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The “I Hate House Cleaning!” eBook for Busy Moms

by Nicole Dean

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Oh my goodness do I hate house cleaning!

My dream is this...

I pick up an oil lamp at an antique shop. I squint my eyes and try to read the grimy, dusty inscription. No luck. I try rubbing the lamp to get a better look at the inscription. ... VOILA! A genie asks me for my 3 wishes.

Before he can even introduce himself, I blurt "I want a self-cleaning house so I never have to clean again."

Moms know that the job of cleaning can feel like a mountain that grows faster than you can climb it. I don't know how you feel, but I sure don't want to spend my time scrubbing floors when I can be writing or playing with my kids!

I've compiled these tips with the help of a friend who runs a cleaning business. They are all very simple, but very handy! I hope you'll enjoy them.

Although this book was written for Moms, feel free to pass it on to anyone you know, who might be wishing for a genie, too!

Here's to quick, painless house cleaning!

Nicole Dean

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The Essential House Cleaning Tools

There's no point in doing a job if you can't do it right - and you can't do it right if you don't have the essential house cleaning tools that you need! A plumber cannot fix a leak without his tools and you cannot clean your house without the proper household cleaning tools. Buying better quality cleaning tools is your best bet; they usually work better and last longer.

Here are the essential house cleaning tools to keep on hand:

Vacuum Cleaner

A good [Vacuum](#) is a number one must-have for every household. Vacuums are expensive, be sure to buy from a name you trust. If you're not sure, ask friends and family about theirs. Offer to vacuum a room in their home so that you can test it out!

Broom

You definitely need a well-made [broom](#) for sweeping. I'm always amazed at everything that turns up in the pile after I sweep my kitchen floor.

Mop

You need a high quality [mop](#). One that you can really push around without it snapping. I like sponge mops, the kind with replaceable heads. Some people prefer cotton string mops. It's definitely personal preference.

Rags

You need plenty of [Rags](#) to clean effectively. You can purchase cotton cloth cleaning rags or create your own. Old socks, t-shirts, cloth diapers, bath towels and pillow cases all retire to become really wonderful cleaning rags.

Extendable Duster

I've seen long handled dusters that extend to six feet. [Extendable Dusters](#) are great to have on hand for dusting baseboards and woodwork and hard to reach areas like corners, ceiling fans and stairwells.

Bucket

Use a [bucket](#) to store cleaning supplies and to tote from room to room and of course, to mop your floors.

Brushes

Toilet [Brushes](#) for each bathroom.

An old toothbrush for getting into cracks and crevices, like around the knobs on the toilet seat and behind faucets. If you don't have an old one, grab a cheap one at the dollar store.

Paintbrushes of different shapes and sizes with good stiff bristles for dusting delicate items, wicker and lamp shades.

Small scrub brush for cleaning tub and tile.

Rubber Gloves

You should always wear [rubber gloves](#) when cleaning. Not just because of germs but also to save your hands from chemicals.

Upbeat Music!

Now is not the time to listen to Phantom of the Opera! You need music to get your toes tapping! Burn yourself a CD specifically to clean to. I love cleaning to [80s tunes!](#)

Cleaning Agents

[All-Purpose Cleaners](#) - Heavy-duty liquid all purpose cleaner, you might like to keep two different products - one for the kitchen and one for the bathroom.

[Glass Cleaners](#), like Windex.

[Powder Cleanser](#), like Ajax or Comet.

White Vinegar is by far my favorite ally in cleaning. I love it for floors.

[Murphy's Oil Soap](#) to polish woodwork and furniture.

And of course, no clean house is complete without the old standard, BLEACH.

Take an inventory of your cleaning supplies now. Do you have what you need? If not, write it down. Does your mop need replacing? Make a point to buy a new one. Having the proper tools to clean with is half the battle. With the right tools of the trade and a solid game plan, you'll have your house clean in no time!

