, and beauty. Cleanliness and order in the home are attained only by continuous and cooperative effort, but the results are often far-reaching in effect. The actual processes of securing this desirable condition, however, should be made as easy as possible, with the least necessary use of time, energy and money.

Problems involved in the care of cleaning of a house include:

1. The removal of dust and dirt.
2. Order in appearance.
3. Sorting and arranging, especially as to closets, cupboards, and other storage spaces.
4. Repairs and renovations.

Factors contributing to good results and satisfaction are several:

1. Good planning for distribution of time and effort.
2. Use of proper tools and energy-saving ways of work.
3. Methods and materials used in specific cleaning tasks.

A PLAN FOR CLEANING

Every homemaker who is successful in keeping her home in good order follows some type of a definite plan or schedule of work. The best plan is the one which accounts for all the kinds of cleaning necessary through the year, distributing them so that physical and nervous strain are avoided, and the house is kept, rather than just made, clean. The woman who finds herself and her family constantly dissatisfied with the condition of the house, might well give thoughtful attention to the improvement of her plan. It might be possible to plan not only a better distribution of work through the weeks and months, but a better division of responsi-

bility among workers or family members. When making such a plan, **list all kinds** of cleaning which must be done in your home. Decide which must be done daily, which once or twice weekly, and which must be done occasionally or seasonally. Then work these into a **seasonal or monthly plan** for the year, **weekly plans** for a month at a time, and **daily plans** for one week at a time. When all the tasks are worked into such plans or schedules, it is surprising how easily it all gets done without anyone's being overworked!

For the occasional and seasonal cleaning tasks there are several possible ways of planning. Some good managers like to do completely one room at a time; others like to take specific jobs in two or more rooms on the same day, such as cleaning closets, washing curtains, etc. The same plan would not be satisfactory to every one, but at least many good housekeepers are learning that semi-annual housecleaning orgies are entirely unnecessary. A more evenly distributed cleaning program spares the family and the homemaker, and does not upset the usual routine of the household.

EQUIPMENT FOR CLEANING

Selection

Choice of equipment and tools should depend upon their effectiveness in doing particular jobs well with the least use of time and human energy. Long-handled mops, brushes, and dustpans are a first requirement for saving the housewife. One's posture in working is partly controlled by the kinds of equipment one has to use, and health is accordingly affected. One should practice doing cleaning tasks in the manner which puts the least physical strain upon the worker. A safe stepladder makes all high work more safely and easily done.

Care

Proper care of equipment is required for efficient cleaning.

Brushes should be washed often. Use 1 tbsp. ammonia to 1 qt. warm water.

Mops may be washed in hot suds, rinsed, and dried. Polish mops may be renewed after washing by pouring just a few drops of a good polish in a tin can or pan and letting the mop stand in it for a day or two.

Dust cloths should be washed frequently. To prepare or renew a **dustless dustcloth**—

(1) Wring cloth from hot water containing 1 tbsp. kerosene or $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp. light lubricating oil.

(2) Pour about 2 or 3 tbsps. of any polish into a pint or quart jar or can. Pour the polish out again, then put a clean soft cloth into the empty jar. Let stand until the next day and cloth will be completely permeated with just enough polish.

A **Cleaning Closet** is needed in every house to keep conveniently the equipment and supplies for the housecleaning work. Space should provide for hanging brooms and mops by rings or screw eyes; shelves for polishes and cleaners; pockets or racks for cloths and small tools. Waxed or oiled cloths should be kept in closed metal or glass containers. A **cleaning basket** or "housemaid's tray," any shallow sturdy basket about 12"x16", is useful for carrying small supplies from room to room.

CLEANING MATERIALS

Materials essential for the care and cleaning of the house include:

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|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Carbon tetrachloride | Gasoline |
| Water | Fuller's earth |
| Soap | Whiting |
| Washing soda | Trisodium phosphate |
| Household ammonia | Prepared or homemade: |
| Kerosene | Cleaning mixtures |
| Vinegar | Floor and furniture polish |
| Linseed oil | Floor and furniture wax |
| Turpentine | |

Soap and water are the two cheapest and most generally useful cleaners we have. An abundant supply of running water and a good drainage system make the care of the house much easier, and lessen the cost in time and energy. The money cost of soap can be reduced in several ways:

1. Buy soap in quantity to have it well dried before using.
2. Utilize soap scraps in soap shaker for dish washing or as soap jelly.
3. Make soap at home if surplus fats are available and other factors make it an economical practice. (For directions, see Mimeo. Cir. 13,902, **Homemade Laundry Soap.**)
4. Use water softener with hard water to lessen amount of soap needed.

