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Making Cleaning Easy



*Save time and energy for the
things you want to do*

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE
EXTENSION SERVICE
C. Larsen, Director
Brookings, S. D.

MAKING CLEANING EASY

By Mary A. Covert

Extension Specialist in Home Management

Is it possible to find pleasure in bringing beauty, comfort and cleanliness out of disorder and dirt? Cleaning cannot be made easy while considered as drudgery.

Factors Which Make Cleaning Easy

Some of the factors which help to make cleaning easy are: Simple standard of living; a cooperative effort of family members to exclude dirt from the home and prevent disorder; adequate places to keep things; a well planned cleaning program; right methods, equipment and working postures.

Simple Standard of Living

A simple standard of living implies durable beauty throughout the home; smooth surfaces and straight lines; few articles which require moving; castors on large pieces of furniture; equipment which is durable, easily operated and cleaned; and efficient methods of work.

Prevention of Disorder and Dirt

The family members will conserve time and energy if they think of the care of the house in terms of keeping it clean and in order.

A well grassed yard; good walks; attention to the closing of doors and windows when the dust is blowing; strips of felt or woolen cloth tacked to the bottoms of doors and window sashes; cheese cloth covering on pantry and store room screens, help to keep dirt out of the house.

The cleaning job will be cut down if members will use the scraper and mat before entering the house, come in the same door, and put coats and overshoes in the place provided for them.

A large per cent of cleaning consists in restoring order. Much time and energy can be saved through the provision of places to keep things and the development of the habit of returning things to their places. It requires only a moment of time to put away reading matter, straighten a pillow, or set a chair in place.

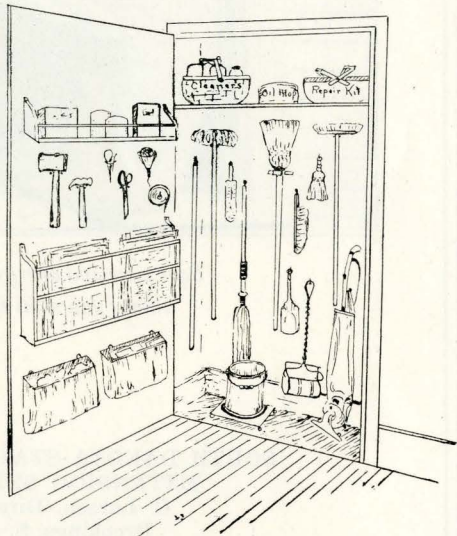


Fig. 1.—A fully equipped closet

Cleaning Plan

The time spent in cleaning should be cut to the minimum for comfortable living. The who, what, when and how of cleaning are problems for each family to determine for itself. Expert homemakers advise that cleaning be planned so that each job can be completed in a given time. Part of the disorder in the home is due to unfinished jobs. Everything should be arranged to make it easy to pass from one job to another with little waste time or motion. Work should proceed from left to right where possible.

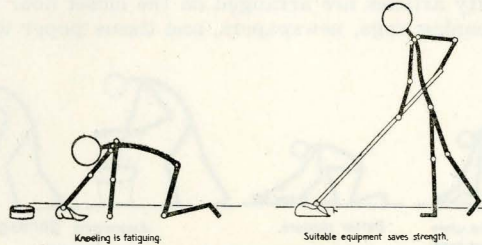


Fig. 2.—Kneeling is fatiguing

Like types of cleaning should be finished before changing to other types. Each type has its specific tools. Frequent change from one to another means loss of time and energy through extra handling of tools. Small jobs of the same kind should be allowed to collect until the accumulation justifies the time and energy expended in the handling of equipment necessary to do them.

When planning the work program, some special cleaning should be included each day so that it does not pile up. If washing windows, brushing walls, cleaning shelves and waxing floors are well distributed throughout the months, the house will be cared for with greater ease.

