

# Cleaning Grand Plan (taken from organizedhome.com)

## Front Porch

The front porch is an important asset to your home. First impressions are important. If the entrance to your home is a mess, then it doesn't matter how organized the inside is, you're still perceived as a "messie".

Assemble your supplies, broom, window cleaner, screwdrivers, paper for lists, trash can.

Start at the front door. Is there a dead rug for wiping feet? Is it savable? Toss it into the driveway for hosing down, into the trash, or into the laundry basket.

Remove everything from the porch that you can. Trash bags, recyclables, kids' toys, those boxes that go to Goodwill. Set things in the grass if you have to but get them off the porch.

Is there a swing? Look at it closely. Are the hinges catching on clothes? Is it a disaster waiting to collapse? A quick turn of the screwdriver can fix that. How about the cushions? If cleanable, put them with the rug for hosing down. If trash, then trash them. Write down "get new cushions" on your list.

Take the screens off the windows. Put them with the rug & cushions for hosing. Using the broom, sweep every windowsill & doorframe. Sweep down the outside walls. Look up high—are there cobwebs in the corners? Sweep 'em down!

After doing the walls & frames, then you can sweep off the porch itself. Don't forget the steps. Open the front door and sweep off the sill too. Do you need to change the light bulb? Put new bug lights on your list.

Wash the outside of the windows. While they're drying, get out the hose & spray off the rug, screens & swing cushions. Put the screens back on the windows.

Now step back and admire what you've done so far. Look at the mess in the yard that came off the porch.

Does any of it belong back on there? Do you have to keep the weekly trash there or can you hide it somewhere else? Toys in the back yard? Perhaps a big bucket for front yard toys? Only you know what can stay there.

Do the hedges in front of the porch need trimming? Either put that on your list for the next nice Saturday or get out your clippers & trim them up now.

Does the front door need painting? How about its screen? New hardware can make a big difference. What about the mailbox? Does the doorbell work?

Write down any fixes and set a specific time to do them. And then do them when the time comes! As long as you've done this much, go ahead and look at the sidewalks & driveway. Too much junk? Remove it to the backyard. Sometimes it's easier to hose down the driveway than to sweep it.

Now go out to the street and really look at what you've accomplished. Aren't you proud to live there now? You should be! Head inside for a well-deserved rest. Don't forget to take that list you made & transfer it to either SHE cards or your planner!

## Living Room

Begin by washing the outside of the windows in this room. You will appreciate being able to see outside when you sit down at the end of the week in your beautiful, clean, and organized living room!

Take everything off walls, dust it, and set it aside. Dust or wash the wall, vacuum or dry-clean draperies and blinds. Get your favorite cobweb killer and sweep down ceilings, corners and tops of doorways.

Take cushions off furniture. Vacuum thoroughly, replace cushions, spot treat any stains and shampoo if necessary.

Wooden furniture (and anything with drawers/shelves): Empty, sort and throw away what you really don't need. Put the rest where it belongs. Dust/polish the piece you've finished with and repeat with other pieces.

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Don't forget the maintenance on piano.

Baseboards: depending on condition they're in, dust or wash them.

Coat closet: empty, sort clothes (by family member, season). Remove any "off-season" items and decide whether to trash, donate, or store elsewhere. Replace only those items which should be in your coat closet.

Clean the TV screen (if you have a set in this room). Don't neglect the stereo items either. Re-organize tapes/records/videos as per your needs.

Clean/change the silk flower arrangements as per seasonal needs. Wash/trim any live plants in this room.

Other items needing attention if your room has them:

- Fireplace/mantel/chimney/glass doors
- Lamps (does the shade need dusting or replacing?)
- Electrical cords (check for frayed wires)
- Mirrors (items framed w/glass) get out the Windex
- Doorknobs/drawer-handles (are they clean?)

Now is a good time to measure furniture pieces and windows, to enter in your planner or Household Notebook and keep on hand for shopping for necessary items.

Stacks (of anything!): Take time now to use the sorting method of trash/donate/store elsewhere. Now put these new piles where they belong.

Vacuum the carpet and clean if necessary.

Hang the items back on walls, if you haven't already and take a good look around. It should look pretty good by now. Take out camera and take pictures for inventory.

## **Entry/Foyer**

Use the basic remove/clean/replace policy for those items which are wall-hung.

Consider how the area looks when a visitor enters your home. Again if it doesn't belong there, remove it! If you have a chair or rack that welcomes clutter, consider moving it until everyone breaks the habit of just dropping everything off in the foyer.

