



CLEANLINESS FACTS

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

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HOUSE FOR SALE!

Tips for Getting It Buyer-Ready

When a house is for sale, the goal is to make it as attractive as possible to potential buyers. The most cost-efficient way to spruce up the home is to clean it thoroughly, advises The Soap and Detergent Association.

Getting Rid of Clutter

Many potential buyers may not see past dirt and clutter. If the house is crowded with the owner's "stuff," they will assume that the house is too small for their possessions. Too much clutter also poses a safety — *and buying* — hazard! A person who trips over items left on the stairs is unlikely to have a good feeling about the house. In addition, a clean, clutter-free environment is more attractive than a grimy, untidy one.

Begin by purging the house, including the basement, attic and garage, of items that are no longer needed. Things that are in good condition can be sold or donated to a charity. The remainder can be thrown in the trash. Rooms will appear more spacious, closets will look bigger and shelves will look roomier to potential buyers.

Time to Clean

Focus on the rooms that potential buyers are most interested in — living room, dining room, kitchen and bathroom. Look at each room as a potential buyer might and see what catches the eye first. Make that the starting point for the cleaning process. Then, follow the top-to-bottom, left-to-right rule for cleaning each room. That way, no surface is overlooked.

Give major attention to the kitchen and bathrooms. Check the labels on cleaning products to make sure they are appropriate for the surfaces to be cleaned. Abrasive cleansers provide extra cleaning power for hard-to-remove soils like food particles and grease

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Attention Readers!

We want to hear about your toughest stain!
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residue in sinks. However, they may be too harsh for surfaces that are easily scratched, such as laminate or solid surface countertops. In general, liquid and gel cleansers are less abrasive than powders.

Spray cleaners are easy to use for small areas, such as countertops, while powders or liquids mixed in a pail of water are more efficient for larger areas, such as walls and floors. Floors can become cloudy from cleaning solution residue, making them look dirty when they're actually clean. To prevent this, use a no-rinse product or rinse the floor well after each cleaning.

Combat Mold & Mildew

Mold and mildew are especially problematic in bathrooms. With all the publicity concerning the illnesses that mold can cause, prospective home buyers are more sensitive than ever about its presence. Use liquid household bleach or cleaners with bleach to remove mildew stains from shower doors, shower curtains and grout between tiles.

Use a non-streaking cleaning product, such as a glass or glass and multi-surface cleaner, for shower doors and mirrors. A regular routine, including rinsing the tub after bathing, using a small squeegee on shower walls after each use, and drying faucets and handles to prevent water spots, will keep things clean.

Don't Forget to . . .

Wash the windows, vacuum carpets and drapes and dust thoroughly. Use a dusting product so that the dust will be trapped and removed rather than dispersed in the air. Vacuum regularly, using long straight strokes.

If repainting is not in the budget, carefully clean surfaces to remove dust, grime and fingerprints. Painted surfaces are usually washable, but test the cleaning solution on an inconspicuous area first. Use a non-abrasive, all-purpose cleaner. To avoid streak marks when cleaning large vertical areas, start at the bottom and work up, overlapping areas and using a circular motion.

Keeping on top of the cleaning chores will make your home look its best. And, once a buyer is found, it'll be easy to have the house "broom ready" for that final walk-through before closing day. ■

PRE-WEDDING ENTERTAINING

Special Guests Mean Special Clean Ups

June and weddings go hand-in-hand. And, with weddings comes a host of pre-nuptial showers, bachelor parties and rehearsal dinners. The Soap and Detergent Association offers some helpful cleaning tips for making these events safe and enjoyable!

Beware of Foodborne Illness

Foodborne illness can be an unwelcome guest at any party, so be sure to wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and hot water *before* and *after* food preparation and during the serving of your guests. If you're hosting a party at home, make sure there's plenty of soap and clean towels for your guests in all bathrooms. Clean hands are key for preventing foodborne illnesses.

Cutting boards, dishes, utensils and countertops should also be washed with soap and hot, water *before* and *after* preparing each food item and before moving on to the next one. Use disposable paper towels for clean up and hand drying, so germs are thrown away with the towels.