Water softeners usually used are:

1. **Washing soda solution**—completely dissolve 1 lb. washing soda in 1 qt. boiling water. Cool and store in labeled glass jars. Use the smallest amount necessary to get a quick lather with soap, perhaps 2 tbsp. to 1 gal. of moderately hard water.

2. Household ammonia solution—1 part concentrated ammonia to 7 parts water. Keep in covered glass jar or tightly stoppered bottles, labeled.

Soap Jelly is convenient for many cleaning purposes. It is especially recommended for use in cleaning rugs and some upholstery.

1 cup neutral soap flakes dissolved in 2 qts. hot water or 1 bar mild soap boiled in 1 gal. water

Allow soap solution to cool, then add 1 tbsp. ammonia solution. Let stand until cooled to jelly-like consistency. If water is hard, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup washing soda may be dissolved with the soap in the hot water. Keep jelly in wide mouthed glass or crockery jar.

Oil Cleaner for Varnished and Shellacked Woods.—A good cleaner for any soiled varnished, shellacked, painted, or oiled surface.

1 qt. hot water 3 tbsp. linseed oil 1 tbsp. turpentine

Mix oils well with the water. Wash wood with cloth wrung out of this solution. Rub dry with another clean dry cloth.

Oil Polishes

All of these homemade preparations are harmless to wood finishes and actually serve to preserve them. They are equally appropriate for use on floors, wood furniture, and woodwork having similar finishes.

Oil Polish No. 1.—Equal parts linseed oil and turpentine.

Oil Polish No. 2.—Equal parts linseed oil, turpentine and vinegar.

Oil Polish No. 3.—One part raw linseed oil, 2 parts turpentine, plus a little melted beeswax.

Oil Polish No. 4.—One part motor lubricating oil, 8 or 10 parts kerosene or gasoline.

To use these four polishes, treat dust cloths or mops as directed under "Equipment."

Homemade Wax

While there are good paste and liquid waxes on the market, it is often practical to make these at home.

Wax No. 1.— $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. beeswax and $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. paraffin melted together in a quart jar or can set in hot water. Remove from fire, fill jar with turpentine, and stir frequently until cooled to a paste.

Wax No. 2.— $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. beeswax, 1 lb. paraffin, $1\frac{1}{4}$ pts. turpentine, $\frac{1}{4}$ pt. raw linseed oil. Melt waxes, remove from heat, and add turpentine and oil. Stir well.

Wax No. 3.— $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. beeswax or $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. paraffin or $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. each wax; $\frac{1}{2}$ pt. turpentine, $\frac{1}{4}$ pt. denatured alcohol. Prepare as directed for Nos. 1 and 2.

When using these or other waxes on floors, furniture, or woodwork, apply a very small amount with a soft cloth, allow to dry about 30 minutes, then rub with the grain of the wood until no free wax remains and a sheen results.

METHODS OF CLEANING

Methods and materials for doing certain cleaning jobs vary quite a bit. Select those which accomplish a desired result quickly and easily, without harm to the article being cleaned, and at a minimum expense. The factor of safety to the worker must not be overlooked. Exercise proper care and caution when using inflammable materials or poisons.

Bathroom Fixtures

Wash bowl and tub—

1. Whiting and kerosene; wash with soap, rinse, dry.
2. Whiting and trisodium phosphate, equal parts; rinse and dry.
3. To remove rust stains: 1 tsp. oxalic acid (poison) to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water; apply to stain, wash thoroughly.

Nickel, brass, or chromium fixtures—

1. Wash with warm, soapy water; rinse and rub dry.
2. Use whiting or other fine abrasive if scouring is needed.

Toilet bowl—

1. Flush, wash with hot soap suds or washing soda solution, using long, handled brush, flush again.
2. Trisodium phosphate—put small handful in bowl and let stand overnight; wash, flush.