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How To Clean Up For Unexpected Guests in 10 Minutes or Less!

You're lying on the couch in your living room, in one your husband's old t-shirts and a pair of baggie sweatpants, watching the new Lifetime movie, when suddenly - the phone rings. You don't recognize the number on caller ID and you make the mistake of answering it. It's your long lost best friend from the sixth grade. She's in town and she just happens to be in your neighborhood. She'll be over in 10 minutes. The house is a MESS.

How To Clean Up For Unexpected Guests in 10 Minutes or Less!

1. Stay calm!
2. Do a clean sweep. Grab a trash bag or laundry basket and gather up everything that is lying around and shouldn't be, no matter what it is and throw it into the bag. Hide the bag.
3. Plump up pillows on couches and chairs in living room, fold blankets. Give each cushion a swat for crumbs.
4. Stack mail, newspapers and magazines in a nice, neat pile. Stick the pile in a corner or on a kitchen chair.
5. Give the bathroom a speedy sprucing up! Wipe out sink, wipe off toilet seat and quickly swish the bowl. Then, close the shower curtain, and throw odds and ends in cabinets or drawers. Spray some Lysol or air freshener so the bathroom will smell clean - even if it's far from it.
6. Rinse off any dishes in sink and stack them neatly or toss them in the dishwasher. Wipe off table and counter tops.
7. Light a yummy scented candle in the kitchen - like Cinnamon Buns or Chocolate Cake.
8. Take a peek inside the fridge - what beverages and snacks do you have that you can offer your guests?
9. Close the doors to all rooms that you don't want on display.

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10. Take a deep breath. Give yourself a squirt of perfume and you're all set! You may even have enough time to get changed into something a little more presentable.

Lighting a few scented candles will uplift the mood of any home and make guests feel welcomed. Throw some fruit in a bowl and place it in the center of your table. Fresh flowers also do wonders, if you have them on hand.

Cleaning up for unexpected guests does not have to be a mad rush, if you keep up on your housework as a rule. A friend of mine gave me some really good advice right after my husband and I got married, she said "The best way to keep a clean house is to entertain in your home once a month."

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What to Clean and When

It seems to me that to a lot of women the hardest part about cleaning their house is finding the time to do it. We all have busy lives, but that is no excuse for having a dirty house. By establishing household guidelines and sticking to a daily routine, you can control the upkeep of your home. The key is to keep on top of things on a daily basis so that your job of cleaning the house does not have to be one of those things that takes on a life of its own. Some household chores need to be done every day, others once a week, some once a year. By knowing what needs to be done and when, you've won half the battle.

Make lists for yourself of the chores that need to be done in your home on a daily, weekly and yearly basis. Check off chores as they are done. Write the date each yearly chore is completed so you know how long you have until it needs to be done again. Make each member of your household accountable to the upkeep of the house - no matter how big and cranky or how little and sweet they are. No one in your house is too young or too old to pitch in! Make keeping your house clean on a daily basis a priority in your home and make housekeeping easier on yourself!

- [Daily Tasks](#)
- [Weekly Tasks](#)
- [Annual Tasks](#)

Daily Household Chores

There are things that really should be cleaned every day in your home if you want to maintain a clean house. You probably already do many of them.

1. My Grandmother used to say, "There is a place for everything and everything should be in its place." Picking up in every room in your home and putting things away is the number one key to keeping a clean house. Establish a new rule in your home that if you take something into a room with you, it must leave the room when you do and be put back where it belongs. Have trouble getting your kids to take the new rule seriously? If your son leaves his hand-held game system on the couch and goes outside to play, he loses it for twenty four hours. Once this happens to a few of his beloved toys a few times, he'll think twice about not putting things away when he's done with them.

2. Make the beds. A neatly made bed makes even the most unorganized bedroom look somewhat together. I can't leave my house unless the beds are made. I have a friend who never, ever makes her bed. "Why should I go through all that trouble? I'm only going to get right back in it in a few hours." It's something that I will never be able to comprehend.