Carefully Selected, Placed and Arranged Equipment

The cleaning closet should be centrally located. One on each floor is ideal but impossible for many. The closet should be just deep enough to

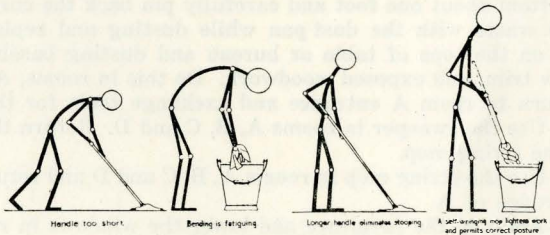


Fig. 3.—Ways to avoid bending over

take the scrub pail and vacuum cleaner. A deep closet is difficult to keep in order.

A fully equipped closet with everything conveniently arranged is shown in Fig. 1. Each piece may be removed without disturbing the others.

The basket of cleaning supplies has the contents plainly labeled and held in place by partitions. The supplies include convenient quantities of

crude oil, furniture polish, wax, household ammonia, vinegar, hydrochloric acid, kerosene, whiting, baking soda, neutral soap jelly, two chamois skins and soft lintless cloths. Waxed or oiled cloths should be kept in closed metal containers.

Cleaning usually discloses some needed repair. The cleaning closet is a convenient storage place for the repair kit which contains screw driver, pliers, sharp knife, file awl, spool of fine wire, screws, tacks and nails. These are conveniently arranged and held in place by partitions.

General utility articles are arranged on the closet door (Fig. 1). The pockets hold cleaning rags, newspapers, and tissue paper wrappers.

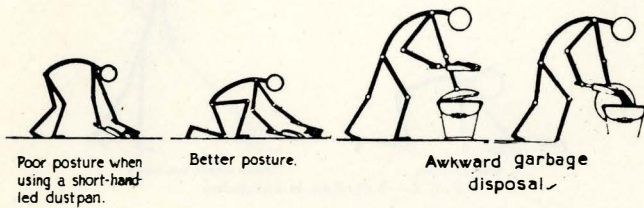


Fig. 4

General Room Cleaning

Experiments by homemakers show a decided saving of time when rooms are cleaned in groups. A standard practice for cleaning several rooms on the same floor is as follows:

Conditions.—Four rooms opening into a central hall, large rugs, and hard wood borders.

Tools.—Carpet sweeper or vacuum cleaner, long handled dustpan, string mop handle, dustless duster for furniture, soft lintless cloth to dust ornaments.

Trip 1.—Assemble the tools and deposit all but the duster and the dust pan at entrance of room A. Begin in room A. Open windows, top and bottom about one foot and carefully pin back the curtains. Pick up the waste with the dust pan while dusting and replacing ornaments on the tops of table or bureau and dusting baseboard, door, window trim, and exposed woodwork. Do this in rooms, A, B, C, and D, return to room A entrance and exchange tools for the sweeper.

Trip 2.—Use the sweeper in rooms A, B, C and D. Return the sweeper, take the string mop.

Trip 3.—Use the string mop in rooms A, B, C and D and return the mop to entrance of A.

Trip 4.—Arrange the furniture and lower the windows in rooms A, B, C and D. Return to entrance A.

Last Step.—Gather all tools from entrance A and carry them to the cleaning closet. Empty the contents of the sweeper and the dust pan into a dampened paper. Shake the mop free of dust outside the house. Replace the tools in the cleaning closet and dispose of the dust in the dampened paper. Room cleaning should be done in the following order: walls, lighting fixtures, pictures, books, woodwork, rugs and floors.

Frequency of Dusting

Dust regularly the places where air currents scatter the dust, such as the windows and floors at the entrances. Dust frequently the places where there is personal contact such as on the arms of chairs, door knobs, table tops, books and magazines. Dust should not be allowed to collect on highly polished surfaces because it will scratch the finish. Accumulation of dirt in storage places may become breeding places for insects. The frequency of dusting depends on the amount of dirt and moisture in the air and the habits of the family.