Closets and Cupboards

These should have their contents removed and be overhauled, at such intervals as may seem necessary for keeping them in good order. If the walls and shelves are smoothly finished with enamel or varnish, they may be washed readily. This is the most satisfactory method for cleaning closet interiors. Dresser drawers should be similarly treated. Use mild soap suds or ammonia; wipe dry.

Curtains

Wash sheer window curtains frequently enough to prevent dust rotting the material away. Soak in water to which has been added 2 tbsp. kerosene to a gallon of water. Wash in warm suds, using a neutral soap. Do not rub fabric but squeeze suds through; rinse well.

1. Put on stretchers to dry, or
2. Hang curtains while still damp on their rods; pull them into shape and smoothness. Run a rod through lower hems to weight them down as they dry, or
3. Fold the curtains carefully lengthwise, then iron dry.

Draperies and Slip Covers

These may be laundered or dry-cleaned, depending upon the kind of fabric and fastness of colors.

Washable fabrics may be laundered in warm water with neutral soap and carefully ironed.

Non-washable fabrics, or doubtful ones, can usually be dry-cleaned satisfactorily. Heavy materials or large articles should be sent to a cleaning establishment, since the lack of adequate home equipment or the amount of cleaning fluid necessary makes that a more practical and economical plan.

Floors

General care of finished floors consists of sweeping with a soft floor brush or a broom, and dusting with a ready-made or home-made mop.

Different types of floor finishes require variations in the manner of doing more thorough cleaning.

Oiled floors should be dusted with a slightly oiled mop. For a more thorough cleaning, wash with warm soapy water, rinse, and dry; then wipe with oiled cloth or mop.

Painted floors may be dusted with a dry or an oiled mop. They may be cleaned by wiping with a damp cloth, let dry, and rubbed with oiled cloth or mop. Very soiled floors may be washed with warm soapy water, rinsed, dried, and polished. Avoid using strong soaps or alkali, or allowing water to stand on floor. If painted floor is kept waxed, follow directions for waxed floors.

Varnished or shellacked floors may be kept clean and polished ordinarily by wiping with a slightly oiled mop or cloth. If the floor is very soiled, clean with a cloth or mop wrung out of warm soapy water. Wipe dry at once; re-polish with an oil polish or with a paste wax.

Waxed floors should be cared for with floor brush, mop, or soft cloths, always free from oil. A slightly soiled waxed floor can be brightened by wiping with a cloth dampened with turpentine or kerosene. Very soiled waxed floors can be thoroughly cleaned with turpentine, kerosene, or gasoline. They may be washed instead with a cloth wrung out of warm soapy water and dried with a clean soft cloth.

After a thorough cleaning, the floor should be rewaxed by applying a thin, even coat of paste wax, allowing it to dry about 30 minutes, then polishing it vigorously. Use a weighted polisher or a woolen cloth over a brick.

Floor Coverings

Wool Rugs.—A soiled rug can be cleaned of dirt and dust by washing with soap and water, provided a test on an inconspicuous corner proves the colors fast.

To clean rug.—With a little warm water whip into a soft suds a small amount of previously prepared soap jelly. Apply suds to small section of rug at a time, using a brush in a circular motion. As each section is cleaned, rinse off thoroughly with a soft cloth or sponge wrung out of warm water. Change rinse water frequently. Dry rug quickly. When dry, brush well with the nap.

Linoleum is cleaned according to kind and finish.

Printed linoleums are easier cleaned if kept finished with slightly thinned spar varnish. Clean as directed for varnished and shellacked wood floors.

Inlaid linoleums are usually waxed for protection; apply home-made wax as directed for woods. The care of waxed linoleum is the same as waxed wood.

Furniture

Wood surfaces of furniture are kept in condition by dusting thoroughly with clean lintless cloths. The duster prepared as previously directed under "equipment" removes dust more completely than a dry cloth and helps to preserve the finish.

To remove a greasy film or foggy appearance from oiled, varnished, or shellacked furniture, use oil cleaner as directed under "materials."

Scouring Liquid (for removing gummy film)—

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| $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fine pumice | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup turpentine |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ cup linseed oil | $\frac{1}{4}$ cup alcohol |
| 2 tbsp. oxalic acid crystals | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water |

Mix in a jar or bottle. Shake before using. Apply with soft cloth, removing all traces with clean, soft cloths. Polish with piece of flannel or chamois.