3. Do the dishes. You've heard the saying, "Never go to bed angry." You can go to bed angry five nights in a row if you like, but never go to bed with a sink full of dirty dishes. If you have a dishwasher, fabulous! All you have to do is stick the dirty dishes in it. Even if you're tired, wash the dishes. I'd rather have 10 or 15 minutes less sleep than wake up to a kitchen with dirty dishes.

4. Sort your mail. Throw away junk and file bills. Don't let it pile up, do it daily.

5. Take out the trash. No doubt about it, this needs to be done as soon as the trash reaches the top - which in our house is usually every day.

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6. Spray kitchen counters with an all purpose cleaner and wipe down with a damp rag. This should be done before and after you cook, and as you go along.
7. Wipe down your bathroom. The sink and shower should be rinsed out after each use. The toilet seat and lid should be wiped once a day. The new disposable cleaning wipes, like Clorox makes, are perfect for this.
8. Sweep and vacuum floors. Technically you should sweep and vacuum every day. I do it as needed in my home, usually every other day. You may be able to get away with only vacuuming the bedrooms in your house once a week, but high traffic areas like hallways and the living room should be done more often. Personally, I love my [Swiffer](#)!
9. If laundry is an issue in your home (as in there's always a ton of it), make a promise to yourself to do at least one load a day.

Weekly Household Chores

Most cleaning jobs need to be done at least once a week. You can't go two weeks or a month without doing certain jobs or you will lose control over your house.

1. Every carpeted room in your home should be vacuumed at least once a week if not more often. Regular vacuuming enhances the life of your carpet. Without weekly vacuuming, dirt and grit will build up in your carpets and act like scissors, wearing down and cutting the carpet fibers. Use door mats and throw rugs at every entrance to your home to trap dirt and keep it from getting tracked around your house.
2. Sweep and mop kitchen and bathroom floors. Dry mop, then damp mop hardwood floors.
3. Dust all furniture. Use a damp rag and wipe down everything. I'm not a big fan of furniture polish, I find that it just leaves a lemon-scented greasy film on my furniture and isn't worth the time or money.
4. Clean glass doors and mirrors, especially bathroom mirrors which are used the most.
5. Empty waste paper baskets in bedrooms and family rooms. Empty bathroom trash can. It makes the most sense to empty all of these into the kitchen trash can before it gets completely full and then take the whole bag outside.
6. Change bedclothes. Beds should be completely stripped down once a week and bed linens should be washed. If you don't have the time to wash all the comforters and blankets in one shot, rotate who's bedclothes get washed when, wash two one week and then the other two the following week. At the very least, pillow cases and sheets should be changed and washed once a week.
7. I like to do all my ironing at one shot once a week. Don't make it such a chore, watch a movie or talk on the phone while you iron.
8. While you're going around cleaning your home, don't forget to water those plants!

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Annual Household Chores

Certain household chores only really need to be done once a year. And it's a good thing too because they are huge jobs that no one looks forward to. At least once they're done and over with, you know you shouldn't have to worry about it for another year.

1. All the windows in your home should be washed inside and out once a year. I usually have it done in early spring. Notice I said "have it done", because I pay someone to do it. It's one of those things that I find is definitely worth the money.

2. Once the windows are clean, take down all the curtains and drapes and wash, dry, iron and re-hang them. It's easier if you do it room by room over a period of a week.

3. Blinds and shades also need to be washed once a year. If they are dusted regularly it makes it a lot easier in the end. Dust shades with a paint brush, using hard, quick strokes. Then rub out any marks with a pencil eraser. I bought a hand- tool that was supposed to be for cleaning blinds. It was not worth the \$25.00 I paid for it. Take your blinds down and lay them in your tub. Fill the tub just enough to cover the blinds, add a half cup of ammonia to the water and let it get sudsy. Soak them for half an hour, rinse in shower and hang over tub to dry. It's hard work, but it's the most effective way to get the job done.

