Spring Cleaning!

Inspiration, ideas, recipes...

Prepared by the Relief Society of the Middlebury Branch
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints • Middlebury, Vermont
I am thankful for a lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning and gutters that need fixing because it means I have a home... I am thankful for the piles of laundry and ironing because it means my loved ones are nearby. ~Nancie J. Carmody

What is Spring Cleaning?

“Spring is a great time to do a strong deep cleaning of your entire home. During the winter, family members, children, and pets are confined indoors for longer periods of time and dirt accumulates more quickly. Spring cleaning is meant to go beyond regular housecleaning to eliminate that accumulated dirt and freshen your home for a fresh season.

In addition to regular cleaning, spring cleaning tasks may include:

- Dusting corners, ceilings, and walls, including photo frames and artwork
- Cleaning windows, window screens, and window treatments
- Scrubbing the fronts and insides of cupboards and drawers
- Cleaning and defrosting the fridge and freezer
- Cleaning ceiling fans, light fixtures, and vents
- Organizing closets, desks, and drawers
- Cleaning the oven, microwave, and dishwasher
- Shampooing rugs, carpets, and upholstery

Your home spring cleaning checklist may vary depending on the size of your home, its general level of cleanliness, and what additional cleaning, organizing, and minor maintenance tasks you want to finish.”

Planning Your Own Weekly Checklist for House Cleaning

Creating a weekly checklist for house cleaning is simple. Here are a few things to think about before you begin:

- **What needs to be cleaned daily, weekly, and less often?** Prioritize according to your family’s needs. If you have small children, you may well find that the floor needs to be cleaned daily. It may just stress you out to have your desk a mess. On the other hand, perhaps that top shelf can live with being dusted only once per month.
- **What days are the busiest?** If you volunteer or are at soccer all day on Saturdays, that’s a great day to do a few minor tasks that take less than 15 minutes.
- **When do I do errands?** Choosing one day during the week to do errands helps you minimize the time you’re spending running around. Don’t clean on an errand day. Use that day to take care of household paperwork, plan menus for the week, and get your errands done!
- **When do I get to rest?** It’s pointless to have a clean house if you can’t enjoy it. Even if it means that the tippy-top corner doesn’t get as clean as it should--it’s okay. Take the time you need regularly to refresh so you avoid burnout.

Creating Your Weekly Cleaning Checklist

Now that you’ve thought about your goals, start making your weekly cleaning checklist in the following manner:

1. Take a piece of paper and divide it into fourths. Your goal is to have the four following sections: daily, weekly, less often, and seasonal. Label your sections and you’re ready to begin!
2. Go through each room of your house. Jot down the things that you need to get done in order for the house to look nice. Make sure to put tasks in the appropriate columns.
3. Spend no more than 5 minutes in each room. You’re going to save this paper for reference later and you can always add to it.
4. Sit down with your weekly calendar and think about what days it makes sense to do which tasks. For example, if you have no where to be on Fridays, that’s a great day to don sweats and pull out the vacuum cleaner and dust and vacuum. If you have volunteering on Tuesdays, that’s a good day to do something less nitty gritty.
5. Finally, add into your week those things that need to be done monthly. You may set aside Saturdays to do monthly tasks, or simply get them done here and there.

If you follow your weekly checklist for house cleaning schedule most of the time, your house will stay relatively clean and you’ll find that deep cleaning goes much easier.”

Source: http://cleaning.lovetoknow.com
Home Spring Cleaning Checklist

Kitchen: (1-2 Hours)
- Clean out fridge
- Wipe down freezer/fridge
- Scrub oven/stove top
- Clean appliances
- Clean ceiling fan
- Dust Cabinets front and top
- Move fridge out and clean behind it
- Vacuum refrigerator coils
- Wash out trash cans
- Clean or wash window treatments
- Steam clean tile floors

Bathroom: (1 to 1.5 hours)
- Dust ceiling and corners
- Dust light fixtures
- Wipe down counter tops
- Clean toilet
- Clean area around toilet
- Scrub shower/tub
- Swap out towels
- Sweep/mop floor
- Empty trash
- Wash dirty towels