Cleaning Delicate Items

Get out your fine china, silver, crystal, and cutlery, but you'll probably want to hand wash these items, unless the manufacturer says otherwise. The force and heat of the water in the dishwasher — and even the detergent — can damage fragile pieces.

Now's a good time to tackle the forgotten dust on top of your chandelier. First, make sure the light is turned off for a while. Bulbs should be cool before cleaner is applied. Apply a non-abrasive cleaner to a soft cloth first, then gently wipe the chandelier.

Spills & Stains on Linens

After the party, you may have some other unwanted guests — *spills and stains!* Treat stains on cloth tablecloths and napkins as quickly as possible, so they don't have a chance to set. For **beverage stains** (coffee, tea and alcoholic beverages), sponge or soak the stain in cold water, then pretreat with a prewash stain remover or laundry detergent. Then launder using chlorine bleach, if it's safe for the fabric. Pretreat **chocolate stains** with a prewash stain remover before laundering. ■

HIGH-EFFICIENCY DETERGENTS The Next Wave In Laundry Products

In place of the traditional top-loading agitator models, many new washing machines fall into a category called "high-efficiency" (HE) washers. Some of these machines load from the front, rather than the top and utilize a tumbler system. The laundry sits in a shallow pool of water and the wash tub rotates clockwise, then counter-clockwise. This tumbles the load back and forth so that the water moves through each item, removing the soil. Other types of HE washers are top loading and use other water-saving systems. Benefits of these HE washing machines include water savings, energy savings, efficient cleaning and gentle handling of fabrics.

Because many of the front-loading HE washers work differently, detergents have been reformulated for optimum cleaning results, reports The Soap and Detergent Association. Since tumble action creates more suds than agitator action, detergents must be low foaming, while still being able to clean the same amount of clothes and soil. They also need to dissolve easily, distribute evenly and prevent the redeposit of soil and dye onto clothes.

It's best to use HE detergents. Contact the HE detergent or washer manufacturer for information on where or how to buy an appropriate detergent. Use the toll-free number on the packaged detergent that came with the washer or check the washer use and care guide. The latter will also give information on how to properly use the detergent dispenser, if there is one.

If HE detergents aren't readily available in your area, it's possible to use a regular detergent. To prevent oversudsing, it may be necessary to use less than the generally recommended amount. Check with the detergent manufacturer or refer to the machine's use and care guide.

To compensate for using less detergent, be especially careful to employ good laundry practices. This means pretreating all stains and sorting loads by color (whites, pastels and medium colors, brights and darks) and by soil (light soil and heavy soil). It's also a good idea to reduce the number of items in the load. This will help improve cleaning, especially in the case of heavily-soiled garments. ■

ENERGY AND WATER CONSERVATION Keeping the Lid on Laundry and Dirty Dishes

As we enter spring and summer seasons, many areas in the United States are still experiencing a drought. Regardless of local conditions, water conservation is a good everyday policy. That way, when water restrictions are in place, conservation practices will be automatic.

When it comes to laundry and dishwashing, water conservation and energy savings can go hand-in-hand. This brings environmental and economic benefits, no matter what the weather conditions, observes The Soap and Detergent Association.

For energy-efficient laundering and dishwashing, *do it right the first time*. Re-washing wastes water and energy. For laundering, pretreat or presoak stains and heavy soils. This will give the best stain removal without using extra hot water or re-washing. Almost all the energy used by washing machines is for heating the water. If possible, wash most loads in warm water and rinse all loads in cold water. Match the water level to the load size. Wash a full load, but don't overload the washer. This can result in dingy clothes that need to be re-washed. If a new washing machine is on the horizon, check out the high efficiency (HE) washers, which use one-third to two-thirds less water and one-third to one-half less energy than traditional washers.

Some simple practices can make clothes drying more efficient. Separate lightweight and heavyweight items so drying is more uniform. Reload the dryer while it's still warm from a previous load to take advantage of residual heat. Don't overload, don't overdry and don't let dry garments sit in the dryer. This causes wrinkling, which means ironing (a.k.a. using more energy!).

