

Spring Into Action – Tidy Up!

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“Spring is beautiful and smells sweet. Spring is when you shake the curtains and pound the rugs, and take off your long underwear, and wash in all the corners.” As noted in this quote by Virginia Cary Hudson, when winter has said it’s last goodbye, it’s time to open the windows, shoo away the doldrums and tackle the annual spring cleaning! Along with Spring comes thoughts of crisp fresh air, newly budding flowers, singing birds and a sense of renewal. Getting organized and doing a bit of spring cleaning, helps to bring that wonderful fresh

feeling into your home.

History tells us that spring cleaning was born thanks to old wood burning stoves or oil furnaces. The arrival of spring meant warmer temperatures and home heating was no longer required. However, the need to clean the ash and soot left behind on all household surfaces, including draperies and exposed surfaces was clearly evident. Today, modern heating systems eliminate such mess.

Spring cleaning is more than just attacking areas of your home not normally cleaned. It's combining thorough cleaning and organization of your entire home. If we are honest with ourselves, we'll admit our normal routine can be lax and infrequent. Spring cleaning will ensure you make up for those hurried days of sliding a dust rag carelessly across the book case.

To get started –

1: Make a detailed list of what needs to be done in each room.

Be sure jobs that you only do once or twice a year are also listed. Perhaps you might take your large comforters to the laundromat, or your drapes and winter coats to the dry cleaners, store your winter clothes and bring your warm weather clothes out of hiding or check the smoke detectors. If all these odd jobs are on a list, you won't forget to do them.

2: Gather together all the cleaning supplies needed for the tasks.

Nothing is worse than getting ready to do your task and then finding out that you are missing the one component needed to complete your task. A large bucket or caddy is ideal for holding cleansers, rags, sponges, and other essentials. They can be toted easily from one room to the next.

3: Decide if you'll have help.

If so, assign tasks or rooms. Be sure to leave potentially dangerous tasks to the adults. Don't assign cleaning ceiling fan blades or disposing of chemicals or pesticides to a young child. If you'll be

tackling the cleaning alone, you might want to do it in short periods over several days to avoid burnout.

4: Make your cleaning fun. Be positive. Think of it as a 'feel good' exercise—one that will really help you to feel good about yourself and your clean, organized environment. Turn on some lively, fun music and move to the beat. Open the drapes and let the sunshine and fresh air in.

5: Concentrate your efforts. Do one room at a time.

- Before getting down to the nitty-gritty, first remove the messy clutter.
- Make a box for trash and a box for charitable donations. Get rid of items you no longer need or use.
- Take time to organize as you complete each task.
- Don't take smaller stacks of items and create larger ones. That's not cleaning, that's reorganizing existing clutter.
- Empty wastebaskets and clean furniture tops, then proceed to dust, wash or shampoo.
- A good rule is to start at the top. Clean chandeliers, light fixtures and pictures first, then work your way down to tables, chairs, window sills and finally the floor. Rather than shuffling furniture from one room to another in an effort to shampoo the carpet, save time and back-breaking effort by covering each furniture leg with a small plastic bag. Then simply move the furniture aside to clean the area and then return to its original spot.
- As you clean each room, make a list of items to be repaired. If you need to replace a light bulb or caulk the bathroom shower, make a note. It's not necessary to repair it right away, but you'll want to be sure you complete the repair in a timely manner.

When all the tasks are finished, stand back and admire a job well done.



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