The next time you enter the front door after being away a few hours, look around and sniff around just like you were in a strange house. Our homes can develop "houseatosis". There are a great many air freshener products and potpourri assortments on the market today, use one if you need it!!

Don't forget to clean out the umbrella stand, if you have one. If you don't, do you need one?

Do you have a rug or maybe carpeting in this area? Do a thorough job of vacuuming it. you'll be pleased.

Do you have a window in your front door, or "side lights" which could use bit of glass cleaner? Don't forget to thoroughly dust/wash front door itself, and also the baseboards in the area.

Plan a place for everything which needs to be kept near the front door and keep it there! Everything else goes!

Now, do you need to go back and spend time on last week's project? If not, could you choose another declutter project that would enhance the beauty of your home? Choose something close to the entry or living room to help give that feeling of flow between organized rooms. Like smiles and yawns, organization is contagious!

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## Master Bedroom and Master Bedroom Closets

First, let's do what we did in the living room. All draperies or curtains taken down and washed or dry cleaned (or at least vacuumed). Do the same with your bedspread. While windows are bare, clean blinds and glass.

Clear off those stacks and piles on and around your dresser/chest of drawers. Now, dump each drawer, one at a time, or all at the same time into a central location. Vacuum the drawers if necessary.

Go through and sort items. Decide what you want to have in the dresser drawers and put only those items back. Use the 4 box method to sort the remaining items. If you haven't worn an item in a year, ask yourself if you will wear it within the next year. If no then get rid of it! (Garage sale, donate to the needy or someone you know will wear it, or THROW IT OUT!)

Do similar with items other than clothing that you find along the way. How about those worn undergarments??

Get rid of them and treat yourself to new! You may want to invest in, or make dividers for some of these types of articles.

How about the jewelry box? Time to go through & inventory. Might want to give some that you don't wear to your kids to play, and leave room for your better items.

Have you checked under the bed yet? Better do so! There could be shoes, books, and other items that have long since been forgotten. You might want to consider getting storage containers for use under there for your off-season clothing.

Now you're ready for the closet! Use the same technique as for drawers: take everything out of the closet and pile in a central location. Decide what you want to store where in the closet! Then use the 4 box method as you consider each thing you removed from the closet before you put items into the closet!

For shoes, try on all pairs if you can't wear them now, chances are you never will. Get rid of them! And if you never really felt comfortable in a certain pair, find a friend who would. Come on now, do you really need to keep the old maternity clothes?? Would anyone else want them? If so, give them away, if not throw them away! Okay now, get ready to fill the closet with things you need and love.

Have you changed the linens on the bed? Turn the mattress first, so you won't "wear" a valley in it! Throw the pillows into the dryer to fluff, and pull out all the dust they collect also.

Time to dust and clean off all the furniture with your favorite product. Don't forget the TV screen & any mirrors you may have. Everyone has different things in their bedrooms which are individual to your household.

Take a good look around and see if there is anything we left out.

Vacuum the floor of the room and the closet!

List time: do you need new hangers? Have you replaced winter clothes for summer clothes? Have you found that necklace that fell behind the dresser last year? Did you check the ceiling fan, light fixtures & air vents? Do you need a new mattress pad? or mattress cover?

We should be finished! What an adventure!

## Master Bathroom

Go through the medicine chest. Do you really store medicine in here? It is not a good idea to store your medications here as the steam and heat of the showers can affect them. Consider finding a new place. While you rearrange them, throw away the horrible tasting stuff that you do not use and the expired items. Check your first aid supplies. Do you have enough Peroxide, band-aids, gauze pads, antibacterial ointment?

Just look at those towels! Are they torn? In need of replacement? You needed some new rags anyway! Put it on your list to replace. Reorganize the ones you have.

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Clean off handles, knobs, light switches. Does anything need replacing?

How about the bathroom mat or carpet? Does it need some spot remover while you go on? Does it need to be replaced?

Clean from high to low. Take down the curtains or blinds and clean them. Vacuum the screens in the windows.

Clean the windowsill and wash any knickknacks.

Clean the entire bowl. Spray with a good disinfectant. How is your bowl brush? Does it need replacing? A sponge brush works better than a bristle brush here.

Polish all the metal fixtures make them gleam. Get around the bowl and clean spots you have not seen in a while! Open the window while you spray a good mold remover if you need to. Scour sinks and bathtubs, and showers.