4. Go through your drawers and closets and donate or throw away clothes that you don't wear. This includes the sun dress you haven't been able to fit into in three summers, but you don't want to give up hope. When you lose that 20 pounds, reward yourself with a new dress!

5. Vacuum radiators, vents, heat ducts and air conditioners. Make sure your air filters have been changed recently.

6. Shampoo carpets. You can rent a machine fairly cheaply if you don't want to buy one or borrow a friend's. This is another job I like to pay to have done in my home.

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7. Clean out your garage, workshop, basement, and attic - get rid of the junk and clean the funk!

8. You may want to consider hiring a cleaning service once a year to clean your home. Yes, it can get pricey - but you and your home both deserve it. It's nice to hire professionals to come in and do your big, thorough spring cleaning - including vacuuming under beds and cleaning out cabinets. How about hiring a service before the holidays to clean?

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Kitchen Cleaning

For most women, the most despised rooms in the house to clean are the bathroom and the kitchen. Most kitchens are not nearly as small and over crowded as most bathrooms, but there is quite a bit more to be cleaned in the kitchen and a dirty kitchen will nag at you more than a dirty bathroom because it isn't as "secluded" and you spend much more time there.

With daily upkeep, cleaning your kitchen does not have to be an all day event. The most important rule in keeping a clean kitchen (or any room in your home) is to clean up as you go along, establish and maintain certain daily standards. I have a sign in my kitchen that reads, "If you spill it, wipe it up." This is crucial to keeping a clean kitchen! Spills and splatters left to dry can become a nightmare to clean. Use a damp rag to wipe up after yourself as you cook. Teach your children (and husband!) to do the same.

Clutter

Before you begin cleaning your kitchen, scan the room. Gather everything that does not belong there - yesterday's paper, ballet slippers, your scrapbooking supplies - and return them to their homes.

Next, look for things that do belong in the kitchen but don't belong out - jar of peanut butter, box of cereal, gadgets - and put them away. Be sure to check for items that you keep out on the counter but you don't use regularly. For instance, my friend gave me a Belgium waffle maker for Christmas three years ago (which I'm sure I used no more than three times) but there it sat on my counter day after day, taking up space and collecting dust. Last week, I finally made it a new home in a cabinet above my refrigerator. If you have an appliance sitting on your countertop that you don't use at least once a week, for goodness sakes give yourself more counter space and put that bad boy in a cupboard!

Dishes

First, load your dishwasher. You know the old saying, "Never go to bed angry."? Start living by a new saying, "Never go to bed with dirty dishes in the sink." Be sure to put away clean dishes and pots and pans.

Fronts of cabinets

Spray a damp rag with all purpose kitchen cleaner and wipe fronts of cabinets from top to bottom. Spot wipe regularly for splatters and fingerprints. Wipe down the front and sides of your refrigerator in the same manner.

Countertops

Again, spray a damp rag with all purpose kitchen cleaner and wipe countertops. Pick up anything on the counter and wipe under it, wipe down small appliances as you go. Don't forget to empty your toaster!

Microwave

If you wipe out your microwave after each use, this will never be a problem area of your kitchen. Use window cleaner on a damp rag to wipe the inside and outside of microwave. If there are dried, stuck on unidentified items inside, boil a bowl of water in the microwave - the steam will help to loosen them - making it much easier to clean. Funky smell? Rub the inside down with a half a lemon, let sit, then wipe.

Stove

Remove grills, burner plates and rings from stove and place in sink. Spray them down with a cleaning product that contains a degreaser and let them sit 15-20 minutes before scrubbing. Remove knobs on stove top and oven and clean with warm, soapy water. An old toothbrush is great for getting the gunk out. Wipe down stove top, hood and front of oven with a damp rag and all purpose cleaner.