Living Room: (1 to 2 hours)
- Remove household clutter
- Dust ceiling, corners
- Wipe down ceiling fan/wall art
- Clean window treatments
- Clean windows
- Polish wood furniture
- Move furniture, clean underneath
- Vacuum and clean furniture
- Vacuum/Clean floors
- Air out room

Bedroom: (2 hours)
- Flip mattress (air it if possible)
- Change bed sheets
- Dust blinds/Window treatment
- Clean wall art/ceiling fans
- Wipe down flat surface
- Vacuum /clean carpets

Closets: (1 hour)
- Wash all winter clothes
- Pack away winter clothes
- Swap out for spring/summer wear
- Put up winter shoes/boots
- Bring down spring/summer shoes

Common Areas: (1 hour per room)
- Dust ceiling, corners
- Clean ceiling fans/lights
- Clean wall art
- Polish all wood surfaces
- Vacuum cloth seats
- Sweep floor
- Scrub floor (carpet/tile)

Final Tips:
- Bag up all ill-fitting clothes for charity or garage sale
- Clear trash clutter and recycling
- Open all windows to fully air out home
- Have pets groomed professionally

After Cleaning:
Organize a post-spring cleaning garage sale.

Source: http://cleaning.lovetoknow.com
Household Chores Checklist

Regular Daily/Weekly Chores:
- Clean Kitchen
- Clean Living Room
- Clean Dining Room
- Clean Playroom
- Clean Office
- Clean Bedroom
- Pick Up Clutter
- Vacuum
- Sweep
- Laundry
- Dust
- Take Household Trash
- Recycling

Add Your Own:
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Weekly/Monthly Chores:
- Lawn mowing
- Weeding
- Window washing
- Closet cleaning
- Clean Ceiling Fans
- Clean out refrigerator
- Garage cleaning
- Wash car
- Clean bed linens
- Dust window treatments

Source: http://cleaning.lovetoknow.com
Better keep yourself clean and bright. You are the window through which you must see the world. ~George Bernard Shaw

White Vinegar

Mildly acidic white vinegar dissolves dirt, soap scum, and hard water deposits from smooth surfaces, yet is gentle enough to use in solution to clean hardwood flooring. White vinegar is a natural deodorizer, absorbing odors instead of covering them up. (Vinegar aroma disappears when dry.) Vinegar is a natural disinfectant and is a great all purpose cleaner, on anything but marble.

With no coloring agents, white vinegar won’t stain grout on tiled surfaces. Because it cuts detergent residue, white vinegar makes a great fabric softener substitute for families with sensitive skin. Add one cup of undiluted white vinegar to the laundry rinse cycle instead of commercial fabric softener by filling the softener reservoir with vinegar.

Undiluted white vinegar--straight from the jug--makes quick work of tougher cleaning problems involving hard water deposits or soap scum.

Use undiluted white vinegar to scrub the inside of the toilet bowl. Before you begin, dump a bucket of water into the toilet to force water out of the bowl and allow access to the sides. Pour undiluted white vinegar around the bowl and scrub with a toilet brush to remove stains and odor. Use a pumice stone to remove any remaining hard water rings.

Clean shower heads that have been clogged with mineral deposits with undiluted white vinegar. Place 1/4 to 1/2 cup vinegar in a plastic food storage bag, and secure the bag to the shower head with a rubber band. Let stand for 2 hours to overnight, then rinse and buff the fixture to a shiny finish.

