

Most of us would rather be playing outside than cleaning or doing chores, or in the case of winter, cozy up to a good book or movie. So, to help maximize your time cleaning and get you back to what you'd rather be doing, we've got a little something for you.

Below, you'll find the top tips experts recommend to streamline your cleaning.

Tip #1: Be Strategic

1 When cleaning their home, many people become overwhelmed with the work that needs to be done. As a result, they go from room to room doing a little here and a little there but never finishing one area. A great way to avoid this is to develop a cleaning strategy. Determine what areas are most frequently used and move out from there.

For example, if the downstairs needs to be cleaned for company consider where you'll be spending your time together and what you'll be doing. If it's dinner and game night, be sure your kitchen is clean and wherever you plan to play games is clear of clutter, washed of anything sticky lingering on the table, and vacuumed. There's no need, necessarily, to dust or wipe down walls and baseboards when the focus will be on eating food and the game table.

Try not to get overwhelmed with what you think needs to get done. Take a look at the big picture then hone in on what must get done. Prioritize and implement.

Tip #2: Schedule the Cleaning

2 The easiest way to keep a clean home and having it stay that way, is creating a cleaning schedule.

If you plan it into your week, you've made time for it. There's no 'I don't have time for cleaning today,' when you've deliberately scheduled 30 minutes a couple times throughout the week for a quick clean. Done regularly, spending a Saturday cleaning the house is a rare occasion.

Tip #3: Keep Cleaning Products in One Place

3 There's nothing like heading to the cupboard for supplies only to discover they're not where you left them. Or thought you left them...

Do yourself a favor and designate a spot in the house that is for cleaning supplies only. Put together a small tote to store them in and include rubber gloves and dust/microfiber cloths. As a bonus: try to

keep your cleaning products to three to five which can take care of all your needs. This cuts down on time, money spent, and the load you carry throughout the house.

Tip #4: Start With the Basics

4 There is a common misconception that ‘cleaning the house’ means ‘deep cleaning the house.’ It doesn’t have to be that way – not at all!

Start with the basics for a foundation: dusting, sweeping, vacuuming, wiping down counters, tidying clutter, toilets, washing and putting away dishes. Once you get a handle on the basics – and everyone’s will be different – then consider adding more in-depth projects. This could look like window washing, cleaning baseboards, wiping down walls, pantry declutter, fridge cleaning and defrosting.

There are many projects you *could* add, but they are not projects that need to be done weekly. Figure out what basics you need and as you master them, add one or two more until those are easily incorporated into your schedule.

Tip #5: Clean as You Go

Cleaning as you go can make all the difference when it’s time to clean.

5 If you sort mail when you get it, put dishes away as they’re cleaned, wipe down dripable/spillable objects like ketchup and pickle jars before putting them in the fridge – you are doing yourself a huge favor. Instead of spending precious minutes ‘tidying’ what you could have been doing along the way, you could spend that time doing the cleaning that you really want to do – like washing the windows so the sun can reach your herb garden!

Bonus Tips!

Here are a few tips we just had to include. They were simply too bizarre and helpful not to share!

COLA = BURNT FOOD REMOVER

You know those pans you’ve had forever? The ones you can *tell* you’ve had forever thanks to the burned food all over them...well, break out the soda pop because it’s the cure.

Really? Yep!

If you boil a can of cola (out of the can – just to be clear) then pour it over the burnt food cooling it down with water, the burnt food should easily come off with a light scrub!

DON'T DRINK THE KOOL-AID!

Instead, use the Kool-Aid to clean your toilets. Strange, but true. Thanks to the citric acid in the drink, it works as a great stain remover. Simply sprinkle a packet in the toilet bowl overnight and give it a scrub and a flush in the morning. This works best when you first realize the stain is there.

TOOTHPASTE IS MAGIC – AND NOT JUST FOR YOUR TEETH!

Magic Erasers have become a pretty popular tool in removing wall stains. But, if you don't have one on hand or don't want to buy one, there's a homemade alternative no further than your bathroom.

Squeeze a little toothpaste on the wall and gently rub. The grime or stain should disappear in no time. However, keep in mind, toothpaste does have grit, so it can rub off paint if you are scrubbing or rubbing it on too hard. Massage it on gently and you should see it work!