



Spring Cleaning

— the ultimate guide —

A letter from your agent

ALTA RICHARDSON



The flowers are blooming, the birds are serenading, and our house still feels like it's stuck with winter blues. Spring cleaning is a tradition that allows us to freshen up our homes and get a head start on the hectic seasons of spring and summer. Originally, spring cleaning was a grueling ritual made necessary by long winters of heating with wood, kerosene and candles that left a layer of soot and grime throughout the home. Today, spring cleaning is much less an onerous chore and more an opportunity to throw open the windows, let some fresh air in, and make our homes clean, happy and efficient spaces.



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Get Motivated

Listen To Music

Whether you choose the radio, an mp3 player, or your favorite playlist on the computer, music will help you be more excited about cleaning. Choose upbeat music, it will make you work faster and as an added benefit it can count as light exercise.

Wear Real Clothes

Not your best clothes of course, but not pajamas. Really getting dressed down to comfy shoes can help tell your mind that you've got work to do. If you start cleaning in your bed pants and house shoes, it may be more difficult to take the work seriously, and therefore get it done quickly.

Set a Deadline

Invite someone over for dinner. You'll be more motivated to clean because you have to get it done by a certain time. Be careful to give yourself enough time to actually get your cleaning done. You can also use a timer. This works really well with kids. Try to beat your last "record" for cleaning. Kids will actually get excited trying to beat the clock.

Give Yourself a Reward

This can be something you purchase... "If I finish my daily cleaning, I can buy that new book I've been wanting." Or, it can be time doing something you really enjoy... "When the master closet is reorganized, I can spend two hours scrapbooking." Creating a reward for yourself when you've finished a dreaded chore can be a great motivating tool.

Cleaning. Overview

Organize and Clear the Clutter

One of the biggest parts of spring cleaning is getting rid of clutter that you don't need. Now is a good time to advantage of the natural spring urge to get rid of items that are weighing you down and begin fresh with a more streamlined lifestyle. A systematic four-step approach to identifying problems, analyzing reasons, determining solutions, and implementing remedies can be extremely productive at this time of year. Sorting your belongings into four categories —throw-away, give-away, store-away, or put-away—can also be effective as you begin the spring-cleaning process.

Now is a great time to plan a garage sale or to donate items to good causes. Cleaning will be a lot easier when the clutter is gone.

Get the Family Involved

If you need a little help in your cleaning endeavors, get your family involved. Even the most unwilling helper can make a big difference in the workload. Don't worry: There are ways to deal with even the most reluctant helpers. This is actually a great time of year to get the entire family to work together. Try throwing on some music or establishing a family reward as an incentive to get the work done.

Tackle the Seasonal Chores

There are some special chores that need to be done seasonally. We ignore them for most of the fall and winter, but now it is time to bite the bullet and get these things clean. Even though these chores only need to be done once or twice a year, they will help your home run look better and run smoothly. Outdoor chores like cleaning grills, patios, and windows can be a little intimidating, but there are some simple tricks that can keep the jobs manageable.

4 bucket Method

We all aspire to a more streamlined life, but getting rid of the clutter in your home is not as easy as it sounds. Even the things we might have used only once or twice seem to call out to us with its greater purpose in the scheme of our lives once faced with the trash can. With this simple-to-follow method, with a little willpower, it is possible to give clutter a life far away from yours.

Find 4 boxes and label them with the 4 categories:

*throw
away*

Throw Away: This box should include any item that you do not need or want, but that is not worth donating or selling. Damaged and broken items should be included in the trash if they are not worth someone buying it and repairing it.

*give
away*

Give Away: Here is your chance to be generous. Think about the uses someone else might get out of the items vs. the use it gets in your home buried in cabinets or closets. You should also consider the financial benefits of selling your stuff at a garage sale.

*store
away*

Store Away: This is where you put items that you cannot part with but do not need on a regular basis. Make an inventory of the items as you box them. Group similar items together. Remember one good way to clean out closets is to store out of season clothing.

*put
away*

Put Away: This should be your smallest category. These are items that need to be out on a regular basis. Monitor yourself by determining if you have a place for each item. If the items in this box will not fit into your home without cluttering an area up, try to reassess if you really need them. If you do need these essentials, try to come up with a storage solution that fits into your home.

4 bucket Method

continued...

Working room by room, sort items into the appropriate boxes. Work with one item at a time determining its proper place in your newly organized life. Do not forget to go through closets, cabinets, and storage spaces. Removing clutter from rooms like the kitchen and bathroom may be very easy to do, while rooms with storage containers and closets may take a lot more time.