Try these ideas to harness the cleaning power of white vinegar:

- Mix 1 part water to 1 part vinegar for an all purpose cleaner that you can use on the stove, appliances, & counter tops, stone and brick surfaces
- Add ½ to 1 cup of vinegar to the rinse cycle instead of fabric softener
- Pour vinegar around the inside rim of the toilet bowl and scrub to get rid of rings
- Mop the floor in the bathroom with a vinegar diluted with water
- Before warm weather hits, clean your air-conditioner filter. Take the foam filter out of the grill and soak it for an hour or more in a solution of equal parts white vinegar and warm water, then squeeze dry and replace.
- To clean suede, brush with a suede brush or steel wool, then wipe with a cloth dipped in white vinegar and wrung out almost dry.
- Clean painted woodwork with a solution of 1/2 cup white vinegar, 1 cup ammonia, 1/4 cup baking soda, and 1 gallon of lukewarm water. No rinsing is necessary with this solution.
- Give your washing machine an annual cleaning by filling it with hot water, adding a quart of white vinegar, and running the machine through the wash and rinse cycles.
- Clean vinyl shower curtains without taking them down by wiping them with a sponge dampened with white vinegar.
- To bring out the color in a rug, dip a broom in a mixture of 1 cup of white vinegar and 1 gallon of water, then brush the rug with the broom. No need to rinse.
- To clean a stainless-steel pan, first rinse it with white vinegar inside and out. Then shake on enough salt to cover. Rub lightly. This cleans the pan and keeps it shiny.
• Keep straight vinegar in a spray bottle and, after a hard workout, spray the sweat stains to kill the odor causing bacteria then toss into the hamper till its time to wash.

• To clean salt marks off boots and shoes, try a mixture of 1 part white vinegar and 3 parts water.

• To remove old wallpaper (non-vinyl), mix equal parts of warm water and white vinegar. Sponge a section of wall with the solution until the wallpaper is saturated. Let sit for 20 minutes, sop the wallpaper again, then peel it off with a broad-bladed putty knife.

• If a closet smells musty, wash it thoroughly (walls, floor, and ceiling) with a mixture of 1 cup ammonia, 1 cup white vinegar, and 1/4 cup baking soda in a gallon of warm water. Repeat if needed.

Homemade Spray Cleaner Recipe
Mix in a sprayer bottle:
• 1 cup white vinegar
• 1 cup water

In the kitchen, use vinegar-and-water spray to clean countertops, lightly soiled range surfaces and backsplash areas.
In the bathroom, use vinegar spray cleaner to clean countertops, floors, and exterior surfaces of the toilet.

For really tough bathroom surfaces such as shower walls, pump up the cleaning power by removing the sprayer element and heating the solution in the microwave until barely hot. Spray shower walls with the warmed solution generously, allow to stand for 10 to 15 minutes, then scrub and rinse. The heat helps soften stubborn soap scum and loosens hard water deposits.

There is no daily chore so trivial that it cannot be made important by skipping it two days running. ~Robert Brault

Uses for Lemon
Lemons are acidic, using lemons adds antibacterial and antiseptic properties and is also a natural bleaching agent, use it for:
• Dissolving soap scum and hard water deposits
• Clean & shine brass and copper with lemon juice. A lemon cut in half and dipped in salt is good for cleaning spots off copper fixtures
• Put a whole lemon peel through the garbage disposal to freshen the drain and kitchen
• Pour lemon juice on white linens & clothes and allow them to dry in the sun to bleach away stains

Rubbing Alcohol
Rubbing (isopropyl) alcohol provides the base for an evaporating cleaner to rival commercial window and glass cleaning solutions. Use this glass cleaning spray recipe for windows, mirrors, chrome fixtures and for a shiny finish on hard-surface ceramic tiles:

Glass Cleaner Recipe
Mix in a sprayer bottle:
• 1 cup rubbing (isopropyl) alcohol
• 1 cup water
• 1 tablespoon white vinegar
The best time for planning a book is while you're doing the dishes. ~Agatha Christie

Ammonia

A strong alkaline solution, clear, non-sudsing ammonia creates stronger window and all-purpose cleaning recipes than acidic vinegar. Choose non-sudsing varieties of household ammonia for these cleaning recipes. Suds may make it appear like the cleaner is working, but they’re tough to rinse and remove. Try these ammonia recipes for spring cleaning or tough chores:

