

Pre-clean your house

Pick up some daily habits that lessen the load when it's time for chores.

Make the bed
Do this basic task every morning and the whole bedroom will look tidier. It also protects your sheets from dust, dirt and pet hair.

Sort the mail
Prevent heaps of envelopes and catalogs from building up by going through the influx each day. Toss out, recycle or shred the junk immediately and file bills away in the proper place.

Bring out a broom
Give the kitchen floor a quick sweep every evening. Removing debris daily makes weekly mopping easier.

Take off
Leave shoes by the door. This simple step stops dirt from being tracked around the house and prolongs the life of rugs and carpets.

Wipe down
Squeeze the shower stall before you get out. Keep disinfecting wipes under the sink and use them on the basin and toilet tank every day to prevent buildup.

Wash as you go
Try to take care of at least one load of laundry every day (maybe assign each family member his or her own day) so you don't spend the whole weekend battling a huge pile.

In the kitchen

Freshen up
1 Deodorize your home with fragrance-free crystals. Simply open the jar to activate. The product eliminates annoying smells including fish aromas.

Odor-neutralizing crystals, *Fresh Wave*, \$9, at *Container Store*.

Let it flow
2 Unclog drains in an eco-friendly way. The natural enzymes in this cleaner break down grease, fat and other organic matter that cause a drain to slow, leaving it free-flowing and fresh-smelling.

Bac-Out drain care, *BioKleen*, \$9, *drugstore.com*.

Scrub a dub
3 Made of recycled corncobs and peach pits, these naturally abrasive scrubbers require little if any soap and last for several months. The gentle texture of the pink one is ideal for wood and plastic; the coarse yellow one works well on kitchenware.

Spaghetti scrubbers, \$9 each, *uncommongoods.com*.

Sparkle with ease
4 Toss your old mop and clean floors effortlessly with this model. Its vibrating baseplate with microfiber pad gets the job done quickly.

Motion mop with cleaner, *Bona*, \$50; at select hardware stores.

25% off
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COOK AND CLEAN
Fill the dishwasher with dirty pots and pans as you prepare a meal; tackle hand-wash items while food is simmering or baking.

In the yard

De-gunk surfaces

1 To loosen dirt that has accumulated on window screens, try a sponge with attached strips of scrubbing fiber. A grooved sponge makes cleaning grills (as well as broilers, oven grates and roasting pans) a simple task.

Microfiber window-screen sponges, \$7 for 2, and grill sponge, \$8 for 3, *casabella.com*.

Clean it all
2 Simply mix this powder with water and use it to remove stains from a variety of items including decks, siding, upholstery and even gym shoes. Soak the item in the solution, spray it on or mop the floor with it.

\$15, *stainsolver.com*.

Get down and dirty

3 Clean outdoor furniture, decks, awnings, umbrellas, boats and RVs with a ferocious formula that can even remove tree sap, bird droppings and mildew.

Patio furniture cleaner, *Goo Gone*, \$5; bedbathandbeyond.com.



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