When using the dishwasher, scrape off excess food particles and let the dishwasher do the rest. Pre-rinsing wastes water and is usually not necessary. Wait until the dishwasher is full before running it. Unlike a washing machine, the water volume on a dishwasher cannot be adjusted to match the size of the load. However, the "light soil" cycle, which uses less water, should be used when dishes are lightly soiled. Select the "air dry" cycle if the dishwasher has one. To keep the dishwasher running efficiently, clean the filter as recommended by the use and care guide. ■





CONVENIENCE CLEANING

Wipes Lead the Way

Wipes are the hassle-free cleaning aids that busy consumers crave. And, they are the perfect companions to many of today's easy-care surfaces, says The Soap and Detergent Association.

Wood laminate and tile, as well as linoleum in a no-wax format, are popular flooring materials. Easy clean up comes courtesy of electrostatic wipes. These dry, disposable cloths attract soil without leaving any residue. When more than a dry dusting is required, premoistened cleaning cloths offer a rinse-free way to remove dirt from the floors. Special mops use moist, disposable electrostatic cloths that contain a cleaning solution. The solution dissolves soil, while the disposable pad absorbs the solution.

Electrostatic wipes are also perfect for cleaning wood furniture. Because the dust is captured and disposed of along with the cloth — and because there's no need for a separate dusting product — many consumers perceive wipes to be more efficient, hygienic and time-saving than vacuuming or traditional dusting methods. For those who prefer the cloth-and-polish method, wipes are available with new fragrances and cleansing conditioners that enhance product performance.

Wipes are great for quick clean ups and wipe downs, particularly in kitchens and bathrooms. They are simpler to use than spray cleaners and are a convenient way to quickly clean common-touch surfaces, such as refrigerator and faucet handles, light switch covers, door handles and telephone receivers. Containers of pop-up wipes sit comfortably next to the tissue box in many of today's homes.

Wipes are highly valued in the workplace, too. Wipes are effective in many places in the office, including water fountain handles, microwave door handles and computer keyboards. Wipes come in a variety of innovative fabrics, from dual-textured cloths to rinseable, shop-sized towels. Citrus cleaner and degreaser wipes are available in a shop towel fabric that can be rinsed and reused. ■

MISCELLANY

Away With Clutter!

When a home is up for sale, the smart seller will keep clutter under control on a daily basis, recommends The Soap and Detergent Association. That way, if an unexpected buyer drops in, the house will be ready to show.

Clear off the kitchen and bathroom countertops, sorting and storing non-essentials in boxes. Wipe all surfaces clean. Anything that will go back on the countertop should be wiped clean, too. In the kitchen, keep out only those appliances that are used every few days.

Don't let newspapers and mail pile up. Sort every day and discard what isn't needed. Place a few baskets in strategic locations around the house. When the real estate agent calls, the clutter that is an inevitable part of daily life can be quickly scooped up into the baskets and hidden away. And, get in the habit of making a nightly "sweep" just before bedtime.

Tips for Cruise Ship Sickness

There's an unwelcome passenger making the rounds on cruise ship lines, reports The Soap and Detergent Association. It's called the Norwalk Virus, a gastrointestinal virus whose symptoms include stomach pain, vomiting and diarrhea. A headache and low-grade fever may also occur. Those infected usually recover in two-to-three days, without serious or long-term health effects. Children, the elderly, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems are particularly at risk.

This doesn't necessarily mean canceling cruise plans. The precautions are the same ones that apply everyday, in any public place. The most important precaution is frequent handwashing. Use soap, hot water and a vigorous 20 second scrubbing. Rinse hands well under running water and dry them with a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use the paper towel to turn off the faucet. Carry alcohol-based wipes and gel cleaners in travel sizes with you at all times. They are easy to use and extremely effective when soap and water are not readily available.

Keep Hardwood Floors Bright and Shiny

Regular cleaning is essential for the longevity and beauty of hardwood floors. Floors should be dusted, vacuumed or swept to remove the dirt, dust and grit that scratches and dulls the finish. Electrostatic cloths or pre-moistened disposable cleaning cloths trap the dust and dirt, and can then be tossed away. Wood floors may be waxed, oiled or treated with a polyurethane finish. Be sure to choose a floor care product that's recommended for the floor's finish.

Prevention is also important, declares The Soap and Detergent Association. Place throw rugs at entryways to cut down on dirt tracked in from the outside. Secure self-adhesive pads to the bottom of chair and table legs to minimize scratching. Clip pets' claws regularly. Those sharp nails can do surprising damage. When cleaning heavy appliances, lay a piece of plywood on the floor to protect the surface, then slide the appliance over it. This distributes the weight over a larger area and prevents dents and indentations.