**Strong Glass Cleaner Recipe**

Mix in a sprayer bottle:

- 1 cup rubbing (isopropyl) alcohol
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon clear, non-sudsing ammonia

**Strong All-Purpose Cleaner Recipe**

Mix in a sprayer bottle:

- 1 T clear, non-sudsing ammonia
- 1 T clear laundry detergent
- 2 cups water

Baking Soda

Baking soda’s mild abrasive action and natural deodorizing properties make it a powerful replacement for harsh commercial scouring powders. It is excellent at dissolving dirt, mildew, grease, and even wax. Put baking soda to work in your organized home:

- Sprinkle baking soda onto a damp sponge to tackle grimy bathtub rings, scour vanities, or remove food deposits from the sink.
- For tougher grime, make a paste of baking soda and water, apply to the tub or sink, and allow to stand for 10 to 20 minutes. Dirt, soap scum and deposits soften and are easier to remove.
- Slow-running drains? Keep bathroom drains running freely by pouring 1/2 to 3/4 cup baking soda into the drain, and dribbling just enough hot water to wash the solution down. Let stand for 2 hours to overnight, then flush thoroughly with hot water. The deodorizing effect is an added bonus! [Do not use this method on blocked drains.]
- Place a box in the refrigerator and freezer to absorb odor-sprinkle it your carpet before vacuuming to eliminate food and pet odors.
- Neutralize food and cat litter odors by sprinkling it at the bottom of the garbage and litter box
- Use it to clean and polish metals and plastics
- Clean vinyl car upholstery with a damp cloth dipped in baking soda. Then wash with a mild solution of dishwashing liquid and water. Rinse thoroughly.
- Did you run out of toothpaste? Substitute baking soda mixed with a little salt or baking soda mixed with hydrogen peroxide.
- Make your own odor-eater balls for boots and sneakers: Pour a few teaspoons of baking soda on a square of cotton cloth. Tie the ends of the cloth together and secure with a rubber band. Set one ball in each shoe overnight. The balls can be used again and again.
• To clean burned food from the bottom of an aluminum pot or pan, wet the burned food, cover with baking soda, and set aside for a couple of hours. Then scrape, wash, and rinse the pan.

• To clean chrome, rub on a thin paste of baking soda and water. Let it dry, then buff the chrome with a clean, dry rag.

• To clean wooden rolling pins, bowls, and cutting boards, sprinkle on baking soda, dampen with a little water to make a paste, and rub with a sponge. Then rinse well and dry with a cloth towel.

• To get the odor of cat urine out of a carpet, sprinkle baking soda on the area. Leave it on for several hours, then vacuum it up. If necessary, repeat the process with fresh baking soda.

• To help keep the odor down in a cat's litter box, sprinkle baking soda in the bottom, then add a layer of cat litter.

• To remove a lingering odor in your microwave oven, wet a cloth with warm water, wring it out, and dip it in baking soda. Lightly scrub down the inside of the oven.

• To remove stains from a counter, rub in a sprinkling of baking soda with a damp cloth or sponge.

• Wet stains on the oven and then shake baking soda over them, scrub well.

More oven cleaning with baking soda:

You can use baking soda and water exclusively, or you might try adding a few drops of liquid dish soap and a couple of teaspoons of white vinegar. Simply mix the ingredients into a paste and use a damp sponge to apply it to the inside of the oven, paying special attention to the areas that have the toughest stains. For exceptionally tough stains, use a Mr. Clean Magic Eraser to scrub the baking soda mixture into the stain. Once the stains start to lift, use a clean, damp sponge to rinse the affected areas and continue to remove the rest of the cleaning mixture.