Do you need a new soap dish? A decorative hand soap dispenser?

Get under the sink. Look at those three bottles of hair spray. Do you need and use all that stuff under there? Consider purchasing some under the cabinet organizers to give you more storage space and allow you to get things easier. Wipe out the bottom of the cabinet.

Don't stop there. Time to get the drawers now too. Throw away what you have not used.

Does the shower curtain need replacing? Is it really moldy?

Wash out the wastebasket and let it sanitize.

The bathroom scale hasn't been scrubbed in a while. Do it now! Get the baseboards and wipe them down, spray the tile with a good tile cleaner while you are doing the baseboard then wipe the tile down after it had a chance to sit.

Take note and replace, repair all items that need attention.

## **Kids' Rooms/Play Areas**

**Kids' Rooms:** Let's get shelves done first (if appropriate). Use same method: examine, toss/save/donate, replace onto shelves. This is a good time to get rid of games with lots of missing pieces, or save for while you're in the playroom in case the pieces are hidden there.

**Desk drawers:** go through (or have your children if they're older) and sort out what papers need to be saved and what can be tossed. Get rid of old magazines, old McDonald toys, toys in pieces, broken crayons, non-functional pens. make room for the stuff on top of the desk!

**Clothing Drawers and Closets:** Again, check for current sizing. Too small? Donate to a friend's kids, Goodwill, or homeless shelter. Torn? Can it be used for rags? Box up anything to be saved for a sibling. Label and the box and put it away now. Throw out anything not able to be repaired! Have your child try on questionable items.

Before we go further. have you thought about taking curtains down, and washing? Better start now! Throw the bedspread & blanket in the wash too!

Time to check under the bed for the nasties down there. This might be a good place for under-bed storage containers. Once everything is picked up off the floor, don't forget the ceiling fans, and wash your ceiling fixtures. Now's a good time for windows & blinds too! Don't forget to dust, & polish any wooden furniture.

If you have boxes stored in bedroom or closets make sure you have a good marker with you to mark the outside of boxes with contents. (You can do this but I find that giving the box a code number, letter or name and not marking the contents directly on

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the box but instead on an index card placed in your SHE box, you can at anytime change the contents of the box without writing and rewriting on the box what is inside.

You can use the same methods for playrooms or play areas. Perhaps if you have a hobby room and no children, you can use this for your sewing or craft room. If you have none of the above, then take a relaxing bath. Then go over any areas that still need "doing".

## Guest Room

Guest bedrooms and other bathrooms. Use the same procedures for master bathroom and bedroom. Take note of your area and surrounding. Make lists of those items you need to replace. Donate or toss what needs to be. Be ruthless this time.

## Kitchen and Pantry

**Kitchen Closets:** Empty them! Pull everything out. Use trash bags, boxes, etc to sort and redistribute your items. Remember—places would love donations of kitchen items. If you have not used something in a few months, chances are you just will not use it so donate it. Kill the clutter!

**Kitchen Cabinets:** Tackle one by one if the job seems overwhelming. Start above counters, on one side of the room and work in one direction & when done, tackle cabinets below the counter. Save the under-sink area for last, for me it was the hardest.

Get Rid Of:

- Old, currently unused cleaners
- Cans & Bottles of food over 6 months old unless there is a later expiration date.
- Old cracker/cookie boxes probably stale
- Pans & pots that you don't use, have duplicates of, are in horrible shape, etc.
- Extra serving dishes (store them elsewhere unless you have lots of room) until needed. Donate if you have not used them in the past six months.

Check any open boxes for bugs.

Don't forget to wipe down empty shelves, re-line (if necessary).

If you store medicines in the cabinets, check expiration dates. Verify prescription items with your pharmacist. Throw out medicines that "didn't work", expired or tasted so horrible you won't use them, etc.

Don't forget to empty drawers, clean inside, then replace items. Get rid of duplicate items (utensils) if you can.

Clean all appliances inside and out (refrigerator, stove, dishwasher, microwave, toaster oven, coffee maker—use vinegar once through, followed by several rounds of water—stove vent, etc.)

**Sink:** Use a toothbrush to get rid of gritty dirt at faucet. Clean drains, disposal, etc Use favorite cleaner to make "shine".

**Pantry:** Use same method as for the cabinets. don't forget to wipe down while empty. Try to combine duplicate boxes of things to throw out that which you haven't and probably won't use.