Sink

Your sink should be wiped out after each use. You can use any all purpose kitchen cleaner to clean your sink. I like to use powdered cleanser. Use an old toothbrush to clean behind faucet and around knobs.

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Oven

If you've got a self-cleaning oven, you've got it made! If not, you've got your work cut out for you. There are a zillion oven cleaning products on the market. I find the cheaper brands work just as well. Be sure to read all directions carefully and to wear rubber gloves. This is, by far, the messiest job in the kitchen.

Dishwasher

Sprinkle baking soda on a wet rag and work into a paste to remove spots and build-up from the inside of your dishwasher. Wipe with a clean, damp rag. Use window cleaner or all purpose on the face on your dishwasher to make it sparkle and shine!

Finally, the Floor

Sweep your floor. I like to use the attachment on my vacuum to get into little corners and under cabinets also. The product you use to mop your kitchen floor is dependant of the type of floor you have. I like to use white vinegar and water on my tile floor. Before using a floor cleaning product, be sure to read the label carefully and make sure it's suited for your floor type.

Your kitchen is going to get messy. There's no way around it. But with routine maintenance and a smart approach to cleaning it, you don't have to wait until you can no longer see the sink to start the job. Go ahead, clean your kitchen and invite your mother-in-law over for dinner.

Bathroom Cleaning

If you ask any woman what her least favorite room of the house is to clean, she will probably say the bathroom.

The bathroom is small to begin with and is often over crowded making the job that much more arduous. Cleaning toilets, sinks and tubs and getting to the little nooks and crannies where the "gunk" thrives can be... less than fun. But it has to be done, and with regular upkeep, it doesn't have to be an awful experience.

The most important rule of cleaning any room in your home, the bathroom included, is to not let it get "out of hand" or too dirty in the first place.

Get your kids and your spouse into the habit of cleaning up as they go along. (And, of course, we have to set a good example for them.) The sink, the tub and the shower should all be rinsed after each use. Insist that used towels and dirty laundry are not permitted to linger in the bathroom for days on end. They must make their way to a hamper or the laundry room before bedtime. This way you won't be bombarded by a weeks worth of wash when it comes time to clean the bathroom.

Before you start to clean the bathroom, take everything that does not belong there in the first place out - clothing, magazines, basketballs, Barbie's - whatever the case may be. Return these items to their rightful homes and you'll already feel like you've accomplished quite a bit. Next, remove larger items from that bathroom that will make you feel more confined when cleaning - hampers, trash cans, scales, small tables - place them out in the hall and wipe them down with a damp rag. Your next step is to sweep your floor, I know it sounds crazy to sweep first, but this will save you a lot of hassle. There's nothing harder to get off a floor than wet hair. Now you are ready to go in for the kill...er...the clean!

Always start high and work your way down low. Use a damp rag to dust light fixtures and wall hangings first. Next, clean your mirrors, then your shower walls and tub, then your sink, countertop and fronts of cabinets. Of course, the floor is always last.

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The Mirror

Spray window cleaner on mirror lightly and evenly, use a dry rag and wipe from top to bottom until the glass is dry. Rubbing alcohol works extremely well on glass, particularly on bathroom mirrors that can have a film of hairspray and other beauty products on them. Keep a separate bottle of rubbing alcohol with a spray nozzle under your sink for this purpose. White vinegar also does a beautiful job on mirrors.

Walls around Shower

Spray a liberal amount of basin, tub and tile cleaner all over shower walls. The product needs time to do its job. Read the directions to find out how long to leave it on before cleaning. Use a small scrub brush and begin to scrub in quick, short circles from the top of the shower wall down to the bottom where the wall meets the tub. Rinse well to avoid build up from the product. If you have sliding shower doors they need to be cleaned as well. Window cleaner will work on well kept shower doors, however if there is a build up of soap scum, you'll need to use a product that contains bleach. The tracks can be easily cleaned by spraying with an all purpose cleaner and scrubbing with an old toothbrush. Warning: If you have not cleaned the tracks on your tub in a while, there's no telling what you'll find when you do!