Another option is to combine one cup of baking soda with one cup of salt and one cup of water. The mixture will create a sticky paste that you will generously apply to the interior of the oven. Once you have added the paste to the inside of the oven, close the door and heat the oven to 500 degrees Fahrenheit for one hour. Once the time has elapsed, turn the oven off and allow it to cool without opening the door. When the oven has thoroughly cooled use a damp sponge or rag to wipe away the residual baking soda mixture. Any baked-on food, grease and other stains should lift during the wiping process. (Source: http://cleaning.lovetoknow.com)

Mayonnaise

- Mayonnaise is one of the best substances for cleaning pine pitch, grease, or tar off your hands. Rub it on, let it sit for a few minutes, and clean off the spot.
- Remove crayon marks from furniture by rubbing mayonnaise on them. Let it sit for a minute or so, then wipe with a damp cloth.
- To remove the residue from tape or labels on glass, saturate the sticky part with mayonnaise, oil, or peanut butter, then wash and rinse.
- To lessen the appearance of water rings on wood furniture, rub with a small amount of mayonnaise on a soft cloth.

This house is protected by killer dust bunnies. ~Author Unknown

Housework is something that nobody notices until it doesn't get done. ~Author Unknown
Combination Power

- Never mix bleach with ammonia or vinegar. Hazardous fumes result!
- Lemon juice mixed with vinegar and or baking soda make great cleaning pastes. A lemon cut in half and sprinkled with baking soda makes a great abrasive cleaner you can use to scrub stubborn dishes, surfaces, and stains.
- Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup baking soda down drain, add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white vinegar, and cover the drain. Wait 15 minutes and then pour 1 gallon of hot water down the drain to get rid of build up.
- Make a super toilet cleaner with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup baking soda and 1 cup vinegar, pour it into toilet and let sit for 5 min. before scrubbing with a brush.
- 1 1/2 Tablespoons of baking soda with 2 Tablespoons of Borax mixed together can replace automatic dishwasher detergent.
- Fabric softener: 6 cups water, 3 cups vinegar, 2 cups of your favorite inexpensive hair conditioner.
- 1 cup olive oil blended with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup lemon juice makes a furniture polish for your hardwood furniture.

Bleach

How To Make Your Own Disinfectant Solution with Household Bleach - and Use it Safely

Follow these steps to make a 1:10 bleach solution safely.

Gather Supplies

- Quart-sized or larger plastic spray bottle, or glass jar with a lid
- Measuring Cup
- Damp cloth
- Household bleach
- Water
- Apron

Go Outside or to a Well Ventilated Room

Full strength bleach emits toxic fumes and should never be used in small or enclosed spaces. Ideally, you should mix your solution outside. If that is not an option, go to a large well ventilated room and open the windows.

Measure Ingredients

To make a 1:10 solution, you need 1 part bleach for every 9 parts water. A good amount to start with is:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup bleach
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water

Carefully pour the bleach into the spray bottle or jar first, then add the water. Mixing the solution in this order will prevent the bleach from splashing up on you. If you do get any bleach on your skin, wipe it off immediately with the damp cloth.

If you need to make a larger amount of disinfectant solution, increase the amounts of bleach and water accordingly, using the same proportions as above ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup bleach with 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup bleach with 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water, etc).

Mix the Solution

Place the lid on the container and gently invert the container back and forth a few times to mix. Your solution is now ready to use. Never add any other ingredients to you bleach solution because many substances - including vinegar - create harmful fumes when mixed with chlorine bleach.
Discard Unused Solution
Chlorine bleach solution begins to lose its disinfectant power quickly when exposed to heat, sunlight, and evaporation. In order to be sure your solution is still strong enough to kill germs, you should mix a fresh batch each day and discard whatever amount you don't use at the end of the day.

Laundry Soap
There is a multitude of recipes out there for making your own laundry soap. Here are a few of them.

Homemade Liquid Laundry Detergent #1
1 bar soap (Kirk’s Castile, Dr. Bronner’s, Dial glycerine, Ivory, Zote, Caress, Fels-Naptha, and Clearly Natural glycerine soap have all been successfully used by various folks)

1/2 cup Borax  
1/2 cup Washing Soda  
1/2 cup Oxi Clean or baking soda  
water  
Optional: a few drops of essential oil (lavender, lemongrass, etc.)