Soft cotton, silk, and woolen rags make good dust cloths. A dry cloth or duster should be used for general dusting. After the loose dust has been removed a cloth moistened with oil, wax, or water may be used. Crude oil is inexpensive and very effective in the general care of oiled or varnished surfaces. Wax only should be used on waxed surfaces. Neglected pieces may require washing with tepid water and neutral soap. See Circular No. 301 for the care of furniture.

Window Washing

Frequent washing of windows may be avoided by regularly dusting the windows and ventilating the house when cooking or washing.

The member who enjoys climbing should be given the window washing responsibility. Windows should not be cleaned when the sun is shining on

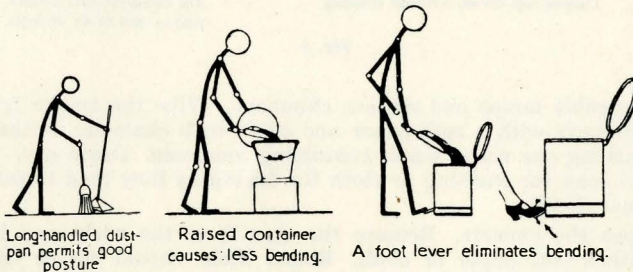


Fig. 5

them. It is hard on the eyes and streaks the glass. A time and energy saving method of washing windows is as follows:

1. Assemble the equipment and supplies — a step ladder; a dull pointed instrument to clean the corners; a brush, cloth and pan of warm water to clean the woodwork; pail of warm water with two tablespoons of household ammonia added to wash the glass; a pail of clear warm water to rinse it.
2. Dust the screens, glass and woodwork.
3. Lower the top sash part way and wash the outside upper part of glass from above. Rinse and dry with the chamois.
4. Drop the top sash all the way down. Raise the bottom sash part way and wash, rinse and dry the outside upper part of glass from above. Leave the bottom sash in this position.
5. Raise the top sash part way, wash, rinse and dry the lower part of glass from below. Raise the top sash to its place.

6. Wash, rinse and dry the lower part of the glass of the bottom sash and lower sash to position.
7. Clean, rinse and dry the inside of the window (Fig. 7).
8. Remove cleaning equipment and supplies. Clean, dry and store them.

Care of Wick Lamps

Frequent washing of chimneys tends to increase breakage. Watch that the flame is not turned too high and that the lamp is not set where a draft will cause the flame to blacken the chimney. Methods and order of work in the general care and cleaning of lamps are as follows:

1. Spread newspapers on the working surface. Collect supplies—soft paper, chamois, warm water to which ammonia is added, scissors, small brush and kerosene.

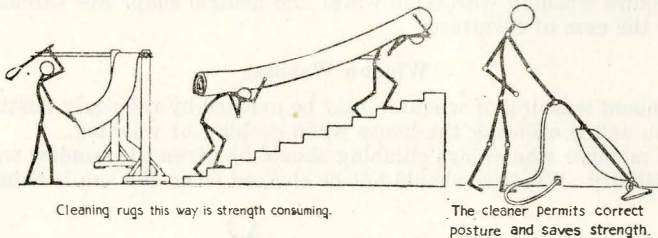


Fig. 6

2. Assemble lamps and remove chimneys. Wipe the smoke from the chimneys with a soft paper and clean with chamois. If they need washing use warm water containing ammonia. Drain dry. Do not use soap for washing or cloth for drying as they tend to make the glass cloudy.
3. Open the burners. Remove the char from the wicks and burners with a soft paper or cloth. Round wicks should not be trimmed. When straight wicks are trimmed the corners should be cut to prevent points on the flame. Turn the wicks down one-fourth of an inch after they are cleaned to prevent the seepage of oil. Clean the ventilating holes with a brush. Dislodge the char in the ventilating tube with a pin or fine wire.
4. Fill the bowls leaving one-half inch of air space to allow for the expansion of the oil when heated. A lump of salt added to each bowl will improve the light. Wipe or wash the bowls. An unpleasant odor from lamps is often due to oil left on some part.
5. Assemble the lamps. Return them and the cleaning equipment and supplies to their respective places.