The Tub

Once the walls and/or doors are cleaned, move down to the tub. I like to use powdered cleanser in my tub, but any bathroom cleaner will do. Your tub will already be wet from rinsing your shower walls. Sprinkle some cleanser to cover the bottom of the tub, scrub it using your scrub brush and let the "paste" it becomes sit for 5-10 minutes before rinsing clean.

Faucets can be wiped down with a damp rag. Window cleaner works well to make them shine - spray on and polish with a dry rag.

The Sink and Countertop

Remove everything from the top of your counter, spray it and the fronts of your cabinets with an all purpose cleaner and wipe with a wet rag. Your sink can be cleaned like your tub, using powdered cleanser, or you can use an all purpose bathroom cleaner if you choose. Be sure to arrange and organize everything that goes back on the countertop.

The Toilet

Ah, the dreaded task. First things first, flush. Pour a half a cup of bleach or your favorite disinfectant into your toilet bowl and let it sit for 5-10 minutes. Then using your toilet brush and starting on the inside rim, scrub in a circular motion. Be sure you scrub as deep into the bowl as you can and under the rim. The outside of your toilet can be wiped down with an all purpose cleaner - use a toothbrush to clean around the hinges - they can get pretty gross.

Finally, the Floor

Sweep again, then mop. I like to use plain white vinegar and water on my tile floors, but an all purpose or commercial floor cleaning product will work well.

Cleaning your bathroom does not have to be such a drag, especially if you do it weekly and don't allow it to get to the point of no return.

Remember: Get in, get it done, get out!

Living Room and Dining Room

Compared to cleaning your kitchen or bathroom, cleaning the living room and dining room in your home is a piece of cake! You are basically just dusting and vacuuming. Neither of which is all that complex, but they do involve more than simply watching the dust blow around and then pushing your vacuum around the room. Before you begin to actually clean the room, take a walk around it. Pick up all items that do not belong in the room and return them to where they do. It's like starting with a blank canvas.

As with cleaning any room in your home, you want to start at the top and work your way down - bring the dirt to the ground. Catchy little slogan, eh? If you do not own an extendable duster, go out and buy one - NOW. They are invaluable to cleaning and so much safer than wobbling around, tippey-toed on a step ladder. With your extendable duster in hand, walk around the perimeter of the room. Check for cobwebs in corners high and low. Be sure to hit woodwork, trim and baseboards. If your woodwork has not been dusted on a regular basis, you may need to go back over it with a damp rag. Dust ceiling fans and hanging light fixtures with your extendable duster. These may also need to be cleaned with a damp rag if they are particularly dirty.

Next, dust all wall hangings and shelves. Be sure to dust frames across the top and bottom where dust always lands. An old paint brush is my favorite cleaning accessory. Use a paint brush to dust knick knacks, floral arrangements, wicker and lampshades - works like a charm! Move on to tables, you can either remove all items from the table and dust them each separately, then wipe the entire table down before replacing the items OR if you're short on time, use your paintbrush to dust around everything. Windows - tops, sills and sides - should be dusted also...when was the last time you gave them a wiping?

Now you are ready to move on to vacuuming and you're almost done! Remove any small, throw rugs from the room - you can vacuum those after you've vacuumed the actual carpet. Divide the room into sections and vacuum the room slowly, concentrating on one small area at a time. Use the small brush attachment on your vacuum to clean upholstered furniture. Be sure to lift up cushions and suck up any

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crumbs that may be under there. God only knows what else you may find - be prepared for the worst!

Voila! You have a clean living room or dining room! Of course, these are only the steps to a routine cleaning. A much more thorough cleaning of your living room and dining room should be done at least four times a year. You can probably get away with once a year, but you didn't hear that from me! When doing a spring cleaning of your living room and dining room, drapes or curtains should be taken down and washed, windows should be cleaned and furniture should be completely moved out to vacuum the entire carpet. You may also want to wash your walls once a year.