Directions:
1. Grate bar of soap, shred with a potato peeler, or cut it into chunks and then pulse it in a food processor.
2. In a large pot or bowl, melt shredded bar soap in 1 quart very hot water (not boiling!).
3. Pour into a 5 gallon bucket. Add 2 1/2 gallons water and optional essential oil, if using. Stir.
4. Add Borax, Oxi Clean, and Washing soda. Combine. (This might get foamy.) As it sits, soap gets very lumpy and gel-like. This is exactly how it’s supposed to look, although different soaps will make different consistencies. Let sit for 24 hours before using.
5. For each load, measure out 1/2 to 1 cup of detergent, depending on how big your bar of soap was. Some people like to keep a smaller portion in an empty laundry detergent bottle and shake prior to pouring out measured amount. (1/4 cup for HE front-loading machines.)

Homemade Liquid Laundry Soap #2 (For hard water)
1 bar Kirk’s Castile soap  
1 cup BAKING soda  
1 cup borax  
2 cups water softener salts  
1 cup dawn liquid dish soap  
3 gallons water

Process as above, mixing well to dissolve the water softener salts. Use about 1/2 c per load for a top loading machine.


Washing soda (sodium carbonate) cuts grease and neutralizes odors. Sold at Hannaford ($2.99 for 3lb 7oz box), also the same as “ph up” for pools.

Soap and Oxi Clean are the stain removers. Kirk’s Castile soap ($1.29 for 4oz bar), Clearly Natural ($1.51 for 4 oz bar), and Fels Naptha ($1.29) are sold at Hannaford, Fels Naptha is also sold at Greg’s and Shaw’s and is found in the laundry aisle, not with the soaps because it is a stain remover and not a true soap. Some people say that Fels Naptha is not good for you, others love it. Oxi Clean is found in the laundry aisle at Hannaford, near the bleach.
Homemade Powdered Laundry Soap #1
1 bar Fels Naptha (or another soap)
1 1/2 cups Arm & Hammer Washing Soda
1 1/2 cups of Borax

Using a food processor with the grater blade, grate the bar of soap. Then change to the regular chopper blade. Add the washing soda and borax and pulse it all together. Use 2 TBSP for a regular load.

Homemade Powdered Laundry Soap #2
8 ounces liquid ultra Joy
4 cups washing soda
2 cups borax
1 cup all fabric bleach
1 cup Oxi Clean

Mix the Joy with washing 2 cups washing soda and let dry for 24 hours. Break up the chunks and put thru the food processor.

Mix all ingredients and use 1/4 cup for a large, moderately soiled load of laundry in cold water. Run the washer on hot for a few seconds to mix the detergent and water then switch to cold.

Follow with 1/4 cup vinegar rinse.

Removing ink

• Sandpaper: Sandpaper does wonders to remove set-in ink stains on suede and leather. Simply use a fine grain sandpaper to gently buff the stain. Once you have lifted most of the ink, dip a soft bristle toothbrush in white vinegar and lightly scrub the stain. Once the stain is gone, use a dry toothbrush to fluff up the nap.

• Butter: Believe it or not, a stick of standard butter can help remove set-in ink stains from vinyl bags or purses and cotton and denim garments. Just rub the stain with some semi-soft salted butter and sit it in a sunny place. Your best bet is to expose the treated stain to direct sunlight by placing it outdoors. The oil in the butter will help lift the ink stain, while the combination of salt and sunlight works to fade any residual marks.

• Cornstarch and milk: This combination helps to eliminate set-in ink stains from carpets. Just mix cornstarch with milk to make a paste. Next, carefully apply the paste to the ink stain and allow it to dry. Once the mixture has hardened, brush it off the affected area and vacuum per usual.

• Hair Spray: An ink stain can be pre-treated with hair spray, wait a minute, then wash with hot soapy water. Repeat as necessary and launder before drying. Heat sets an ink stain.

The following is one website with a good chart about stain removal for washable items: http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean_living/stain_removal_chart.aspx


Happy cleaning! ~ Maren Mecham