Work on one room at a time to provide yourself with an easy stopping point for interruptions. When you come to a stopping point, be sure to throw out the trash immediately. Box up the storage box. Place the giveaway/sell box in the garage, or out of sight. If you allow yourself to contemplate the decisions you have made, your brain can trick you into rescuing the clutter.

Things To Remember

Items are not equivalent to memories of the person who gave them to you, but pruning items with an emotional attachment can be difficult. Consider carefully if you need the item to have the memory or emotional attachment. If you simply aren't sure, consider storing items on a trial basis, or giving them to another family member for safekeeping.

Get rid of old clothing even if it's the size you used to be and hope to return to. It's tempting to keep them for when you reach your goal but think about instead rewarding yourself with a new wardrobe when you get to your goal weight.

Keeping things just because you might need them someday may seem like a good reason for clogging your closets. Remind yourself that what you really need is space and organization.

7. Kitchen

- ___ Open windows.
- ___ Remove and clean window coverings.
- ___ For each cabinet or drawer: Remove items, wipe out drawer, place items back neatly.
- ___ Wash and sanitize cutting boards
- ___ Wash cabinet doors and knobs
- ___ Clean and organize pantry.
- ___ Check food expiration dates.
- ___ Clean oven.
- ___ Clean stove top. Remove elements and drip bowls, if applicable, wash and put back.
- ___ Clean and organize fridge and freezer.
- ___ Check food expiration dates.
- ___ Clean under fridge and stove.
- ___ Vacuum refrigerator coils.
- ___ Clean microwave.
- ___ Clean crumbs out of toaster.
- ___ Wipe down any other counter appliances
- ___ Wash and shine sink. Shine faucet. Clean drain.
- ___ Clean Dishwasher with vinegar.
- ___ Dust light fixtures.
- ___ Wash windows and window sills. Remove window screens and wash.
- ___ Wash switch plates.
- ___ Wash walls and trim as needed.
- ___ Wash doors and door knobs.
- ___ Wash counters and back splash.
- ___ Wash floor registers and other vent covers
- ___ Sweep and wash floor.

2. Dining Room

- ___ Open windows.
- ___ Wash curtains.
- ___ Wipe down table and chairs.
- ___ Wipe down or dust other furnishing.
- ___ Clean chair
- ___ Polish table, if necessary
- ___ Create a pretty spring vignette on table!
- ___ Dust any displayed china or serving dishes.
- ___ Launder table linens.
- ___ Shine silverware.
- ___ Dust art.
- ___ Wash windows and window sills. Take out and wash window screens.
- ___ Wash switch plates
- ___ Wash walls and trim.
- ___ Wash doors and door knobs
- ___ Wash floor registers and other vent covers.
- ___ Clean floors.

3. Living Room

- ___ Open windows
- ___ Vacuum sofas
- ___ Spot clean sofas, if applicable
- ___ Launder throw pillows and blankets
- ___ Dust shelves, furniture and decor
- ___ Clean lamps and lampshades
- ___ Wash windows and window sills
- ___ Take out and wash window screens
- ___ Clean television screen
- ___ Carefully dust electronics
- ___ Tidy electronics wires. Tuck nicely out of sight
- ___ Sort through music and DVD collections. Purge things that no longer suit your families interests. Organize what is left in an attractive manner
- ___ Sort books and magazines. Donate or recycle ones that no longer suit your families interests
- ___ Wash hard plastic children's toys with warm soapy water. Rinse and dry. Launder stuffed toys. Donate or store toys that your children have grown too old for
- ___ Wash switch plates
- ___ Wash walls and trim as needed
- ___ Wash doors and knobs
- ___ Wash floor registers and other vent covers
- ___ Clean floors



4. Laundry Room

- ___ Open windows
- ___ Wash windows and window sills
- ___ Take out and wash window screens
- ___ Wash cabinet doors
- ___ Wash inside cabinets
- ___ Wash laundry sink. Shine faucet. Clean drains
- ___ Wash outside of washer and dryer
- ___ Wash inside of washing machine
- ___ Wash lint trap with soap and water to remove filmy build-up from laundry soaps and dryer sheets. Let air dry thoroughly before putting back in place
- ___ Wash switch plates
- ___ Wash walls and trim
- ___ Wash doors and door knobs
- ___ Wash floor registers and other vent covers
- ___ Sweep and wash floors
- ___ Reseal grout lines, if applicable