Did you know that "technically" you should dust and vacuum your home EVERY DAY? Who has time for that? Not me. Enlist the help of your children. Dusting and vacuuming make great chores for kids. Make maintaining your home a priority for the entire household. By getting your family into the habit of picking up and wiping up after themselves each day, your task of cleaning will not be such a heavy burden.

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Enlist your Little Helpers

Having kids equals chaos. Chaos puts the work in housework. Of course we all love our children dearly, but who knew they'd be so messy? When you have children, you can never count on how long your house will actually stay clean after you've cleaned it. A day? An hour? Less? Cleaning up after your kids does not have to take on a life of its own. By making a clean and organized home a priority for the entire family and by setting and sticking to household standards, you can avoid feeling more like Maid than Mom.

Children as young as two can learn to be organized. Household chores are not just for older children. Toddlers can learn to put away their toys, brush the dog, put their dirty clothes in the hamper and help to unload groceries. Always thank your child when they've completed a chore and praise them for doing it and doing it well (when deserved). The traditional chore chart on the fridge is a great parenting tool for positive reinforcement. Reward your child with a sticker on his chore chart next to the chore they've completed, when they get X number of stickers, they get a reward - a new book or toy, their favorite dinner, a trip to the movies, etc. The chore chart system can be tweaked and customized for your family to suite each child in the house.

Older children need regular household chores. Studies have shown that children who have chores at home get better grades, are more social and more confident than children who do not have chores. Children need a certain amount of responsibility and need to learn to be accountable for their actions. Requiring your children to do household chores will help them to be more well rounded (and organized!) as they grow. Older children can make their beds, keep their room organized and clean, dust and vacuum, wash dishes, feed pets, and water plants.

Your older children may be more apt to take their chores seriously if there are dollar signs involved. Base your child's allowance on what you can afford, how many chores your child does and how well they do them. For instance, you can pay according to age (so an 8 year old would receive \$8 per week). Or come up with a pricing system that works for you. Luckily, my 3 year old is quite happy with stickers.

When it's possible, allow your child to choose chores that they like to do. Their response will be better because they will enjoy what they're doing. My eight-year old loves to dust. I let her turn her music up a bit, hand her a damp rag and she goes to town. It's a different story when it comes time for her to clear the table after dinner though, that's like pulling teeth - without pain killers!

Do your children fight over who does what chores? Rotate chores from week to week so that your child isn't stuck doing something he/she hates every week: This week Susie dusts and vacuums and Johnny takes out the trash and feeds the dog, next week it's Susie's turn to take out the trash and feed the dog and Johnny's turn to dust and vacuum. Try not to base household chores on gender. There's nothing wrong with your son having to wash dishes or do laundry and there's nothing wrong with your daughter taking out the trash or washing the car. No housework is strictly for girls or strictly for boys. It may be helpful to remind your husband of that too. If rotating chores doesn't work to stop bickering, try writing chores down on little pieces of paper and having your children pick their chores from a hat.

If your children don't have chores, it's not too late to start. Hold a family meeting and explain that you need their help to maintain the house and that effective immediately everyone is going to start pitching in. Introduce chore charts and allowance/reward systems and explain to each child what chores they'll be responsible for, when each chore needs to be completed and if necessary, how to do it. Be sure to have consequences ready for chores that aren't done and explain them in advance. In our house, if one chore is neglected or refused, it's a done deal - no allowance, no negotiations. It may take a few weeks to get your family in full swing, but it will come together - I promise.

You are Mom, not Maid. You can ask for help and get it! Your children may not thank you for it now, but later on it will pay off for them - and for you! Make housework a part of your children's routine and make yourself less stressed. Sit down and supervise for awhile ...you knew you had kids for a reason.

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