

SPRING *cleaning*

THE CHRISTIAN HOMEKEEPER™ NETWORK



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We'd love to enjoy your fellowship on the CHK Forums, too!

christianhomekeeper.org

The New Year brings the Cleaning Bug to homes across the globe. The words de-cluttering and organizing are on our minds and in our plans.

Each year at CHK, we offer a comprehensive De-Cluttering and Organizing series including daily to-do lists for our annual Spring Cleaning Event. We offer all kinds of free resources to help you organize your home including:

- * Instructions for making natural cleaners.
- * Instructions for detailed de-cluttering and cleaning of each major area in the house.
- * Spring Cleaning Printables to help you organize your thoughts and tasks.
- * Encouragement to help you through the week.

This e-book is a compilation of all the plans, lists, and tips shared by Sylvia Britton during our Spring Cleaning Event in 2009. We hope this e-book will help you accomplish your Spring Cleaning goals, no matter when you set out to do them.

Homemade Natural Cleaners & Printables

Many of our instructions refer to natural cleaner recipes, which you will find on Sylvia Britton's blog (christianhomekeeper.org/homemade-natural-cleaners/), such as homemade scouring powder, and natural cleaners, polishers and disinfectants.

After page 14 of the e-Book you'll find copies of all our **Spring Cleaning Printables**: *Cleaning Supplies Checklist, Weekly Planner, and Room By Room Task Lists*. You can get more copies of these online at: christianhomekeeper.org/blog/spring-cleaning-printables.

De-Cluttering the Main Bedroom

The main bedroom is often the only place to find any “alone” time. However, the bedroom is often the first place to be used as a “dumping ground”. It’s not uncommon to find laundry that needs to be put away, books that need to be shelved, craft projects, etc. All that clutter isn’t conducive to attaining a peaceful and relaxing atmosphere.

The guest room is another place that often catches the clutter. Try not to begin the habit of using your guest room as a storage room with boxes of stuff everywhere and clothes thrown across the bed. It should look as tidy and homey as the other bedrooms. You want it to make guests feel welcome and comfortable.

Here are some things to keep in mind and also to jump start us and get us going!

***Organize as you go.** Pick up and deal with clutter! Take this opportunity to go through any storage bins you

have under the bed. Throw out what you don’t need, organize and label the rest.

***Check to see if any castors or rubber floor protectors are needed under the feet of the bed, dressers, etc.** Metal frame beds can be especially harsh on wood floors.

***If you store items under the bed using a bed skirt/ruffle will usually hide them.** And, take this time to go through these stored items and de-clutter. This is also a good time to move items if needed and clearly label storage bins/boxes before replacing them. Make a storage list if needed. That way you know what’s under there and you don’t have to go on a digging expedition for anything!

***Bedside tables and dressers.** Take everything out/off and de-clutter if needed. Sort and organize before replacing items you’ve decided to keep. If you keep any medicines in your bedside table you may want to consider child-proofing the drawers/doors. Are there items in your dresser that should be hung instead of folded?

***Closets.** Evaluate them, make a plan, and GO!

- Everything should have a place, even if it’s in (well labeled) storage bins/containers.

- Consider a “closet makeover”! Closets don’t have to look like a dumping ground. They can be painted or papered, organized and neat. The more time you take now to make your closets user friendly and attractive the better you’ll do at upkeep.

***Odds-N-Ends.**

- The quick 10 minute pick-up rule is great in these rooms too! Just a few minutes a day can add up to big changes!
- Most of the time 2 sets of sheets per bed are all you need. One set is on the bed and the other can be stored between the mattress and box spring for easy out of the way storage.
- Making your bed can be easier and quicker if you learn to make one side at a time.

***Quilt Care**

Here are a few more tidbits you might find useful from Deborah Tukua’s book, “Pearls of Country Wisdom.”

- An upright trunk makes a great bedside table and provides an inside storage space of 3 feet deep.
- Dresser drawers stick? Rub a moist bar of soap across the runners to help it glide easier.
- Has the life gone out of your mattress? No money for a new one? Extend the life of your mattress by purchasing an egg crate foam mattress covering. It’s much cheaper than buying a new mattress, usually around \$12.00, yet adds plush comfort to your bedding for at least another year.



Cleaning the Main Bedroom

You will probably want to use an all-purpose cleaner, window cleaner and a good furniture oil for this room.