The burners should be boiled occasionally in soda water, rinsed and dried. The bowls should be emptied of sediment and allowed to stand filled with strong hot soda solution. They should be thoroughly dried before being refilled. Water in oil tends to make the flame flicker.

New wicks are less likely to smoke if boiled in vinegar before using.

The tops should be burned off evenly by holding them in a flame. Old wicks should be washed occasionally and boiled in vinegar.

When lighting the lamp, turn the wick only part way up. Glass expands when heated. The chimney may break if heated too rapidly. Wait until the cloudiness on the chimney, due to dampness in the air, has disappeared before turning the flame to full height. There is no advantage in turning a flame low because the same amount of oil is used and an unpleasant odor results. Shade the lamp if less light is desired.

When extinguishing the flame do not blow down the chimney. Turn the wick low and give a quick puff across the chimney top.

Correct Body Posture and Use of Equipment

Correct posture in the use of equipment is perhaps the greatest factor in making cleaning easy. Comfortable positions should be assumed. Stooping should be avoided as much as possible. Tools should have handles long enough to permit the worker to stand upright without stooping. (Figs. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.)

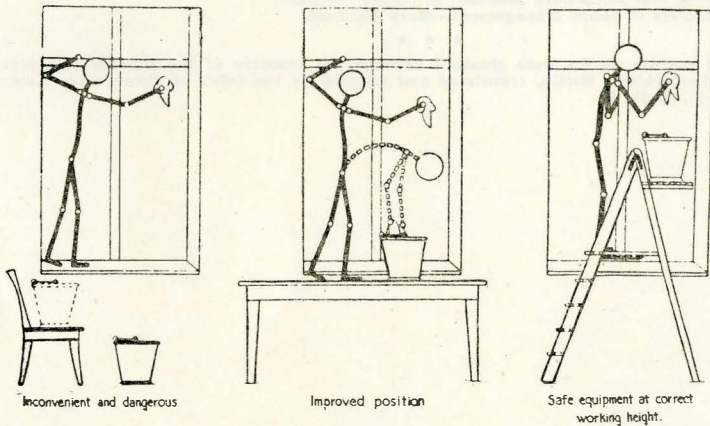


Fig. 7

The straighter the position of the worker and the further down the force is applied on the tool the easier will be the work and the more efficient will be the results. The handle should be grasped as far down as possible without stooping, using one hand to direct it and the other to apply the force. Tools should be held so that the hands are not cramped.

The hands and body should be trained to quick easy action. The movements should swing into rhythm. Work is accomplished with greater ease when the body is well balanced and adjusted to the movements of the job. Methods of work should be studied to eliminate all unnecessary movements.

Poise for Standing and Light Quick Movement

Poise the front diaphragm muscle well over the great toe. Hold the back of the head up easily and lightly. Raise chest high. This position

holds for all work which requires quick light movements. Regardless of the job feel that action has its first impulse in the solar plexus and keep it leading.

Poise for Lifting Heavy Weight

Fill the lungs with air. Make the effort with the entire body, but concentrate the feeling of force in the feet. Balance the body so that you feel a springiness from the ball of the great toe and a lifting feeling from the inside of the forward part of the foot. Distribute the weight evenly so that the entire body is like a flexible lever, braced from the inner side of the great toe.

When the strain is allowed to center in the back, arms, chest or abdomen there is no accumulation of strength for the effort and the tissues in these parts may be strained.

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The posture charts were obtained through the courtesy of the Reichskuratorium für Wirtschaftlichkeit, Berlin, translated and adapted by the Office of Cooperative Extension Work, U. S. D. A.

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