

STEPS

TO INDEPENDENT LIVING



THIRD
EDITION

How to Take Care of Your Home

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To the Student

Living on your own can be a great experience! You can choose and decorate your own place. You can decide for yourself what and when to eat. You can set your own hours. In short, you are free to make your own choices about your lifestyle.

Along with these freedoms comes responsibility. Living on your own means it's up to you to take care of yourself when you're sick or hurt. You are now the one who must be sure your nutritional, physical, and emotional needs are met. No one will be watching over you to ensure your personal safety. No one will be looking to make sure you make good decisions about alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. It's up to you!

But that's not all! You must make good choices as you choose and set up your home. You must keep your home safe and clean. And you must use your money wisely to meet your needs.

You will have a better experience living on your own if you are prepared to meet your new responsibilities. The six books in the *Steps to Independent Living* series will teach you the skills you need to make it on your own.

In this book, *How to Take Care of Your Home*, you will learn about:

- safety in the home
- keeping your home clean
- keeping washable goods clean

We hope this information helps prepare you for the day you start living on your own!

Self-Test

How much do you know about keeping a home safe and clean?
Circle YES or NO for each question.

1. Do you know how to put out a grease fire safely?
YES NO
2. Do you know what to do if you're trapped by a fire?
YES NO
3. Do you know how to protect children from poisoning?
YES NO
4. Can you use electrical appliances safely?
YES NO
5. Do you know what to do if your gas stove leaks?
YES NO
6. Do you know how to keep out burglars?
YES NO
7. Do you know how to prevent food poisoning?
YES NO
8. Do you know how to save time cleaning your house?
YES NO
9. Do you know how to choose laundry products?
YES NO



You Don't Have to Eat Off the Floor!

Some people like their homes to be spotless. Others have no interest at all in keeping things clean. Who's right? Does keeping things clean matter? Does a little dirt hurt anyone?

Well, yes and no. Each person must decide how clean is clean enough. But there are reasons for keeping things at least somewhat clean.



A dirty bathroom is full of germs. It may smell bad, too. Clean the bathroom well at least once a week. Use disinfectant to kill germs.

Food fixed in a dirty kitchen may look good but be very bad for you. Food poisoning can result if food handling areas are not kept clean. So, keep the kitchen clean! Wash dishes and take out the trash daily. Keep work surfaces wiped up.

Spiders, roaches, silverfish, and other pests love dirty corners. They carry dirt and germs all over your home. To get rid of them, keep things clean. You may need to use bug sprays as well. Or, hire a pest control service.

Living in dirt and clutter can make you feel unsettled. A clean, orderly home is more pleasant.



Make It Easy on Yourself!

No one wants to spend a lot of time cleaning. Don't spend more time than you need to. Save your time for things you enjoy. Here are a few ways to get the most done for the least work.

- Have a place for everything. Keep everything in its place.
- Keep things neat as you go. When you're done using something, put it away. Hang up clothes when you take them off. Wash dirty dishes after each meal. (Or put them in the dishwasher.) Leave the bathroom neat after each time you use it.
- Put a doormat by each outside door. This keeps dirt outside, not inside!
- Have a spot for your cleaning supplies. Keep everything you use on hand.
- Set up a schedule for cleaning. You might do one job each day. Or you might pick one day to do all the cleaning.
- Before you start any cleaning project, gather all your supplies. Stopping to find cleansers or sponges will eat up your time.



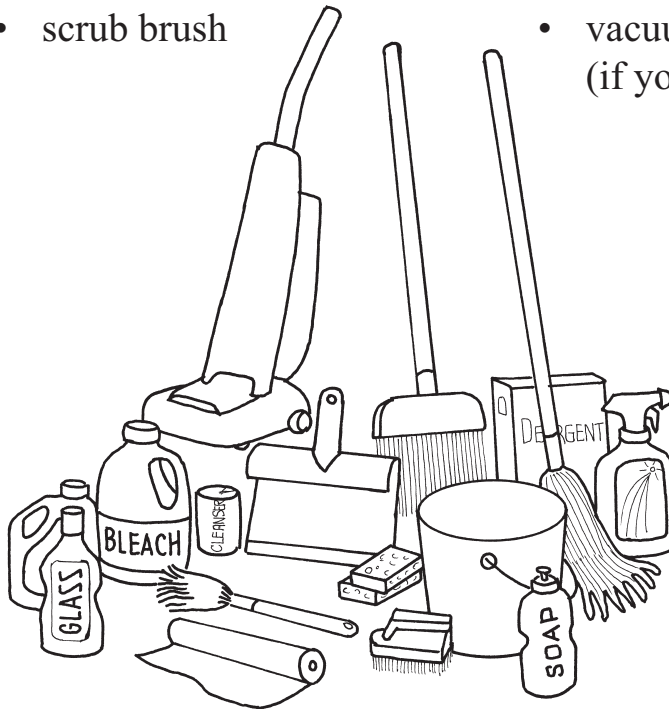
Cleaning Tools and Supplies

Look for the cleaning supply aisle in any grocery store or home-supply store. You'll find a huge number of products to choose from! Many of these cost a lot and are not needed. But some may save you time. You must decide if they are worth the extra money.

What do you really need to keep a clean house? Let's take a look at the basics.

Cleaning Tools

- broom
- dustpan
- dust mop
- dust cloths
- scrub brush
- wet mop
- pail
- toilet brush
- sponges
- vacuum
(if you have carpets)



Cleaning Supplies

- powdered cleanser
 - disinfectant
 - detergent
 - dishwashing soap
 - furniture polish/spray
 - liquid cleaner
 - glass cleaner
- * Never mix cleaners. Chlorine bleach and ammonia combine to form a toxic gas that can kill you.

Cleaning the Kitchen

Everyone has his or her own way to clean a room. The list below is a suggested cleaning plan. You may want to do a job more or less often than is suggested here.

Daily or After Each Use

- Put away leftovers.
- Wash and put away dishes.
- Wash sink.
- Wipe counters and table.
- Sweep floor.
- Empty garbage.

Weekly

- Throw out old food.
- Wipe out refrigerator.
- Wash stove burners.
- Wash floors.

Sometimes/As Needed

- Wash curtains or blinds.
- Wash walls.
- Clean out cabinets.
- Wipe down and clean out drawers.
- Clean oven.
- Clean refrigerator well.
- Wipe down small appliances such as toaster and mixer.
- Wipe cabinet fronts.
- Dust and clean ceiling fan and items hanging on the wall.