Now, you may have other things that need to be done in your bedroom, but these are the essentials of a thorough cleaning and decluttered/organized bedroom.

First, take down curtains and wash them if you are able. If you cannot wash them, hang them outside to air. Be sure not to hang them in full sun if you think they may fade.

Second, strip the bed linens and put them in to wash or in the laundry room. Turn the mattress if you are able..... but don't hurt yourself for goodness sake! :o

Third, hang up and put away all clothes or laundry. Yes..... this is the one day each year that I can see in your bedroom! If there are clothes that need to be put in someone else's room, do it. If there are clothes that need to be stored, store them. If there are clothes that need to go to GoodWill, take them!

If you just don't have any way to store those clothes, get rid of some of them! Let's also see if anyone has some good ideas for

impromptu storage techniques... If you do, speak up while we clean this room.

Fourth, get yourself three baskets, boxes or bags. Label these containers:

- * Throw Away
- * Give Away
- * Put Away

Walk around your room and put everything that you don't want in the room in one of these boxes.

When this is done...

Find a fourth box.... put all your trinkets, doo-dads and knick-knacks that you are going to keep in this box (think about getting rid of some of these!). Put your alarm clock, pictures, wall decor, everything that will stay in the room. Place this box in the dining room or kitchen. You can enlist a child to dust and clean these items or save this for yourself for later.

Fifth, pull everything out of the closet. Oh yes, the closet. Pull it all OUT. All of it. Everything. Now go through it quickly and put each item in one of your four boxes. Hang up clothes and sort them into the boxes quickly. Don't take too much time with this. If you have not worn the item in 2 years, toss it or give it away.

If an item you pull out of your closet does not belong in the



closet, if the closet is not where you really should store it, then move it to its rightful place. If you don't have anywhere else for this item, then its rightful place is the closet. Only you know.

Dust, sweep and clean the inside of the closet. Rehang the clothes. Arrange the contents of the closet that are going back in it, correctly and neatly. Robin will probably have some ideas for storage and organizational issues...

Sixth, clean out from under the bed. Pull it all out, divide the under-bed contents into your four boxes. Sweep and mop under the bed when everything is moved out from under it.

There are lots of good ideas for under-bed storage. Those bed risers that I talk about every year are really a handy thing to have.

It can give you up to 10 inches of space to store things. They cost about \$ 8.95 - \$14.95 for four of them. This is one of the best investments for the household I have ever made. I

bought mine at Linen's and Things. Flat plastic boxes are great for under the bed too. Seventh, we're on the home stretch! Dust the ceilings, tops of windows and door frames, and walls. If your walls are dirty and you want to wash them, go for it! Use a mild detergent or soap and warm water if you have painted walls. If you have wallpaper, you will want to use a barely damp sponge and a drying towel. Work from the top of the wall down to the floor. If you have carpet, cover it!

Now to the Nitty Gritty Cleaning of the Room

* Wash the windows. Use my homemade window cleaner or what ever you have on hand. Use newspaper to dry them for a streak free shine!

* Clean up the window frames now and dry them well.

* Clean the baseboards with a soapy solution of mild dish soap and warm water or your natural cleaner

* Dust all furniture. Use lemon oil or orange oil on all wood. Use a mild soap and warm water on other furniture according to what its made of. Wash doilies and table covers.

* If you haven't yet cleaned the knick-knacks and needful items that go in your room go do that now. When they are cleaned, replace them where they go in the room.

* Think about adding a doily or a table skirt to soften the room. Think about what you use to make the room a pleasant place to be with your husband or just to go to relax.

* Press and rehang your curtains.

* Sweep, vacuum and mop the floor depending on what you need to do. If your floors are hard, use which ever chemicals you have success with. I use a wood soap on my hardwood and then a wood shiner product made by Glade. Sometimes I even use orange oil on the floors and rub them to a deep shine. You must rub the wood very vigorously so that it won't be slick!

* Dress the bed. Its getting to be cooler here in the US so dress your bed in sheets and two quilts OR with one quilt and one blanket. Think about getting a skirt to hide the under bed contents. I found a white cotton one at Good Will for \$3.49 !

* Replace rugs.

De-Cluttering in the Living Room

The living room (or family room) should be a place where the family can gather and be comfortable and relaxed. Often, with all the traffic that rushes through it, it becomes more of a "road hazard" than anything else. We tend to leave things lying around, such as mail, magazines, games, video cases, etc. Often, the coffee

table is even used as a dining table. Let's get started.