Cleaning Reflections

Even with a very thorough spring cleaning, there are a few spots that don't seem to show up on the cleaning radar screen, says The Soap and Detergent Association. And, summer is a great time to tackle these forgotten tasks.

Check out the kitchen range hood. To eliminate the smelly, oily cooking material in its filter screen, replace the screen or clean the permanent metal filter in the dishwasher.

Take a close look at the drapes. While vacuuming may remove dust, it doesn't take care of stale or musty odors. Set the clothes dryer on the air fluff (no heat) setting and toss the drapes in. Re-hang immediately so there's no opportunity for wrinkles to set in.

Next, place a stepladder in the middle of each room, climb up on it, and look down. Cleaning opportunities, such as refrigerator tops, ceiling fans, light fixtures and trim moldings, will come into view!

Check and clean behind and under major appliances, including refrigerators, washing machines, and clothes dryers. The latter is especially important because lint build up frequently occurs, creating a possible fire hazard. Other tasks on the overlooked list: cleaning out the medicine cabinet and cleaning the air filter in the vacuum cleaner. ■

Q & A

SDA Answers Your Questions

Q: Are hand gel sanitizers effective for sanitizing hands?

A: Yes, alcohol-based wipes or gel formulas are effective for sanitizing hands but not necessary if hands are visibly soiled. Soap and water would be more effective for cleaning soiled hands.

Q: Should I use antibacterial soap to wash my fruits and vegetables?

A: No. It's important that you only use commercial products that are specially formulated for washing produce.

Q: My kids get their clothes really dirty during summer. What's the best way to treat these stains?

A: Here's how to treat some common summer stains:

Ice cream: Use a pretreat laundry product. Then launder.

Juice pops: Wash with bleach that's safe for the fabric.


Grass: Use a pretreat laundry product. Then launder the garment as soon as possible. **Note:** Check the garment for stain removal before drying it, as the heat of the dryer can set the stain. If stain persists, launder the garment again using bleach that's safe for the fabric.

Mud: Let the mud dry. Then, brush off as much mud as possible. Treat the stain using a pretreat laundry product. Then launder.

Blood: For *fresh* stains, soak in cold water (do not use hot water as it will set blood stains). Then launder. For *dried* stains, pretreat or soak in a solution of warm water and laundry detergent. Then launder. If stain remains, rewash using a bleach that's safe for the fabric. ■



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CLEANLINESS FACTS



“KEEP IT CLEAN” BRIEFS

Selling Your Home?

Here are some daily, quick cleaning tips for when potential buyers make spur of the moment visits:

1. **Wipe Away.** Use disposable wipes to quick-clean toilet bowls and areas in the kitchen.
2. **Scented Bathroom.** Put a small amount of your favorite scented cleaner in your toilet bowls each night before bed. In the morning, every bathroom will smell great!
3. **Turn It On.** Before cleaning the shower, turn on the hot water for a few minutes to loosen the dirt and grime. Use a tub and tile spray cleaner after every shower, so walls stay clean and bright without extra cleaning.
4. **Steam Clean.** Steam clean your microwave. Add four tablespoons of lemon juice to one cup of water in a microwave-safe, four-cup bowl. Boil for five minutes in the microwave, allowing the steam to condense on the inside walls of the oven. Then wipe clean.
5. **Dish DOs.** Spend less time on hand washing dishes by filling the sink with hot water and dishwashing detergent *before* you prepare a meal. Add large pots and pans that won't fit in the dishwasher as you use them. By the time you're finished, the pots and pans can be cleaned in a snap!
6. **Take Two.** If you live in a two-story house, don't get rid of your old vacuum. Keep it upstairs so you don't have to lug it up and down stairs. It'll save you time and energy. Also, keep a bucket of cleaning products on each floor of your home.
7. **Clean As You Go!** Wipe up spills as they happen. This will make tough jobs a lot easier.
8. **Rugs to the Rescue!** Use rugs or mats at all entrances to catch dirt and grit that can build up on floors and carpets. ■

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www.cleaning101.com