When this is done, you will probably want to dust any appropriate items, vacuum from ceiling to floor, including vents/ a/c ducts, clean any windows, and sweep & wash the kitchen floor (I always do that last!) As far as I'm concerned this is probably one of the hardest rooms in the house. If you have tile on your counters or table, this is a good time to spray them down and clean and reseal the grout.

Be ruthless! Go through every drawer, cabinet, counter. Did you take time to do all that work and sell yourself short? Did your Mama tell you a job worth doing is worth doing well??? Well go ahead and "git": make that kitchen shine. Go through the spices and the cookbooks again. I know there are things you still really need to do.

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## **Family Room, Den or Rec Room**

Since the Family Room is much like the Living Room, consult the notes from that week as well, to be sure we haven't missed anything! Here goes!

Start by washing the outside of your windows.

Take everything down off the walls, take down curtains etc. Wash, vacuum or dry clean as needed.

Sweep ceiling corners and other nooks in the room - tops of doorways, windows, arches, bookcases, etc.

Wash inside of windows and sills. Polish and touch-up stain on wood.

Re-hang window coverings.

Take cushions off furniture, vacuum thoroughly. Vacuum cushions, checking for wear and turning as needed.

Spot treat any stains or shampoo furniture as needed.

Wooden furniture and anything with drawers: Empty, sort, and throw away what you don't really need. Put the rest where it really belongs. Dust/Polish the piece you're finished with, repeat as necessary. Do shelves the same way.

Baseboards - dust or wash as needed touch up scuffs on wood or touch up paint on painted surfaces.

Clean the TV screen. Dig out and sort all the accumulated electronic equipment--games, tapes, camera parts, wires, connectors, etc. Put everything where it belongs and get rid of the rest. (I stash things for a few months in the attic and if they don't miss it then I can dispose of it as I please!) If something doesn't work, take action--if it is worth getting fixed then decide when it can be done. Otherwise just liquidate it now.

Vacuum the entire room. Use a whisk broom to get into those hard to reach areas and around the baseboards if your vacuum doesn't clean close enough. Yes, get help and move the furniture. There may be a wealth of lost treasures hiding under the sofa right now!

Clean/change silk flower arrangements for the season. It is also a good time to clean, trim, and/or repot live plants. They can't absorb CO2 and light through a layer of dust!

Other items needing attention if you have them are: Fireplace/mantel/chimney/glass doors Lamps - cleaning and/or replacing shade/bulb/wiring Light switches (clean)

Mirrors and anything framed under glass clean it.

Door handles--and the area around them-- if you have little sticky fingers be sure to get the area below them clean too with an appropriate cleaner. Polish the wooden doors and retouch scuffs.

Clean shake/wash/vacuum/take to professional-- any area rugs.

Now is a good time to reorganize the video tapes and CDs, Cassettes etc. If you have not viewed or listened to them in a while, donate or take to a consignment shop or a second hand music store and swap

## **Garage / Storage**

This a designated area used for storing "needed" items until it is time to use them. It is not "someplace else" for procrastinators. It can be the attic, basement, section of garage, closet, shed or even a rental unit.

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An efficient storage area is the backbone to your home. Overload it & the whole house suffers. There are basically two types of items that should be stored: seasonal-occasional (Christmas, camping, Baby stuff only if anticipated need (g), suitcases, etc.) & home management (backup supplies used in managing a home), (extra paper goods, soaps, kitchen supplies, light bulbs).

Remove everything from storage area.

Sort everything into related piles, boxes, or bags.

Streamline these piles until only keepers are left. (Other items go to the place they belong, i.e. trash, Goodwill, garage sale)

Designate centers in your storage area according to available space and keeper categories. Your categories of keeper piles automatically determine your centers.

Maximize your space & increase your storing efficiency by using the following techniques:

1. Hang as much as possible in drawstring bags.
2. Consolidate by placing related items inside each other (bag of baby bedding inside bassinet, suitcases inside each other, etc.).
3. Use shelving around area & make aisles like they do in warehouses. You can use metal shelves or boards on blocks, buckets, pipe, etc.
4. Always consider how any given item is used, where it is used, & how often it's used-- then put things where they belong.
5. Keep things that are used together stored together. It's simple but it works!
6. If no room for it, you don't need it!!

Group and store like things together, just as the grocery store does, don't scatter. Consolidate as much as possible.

Hang as much as you can.

Use grocery store arrangement by lining the perimeter of your area with shelving, then run stacks of shelves both parallel and perpendicular to this.