***Evaluate the situation**

What's working in this room? What's driving you nuts? What changes would you like to make? What goals do you have for this room? How can you attain these goals? (And, are they attainable at all?)

Make sure the goals you set are realistic. Don't set yourself up for failure.

It's often good to make a series of goals; short, medium, and long-term.



***Clutter**

•Deal with clutter and misplaced items as you go. Keep a basket handy and place all items that need to go to another room (or be thrown out, donated) in it.

•Take a little time each day (or several times a week) to deal with clutter as it happens. Don't let it build up. The children can help with this too!

Even 10 minutes a day can make a huge difference.

•Do you need to remove clutter from your end tables or coffee table? What do you have on them/in them? Why is it there?

•Do you have storage issues? If so, try to think in terms of "decorative storage" and get creative! Usually items that need to be dealt with in this room are cd's, dvd's videos and books.

You can use anything from store bought containers and baskets, to decorated boxes, or even furniture pieces (such as an old pie safe for dvd's) to organize these items. An old cedar chest makes a great storage area for blankets, and can be used as a coffee table as well.

~If you have any creative solutions we'd love for you to share them with us in this thread!

***Stereo/TV/Entertainment Center**

Do you need to tidy this area up? Do you have movies and video games everywhere? Would making a movie inventory be something useful for your family?

***Computer**

Is your computer in this room? Take a few moments to organize your computer desk. Clean your keyboard. (Compressed air is great for dusting off/out your computer). Wipe down your monitor screen. (I use a mixture of rubbing alcohol and water).

***Books**

Do you need to dust off any books? Book cases? Shelves? Is it time to re-organize these shelves? Donate some unused books?

A few last tidbits to keep in mind...

~Deal with clutter as you go.

~Clean underneath everything! Furniture, tables, etc.

~Take the opportunity to listen to some music as you work!

~You can also light some scented candles or place some potpourri around to make your living area more relaxing and inviting.

~If you have a magazine holder in this room, take this opportunity to go through it. Organize. Discard/donate any magazines you no longer want. Make the ones you do want to keep more accessible, so you'll actually look at them!

~Keep your lifestyle in mind!

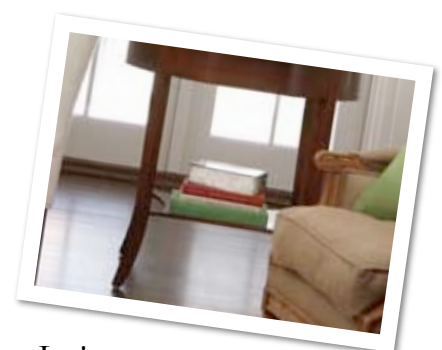
Every home is different. For instance, a home with pets or children will be organized, decorated and kept differently than a home without them.

~Magazines a problem? Tear out the pages you want to keep and make binders/idea books out of them. Recycle the rest.

Spring Cleaning in the Living Room

The living room or den is the room where a family does most of their, well.... living. Its a busy room and takes a lot of wear and tear. So, it can usually stand a good cleaning any time you want to give it one.

Begin by picking up the room and using your 4 bags/boxes/baskets like we have been doing all week. Get everything out of this room that doesn't belong. Sometimes I place personal belongings in a basket and tell the children to come get their things in the next ten minutes or the things are leaving home.



Let's start cleaning the Living Room!

- Make a pan of hot soapy water or use the kitchen sink.

- Once you get the room emptied of stuff that doesn't belong, take up knick-knacks and decorative items.

- Clean and wash picture frames and knick-knacks, set them out to dry.

- Take down the curtains and take up the rugs, wash them if possible or hang them out to air.

- Take up tablecloths, doilies, all fabric coverings and pillows; wash and dry if you can or air dry.

- Wash down the door frames, window frames, baseboards, all woodwork, ceilings and ceiling fans.

- Wash windows

- Clean off shelves, rearrange books, wipe down the shelves while they are empty.

- Clean up work areas. Organize work materials.

- Organize movies, cds and dvds, organize the whole tv/entertainment area.

- Dust all furniture, polish if needed.

- Move out furniture if possible, if not just clean around and under as best you can.

- Vacuum upholstered furniture.

- Vacuum floors, sweep and mop, polish wood floors.

- Replace rugs and curtains.