Painted, enameled or lacquered furniture can ordinarily be cleaned by dusting with a dry or slightly damp cloth. Warm, soapy water with a very little ammonia may be used for more soiled surfaces. Rinse and dry.

Upholstered furniture needs frequent brushing, watching all grooves and cracks especially lest it become moth infested. Much dust can be removed sometimes by covering the piece with a damp cloth, then beating gently with a flat beater. The cloth will catch the dust. A more thorough cleaning can be given upholstery fabrics, which have been tested for fastness of color, by following directions given for cleaning wool rugs. Carbon tetrachloride may be used to dry-clean fabrics which cannot be washed.

Leather. Make a very thick suds of mild soap. Add a little alcohol and linseed oil. Wring a cloth out of this solution and go over the leather, a small portion at a time. Be sure that the edges of the cleaned parts overlap. Wipe dry with a clean, soft cloth. When dry, go over it with a slightly oiled cloth, taking care not to leave any excess oil.

Walls

Walls, both painted and papered, can be kept free of dust with a wall brush or a covered broom. Light strokes should be used. A bag made of cotton flannel outing or any soft heavy material can be slipped over the broom and tied on securely by a tape run through a narrow hem; washed frequently this is even more satisfactory than some wall brushes.

Painted walls can be washed with mild soap and water; rinse with clear water; wipe dry. If walls are very soiled, add a little turpentine or household ammonia to the soapy wash water. After painted walls are washed, they may be protected by a coating of very thin laundry starch applied with a wide brush. When the wall becomes soiled, the starch is washed off and renewed.

Papered walls.—Varnished or washable wallpapers may be cleaned by wiping with cloth wrung out of clear lukewarm water and drying with a clean cloth. A little mild soap may be used if really needed.

Other wallpapers may sometimes be cleaned satisfactorily by using a prepared wallpaper cleaner or this homemade one.

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| 1½ cups flour | 2 tbsp. vinegar |
| ½ cup warm water | 2 tbsp. ammonia |
| 2 tbsp. salt | 1 tbsp. kerosene |

Mix flour and salt together, add all liquid ingredients, and cook in a double boiler until all raw starch has disappeared. Stir as long as possible, then cut and fold until cooked; remove from kettle and knead in the hands a moment until the mass is elastic; place in a covered can until cooled. Use as any other wall dough is used, cleaning one strip at a time and folding dough over as the surface becomes soiled. If each strip cleaned is slightly overlapped, streaks will be avoided.

Calcimined walls cannot be cleaned but must be re-calcimined when soiled.

Woodwork

The cleaning of woodwork may be done according to its finish by any of the methods and materials already described for floors, furniture, or walls having the same kinds of finish. **Another cleaner** used often for varnished woodwork consists of equal parts of hot water, kerosene, and vinegar. After being wiped with cloth wrung out of this mixture, the woodwork must be rubbed dry with a clean dry cloth.

Windows and Mirrors

These are best cleaned with substances other than soap. A little ammonia, alcohol, kerosene, or washing soda added to warm water is more satisfactory. Clear alcohol is excellent, especially in cold weather, but too expensive for ordinary use. Lintless cloths or chamois should be used for polishing glass dry. Light cleaning may be done by rubbing with soft paper.

Dry cleaning may be done by applying to the glass a thin paste of whiting or commercial cleaning powder and water. Allow to dry, then rub off with soft cloth. This makes a gloss shine but is a dusty process and should precede other cleaning in a room.

Paint may be removed by scraping or softening with turpentine.

TO MAKE CLEANING EASY

Provide good storage spaces for keeping things. Rooms are much easier to keep in order if there are adequate places for all kinds of articles which otherwise tend to clutter up.

Prevent dirt in the house by keeping a well grassed yard and having good walks; use door mat at each outside door and a metal bootscraper for removing mud; have muddy shoes cleaned outside; clean window and door sills, porch, steps, and walks frequently.

Eliminate dust collectors wherever possible. Discard unnecessary small articles or bric-a-brac; avoid grooved and elaborate woodwork or furniture, rough finished walls, superfluous drapes or hangings; fill cracks in floors.

Seek family cooperation in all efforts to keep the house in a condition which gives comfort and pleasure to all.