Assign a space for empties. No more setting empty jars, buckets, drawstring bags in front of full containers.

For home management & backup storage, you will want to keep a record of items being stored (3-ring binder or computer).

Only store supplies that your family uses & likes. Wasted storage space is too expensive to pay for unwanted items.

Don't be tempted to just shove things into the storage area until you can find another place for them. Keep the "backbone" of your household skeleton lightly and efficiently loaded, and you'll experience greater efficiency and control throughout the rest of your home.

## **Attic / Storage**

The attic works the same every other room does, except it's probably got mostly stored boxed and old clothes. Remember what our motto has been? If you haven't worn it in the last year, and you can't figure when you'll wear it in the next year, get rid of it! (Donate it somewhere, or throw it out if it's not in good shape.) This can really make a big dent in the storage facilities.

And don't get caught with "well, Johnny can wear this when he's 14." Let's be honest, how many kids really want to wear hand-me-downs that are way out of style? We must swallow our pride (if my daughter doesn't want to wear my wedding gown when she's old enough, I guess I won't get upset!) and get rid of what truly we won't use, and will have no value later on (but not that wedding gown! I can't part with that!). Everyone will have treasures that you can't part with, and that is fine, but set a limit.

As for those boxes, bring a few downstairs and work on them in front of the TV, or at the bottom of the stairs. The old "can't go to bed cause I can't get past these boxes yet" works nicely here. Or do it while the kids are at school if you are able. Once again ask yourself if you will really use the item again. If no, and it has no sentimental value worth passing to the next generation (and collecting dust!) then donate it to somewhere that might really appreciate it.

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## Dining Room

Using the basic plan, take everything off the windows and clean them.

Take everything off the walls and clean items and wall.

Empty all drawers, shelves, ledges, etc. Clean items, but don't replace-- YET.

Using the philosophy from the "It's Here Somewhere" decide what you want to use this area for: eating, entertaining, playing games, alternative office space, etc: then place only those items related to those uses back into drawers, shelves, whatever. Declutter! Use the 4 box method, place everything that isn't useable in this room into the appropriate box: trash, Goodwill, someplace else or storage.

Streamline down to what you will actually use in this room.

Remove all furniture, and clean the floors and baseboards.

As furniture is replaced, clean each piece with appropriate cleaner/wax. Check chair/table legs to see if they need new protective caps.

Re hang pictures on the wall -- only try using only half of them. Then add more only if you can't stand the empty look. According to the "Law of Household Reduction", when you decrease the number of things, you expand your space visually as well as physically.

Add a new arrangement or fresh flowers and plan to invite company for dinner!

## Holiday Decorations / Storage

As I recall, we had only to find and sort those holiday decorations. This covered ALL holidays and all things pertinent to those holidays too. (like the red/white/blue centerpiece for the 4th, the Thanksgiving candles and wreaths, and centerpieces, etc.) I believe the idea was to group these all together in ONE box if possible to be added to the storage area (WHO HAS THE ROOM?). This is to free up space in the house and kitchen cabinets by removing these non-essential but occasionally needed holiday items. The "storage" reminder at the end of this week's title was to give some people more time on that very difficult area in our homes. After the previous weeks of the grandplan, the storage areas are FULL of stuff that must NOW BE FACED !!! Are we going to hang onto our "junk" or clear the clutter??? Only you know yourself. So what'll it be??

You might as well check on all the other decorations while you are in the process of storing the Christmas decorations. Mark those boxes well and make a list of what you want to replace. You might still be able to find those after Christmas bargains for those types of things.

## Last Week!

Take this week to budget for the things you noted you needed to have done: new wallpaper, carpet re-stretching.

What about the outside?? It is a good time to really clean well the patio furniture and to sweep off the patio and trim the plants. Any weeding needing to be done? Section off the outside yard just as you would do the inside of the house and get to it. You can enjoy your home inside and out! )

Learn to delegate! Talk with your family and tell them how hard you have worked. (So what if they really do not understand.) Tell them how you need to have their help. Be specific! Delegate specific chores and write them down on cards. No Nintendo, TV, or playing with friends till that is done. No ifs ands or buts about it!

It takes 21 days to make something a habit-- for you and everyone else in the family--so stick to it! Keep on them. Work on relationships now. You have been so busy in the house! Plan a lunch alone with your son. Take your daughter alone to a movie! Buy a new sexy piece of lingerie and treat you and Hubby! Have fun now that you have your home all organized and clean!