5. Bathrooms

- ___ Open windows
- ___ Wash windows and window sills
- ___ Take out and wash window screens
- ___ Wash cabinet doors
- ___ Wash inside cabinets
- ___ Dust down the ceiling and corners
- ___ Dust the vents and fans
- ___ Scrub the shower and tub
- ___ Clean/wash shower curtain
- ___ Scrub down the toilet
- ___ Vacuum Out the Closet
- ___ Wash down the sink and fixtures
- ___ Clean out underneath sink
- ___ Wipe Down Light Switches, Fixtures
- ___ Shake out bathroom rugs/wash
- ___ Clean Windows and Mirrors
- ___ Empty and wash out the trash can
- ___ Go through any junk drawers you may have and clean them out
- ___ Clean the Floors/Vacuum the Carpet

6. Bedroom

- ___ Pick Up and Put Away All Clothes, Books, Belongings
- ___ Strip the Bed
- ___ Launder the Bedding
- ___ Flip the Mattress
- ___ Push Aside the Bed and Clean Under It
- ___ Vacuum Out the Closet
- ___ Dust all Surfaces
- ___ Wipe Down Light Switches, Fixtures and Ceiling Fan
- ___ Dust down the ceiling and corners in the master bedroom.
- ___ Clean Windows and Mirrors
- ___ Wash Curtains or Clean Blinds
- ___ Remake the Bed
- ___ Go through any junk drawers you may have and clean them out
- ___ Clean the Floors/Vacuum the Carpet



7. Kids Room & Playroom

- ___ Pick up all trash
- ___ Find everything that belongs in another room
- ___ Put away things that are on the floor
- ___ Put away the things on the desk, dresser and nightstand
- ___ Dust
- ___ Clean any glass
- ___ Change the sheets
- ___ Make bed
- ___ Pick up all dirty clothes
- ___ Refold or rehang all clean clothes
- ___ Wipe down door and trim
- ___ Clean windows
- ___ Clean Curtains
- ___ Vacuum/mop



8. Stairwells

- ___ Sweep/vacuum stairs
- ___ Spot clean walls
- ___ Wipe down handrail
- ___ Dust art and light fixtures



9. Outside

- ___ Sweep porches and walkway
- ___ Wash thresholds
- ___ Wash exterior doors
- ___ Give front door a fresh coat of paint, if necessary
- ___ Clean or replace welcome mat
- ___ Wash siding
- ___ Change any burnt out light bulbs

Keep Your Home Looking *Great*

The 15 minute clean up method

If you have last-minute hosting duties or have just forgotten to clean the house in a while, use the 15-minute cleanup plan for any room (or all of your rooms). Try setting a timer and doing it all in 15 minutes.

How a 15-Minute Cleanup Works

A 15-minute cleanup works because it recognizes that there are three types of items you need to clean up in a room. Everything falls into one of three categories:

1. Trash
2. Things that don't belong in the room.
3. Things that belong in the room, in a different place.

Having only a few categories to sort items into makes a pickup run more smoothly. The 15-minute cleanups also work because they are designed to maintain a room. Having a quick cleaning session in a room several times a week will keep your home looking great between more intense cleanings.

What a 15-Minute Cleanup Is and Isn't

A 15-minute cleanup is a brief step-by-step guide to cleaning a room in 15 minutes or less. While the room may not be white glove clean, it will be presentable to guests. Quick cleanups are a great way to maintain a home in between more thorough cleanings. These cleanups include step-by-step instructions, a list of supplies, tips, and links for more thorough information.

A 15-minute cleanup is not the only cleaning regimen you'll need to keep your home in tip-top shape. It's not an intense cleaning, but only a brief pickup of a room. To really keep a home clean, more thorough work will need to be done according to your cleaning schedule. Before intensely cleaning a room, it's a good idea to start with that room's quick 15-minute cleanup.

Who is *Alta*

Alta Richardson is a licensed realtor in the state of Georgia, who utilizes her corporate project management background to create strategic marketing and transaction management services to her clients across many Georgia markets. Her business is built on: Excellence, Dedication, Communication, Determination & Trust while embodying the ability to serve and cater to all of her client's Real Estate needs.

When she is not in the throws of helping her clients with their real estate goals, Alta is spending time with her family, working out with who ever will join her, or recreating her latest Pinterest recipe for anyone who will try it!

Next Steps..

Ready to work together? Call to find out how Alta can make your real estate experience one you won't forget!

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