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House is cleaned on a monthly basis rather than a weekly one.

Month is first filled in with dates, appointments, etc.

This leaves open days with no plans, ideal for scheduling some cleaning.

Someone who works 40 hours per week may find that only weekends are open, or only some weekends. This is when daily wipe downs and family help become more important.

Daily tasks

Wipe down of kitchen and bathroom surfaces

Dishes

*Sweep floors

Empty trash

1 load of laundry, washed, dried, dealt with

Pick up the house

Sort mail

Biweekly tasks

Clean floors

Deep clean bathroom, kitchen

Dust

*Sheets changed

Monthly tasks

Clear out cobwebs

Wash inside windows

Daily tasks explained

*May want to adjust this time frame to suit your own needs

Daily tasks are about an hour in length, distributed throughout the day. Wipe downs can happen as you are using the room; the kitchen is typically wiped down each evening as dishes are done.

Unloading the dishwasher and throwing in a load of laundry should be done first thing in the morning. That way, even if you work a full schedule, it's easy to have someone throw it into the dryer (first one home) or as you are preparing dinner. (Note: be sure to check out my quick and easy dinner plans too.)

A quick sweep of the floor - even if just the kitchen - emptying trash, and loading the dishwasher or washing the dishes is usually part of evening kitchen cleanup. Lunches for tomorrow can also fit in here without much trouble.

Mail can quickly be reviewed and sorted during dinner prep or anytime during the evening. (Note check out ways to manage paper.)

A quick pick up of the house with all members participating will take just minutes.

Dry laundry must be taken out of the dryer and dealt with the same day. (Note: see the laundry section for more tips.)

Biweekly tasks explained

*May want to adjust this time frame to suit your own needs

Biweekly tasks are meant to be done every other week, or weekly if your schedule permits and you see the need. They fit in where you have the time, so it may be different from month to month.

Floors are mopped or vacuumed at least twice per month. This is in addition to your daily sweep. As is noted, you may need to change this to suit your family.

In ours, we have all hardwood floors and a large dog that sheds a great deal. We must do a light vacuuming each day to keep the dog hair under control. Then we find that weekly or biweekly mopping of the kitchen works for us, and the other rooms can often do with just once or twice a month, depending on the season.

Dusting is done on a biweekly basis. This is removing all objects from the surface and dusting using either a microfiber cloth or polish and a cloth. You may want to add in a quick Swiffer now and then during the month if you can.

Give the bathroom and kitchen a deep clean at least twice a month. Since you do a daily wipe down, things will not be as grungy as you think.

Change your sheets at least twice a month. Again, more often may be your preference, according to your schedule. Changing the sheets in a 4 bedroom house should take about 30 minutes, so it's not a time consuming task although it may seem that way. Again, family members should be encouraged to help.

Monthly tasks explained

Clearing out the cobwebs and cleaning the inside of the windows can be easily tackled once a month. You may find yourself needing more window cleaning in the summer or more cobweb patrol during the winter, but this is a general guideline.

Things like sweeping off the porch or deck depend on the season and your own living situation.

Note: if you are looking for a more detailed list that involves cleaning the baseboards, washing the walls, and vacuuming the tracks of your windows and doors, please see Martha Stewart. ;)

The Plan

Unlike most traditional cleaning schedules, this one takes a longer view, pulling out to look at the month rather than the week. It also offers flexibility as to when tasks are done and how often. There is no right or wrong - only what works for you.

This plan allows your life to happen first and cleaning to fit in afterwards. As long as you stick with the daily plan - at least most days - your house will be presentable. Anyone looking to inspect it with a white glove should be sent away.

This plan is based on my own experiences throughout my life as a working woman, wife, and mom. I've had jobs that took up 50 hours or more per week and that often meant weekends or overnights.

I have 3 kids and when they were younger, they were all involved in outside activities. It was not unusual for us to have to drive an hour or two on a weeknight to a hockey game or figure skating competition and fit in dinner and homework.

This is the schedule that got us through and kept me sane.

The basis of the plan, other than looking at a longer, monthly view, is that you learn to relax your perfectionist tendencies. Martha Stewart has an entire army of people who do the work for her, plus she's an unrealistic role model.

Your mom, neighbor, best friend, or cousin might be an unrealistic role model as well. I was lucky - my mom had ADHD and while she managed her household more effectively than I have, she had one child and stayed at home. My life has been vastly different.

What you want to do is to come up with a plan that has your family's personal stamp on it. It's not An ADD Woman's Guide to Keeping House and Staying Sane, it's the Your Family Name's version of it.

Start with the way things are outlined and stick to it as much as you can. First you want to get an idea of the way the plan works. After a few months, you will begin to find your own rhythm and your own way of doing things that works best for your family.

For a while, each month will be different and you will need to really work to fit things in and figure it out. That's OK. It's part of the learning process. Once you have the general plan down, it will be easy to make adjustments as you go.

If you have a cleaning day scheduled, especially a biweekly one, and somehow you just don't get to it, that's OK too. Try to fit it into another day or at least make an extra effort with daily tasks and try to fit a few critical things in where you can.

Be sure to check out the sheets on individual tasks, such as doing laundry, cleaning a bathroom or kitchen, and more. There are lots of good tips there and hopefully some ideas you haven't thought of.

I have also included some recipes for DIY cleaners. I find that I am moving more and more away from chemicals - just as I did processed foods - and relying more on natural, green cleaners to do the work for me. They are just much better all around.

If you get this plan in the middle of the month, don't sweat it. Just use what's left of the month to make your plan and don't forget to make adjustments. For instance, if you start your plan after the 15th of the month, your biweekly tasks are cut down to just once before the month ends.

And again, do what you can. Be honest about your time. Allow time for family life and work to take place, but don't let tasks sit undone while you watch TV night after night. Realistically, this plan should only take a few hours out of your entire month, so it's doable for just about everyone. As I said earlier, working 50+ hour weeks and maintaining a full 4 bedroom house was still possible so I know it can be done.

And be sure to get everyone involved. There is no reason that as the wife or mom in the household you should do all the work, especially if you work outside the home as well. Teamwork gets it done sooner and doesn't tire one person out or make them feel grumpy. It's also a great lesson for kids.

My Personal Notes for Product

~~Had a reader ask about something like a what to do list plus daily journal. Making this into a planner could do that. 12 undated monthly pages plus 2-4 pages within each month for notes. Could include positive quotes and thoughts, a few pages to explain the plan, plus pages for meal planning, diy cleaners, how to clean tip sheets.~~

~~Could print on 5 x 8 paper, unpunched so that it can fit in either a binder or an ARC. Print or download.~~

~~Find ways to make it cute. Even some black and white patterns can be cute, like those dishes I saw online. Maybe include stickers? Stickers for cleaning days.~~

~~What about things like water, calls, errands?~~

The whole point of this is that it is based on the planner they already use or should be using. No creating a second one disguised as a cleaning planner - that's using 2 different planners and a no no.

OK to design as part of the homekeeping binder.

Also offer a decluttering guide and organizing guide, maybe priced less than the cleaning guide. Include green cleaning recipes free with cleaning guide. Also a meal planning section with pantry, freezer, and quick meals.