- Replace furniture covers if using and pillows.

- Arrange magazines, papers, books that don't have a shelf. A basket might be nice, or simply stack them up neatly.

- Replace knick-knacks and pictures.... do you need them all in this room?

Now that the room is clean, make it a point to keep it that way by having a daily 10 Minute Tidy where you work fast and hard to get the room picked up before dinner time and before everyone decides to relax in the living room.

De-Cluttering and Organizing the Bathroom

There tend to be two consistent issues when talking about bathrooms; clutter and storage. It probably goes without saying that a problem with the former makes the latter even more difficult! So, take the time to de-clutter first, then deal with your storage issues.

Here are a few ideas to jump-start you in this room.

*Cabinets and drawers.

If you have any are you using them effectively? Why or why not? If you don't have cabinets do you need to get creative and create some cabinet type storage?

*Now, as to the bathroom as a whole...when you first enter this room what really bugs you? What would you like to change? Why would you like to make this change? Take the time to focus on changes that not only help with storage and visual appeal but also help with cleaning issues. Then figure out if the changes you want are short-term, medium-term, or



long-term goals. Write them down if you need to. Many of us are more productive with a checklist!

*Have you considered using pump soaps in place of bar soap? Bars can be messy and difficult to use.

*Can you hang an organizer over the shower head to provide a place to keep shampoo, conditioner, etc.? Suction hooks to hold brushes and sponges?

*Do you need to place racks, hooks, shelves, or containers in the cabinets to expand storage?

*How do you store your towels, wash cloths, etc.? Would you like to change it? Could a decorative basket or box be used to hold your towels? Or perhaps you could use an over-the-door rack?

*Pay attention when re-organizing items so they are user friendly. Place items you use together in the same area (such as your hairdryer and make-up).

*Clean out your medicine cabinet. Discard old medications and make sure any areas that contain dangerous items are child-proof. And remember, under the bathroom cabinet isn't really the best place for cleaning products to be stored!!

*What type waste basket are you using? Does it have a lid? Do you need one? Often when pets or small children are in the home it's best to have a trash can with a lid.

*Do towel racks/rods/hooks need to be removed? Replaced? Moved to a new area of the bathroom?

*When picking out floor mats consider ones with non-skid backing. You can also check into non-skid appliqués for the tub.

*Keeping extra rolls of toilet paper in each bathroom is very helpful and much appreciated by guests.

*Many bath stores now carry disposable hand towels you can use when entertaining guests.

*The new wipe packs are very useful for cleaning. You can get basic cleaning products in wipe form; they're great for touching up areas in between cleaning days.

*If you have small children that use toys in the tub, devise a system for dealing with this. Perhaps you allow the toys to drain in the sink after use and when dry have a special container they stay in? And remember...just because they're tub toys doesn't mean they stay cleaner than other toys! Take the time to regularly clean and disinfect them. Some can be run through the dishwasher; others can be cleaned with a diluted bleach solution and allowed to completely air dry before using them again.

Spring Cleaning in the Bathroom

Faithmom6 (Linda Maria) coined the term "Bleach-Wear" for us last year. So don your bleach wear and let's get busy in the bathroom. At least wear some socks so you won't track up the floor when you're washing it.

This is one room where you will really use those natural cleaners you've been making!

First Things

- Pick up the room. Take out all dirty laundry and towels.
- Take down the shower curtain. Put the plastic one in to wash.
- Wash the cloth one if you have one. (Remember -- take care to



read your labels and only wash things that are supposed to be washed.)

- Take down curtains. Prepare them to wash or just air them outside.

- Take out the trash, fill the trash can with cleaner and water to soak or needed, if not give it a quick rinse and set it outside to air while you clean.

Second Things

- Get yourself a box or basket. Pick up all the knick-knacks, soaps, lotions, etc. that are sitting on the counter-top and tub, put them in the basket.

- Sweep the floor, shake out rugs and take them to the laundry or air outside.

- Use your natural cleaner and spray the tub and sink and commode to let it sit a while.

- If you use commode cleaner of some kind, go ahead and put some in the commode to let it soak. A good natural cleaner for the commode is borax.

- Pull everything out of the linen closet and under the sink area. Go through it carefully and throw away what is out of date or old or unused. Find yourself some storage containers like baskets or small plastic trays to keep your bathroom items in. Try using a medium sized basket to put blow-dryers, curling irons, etc, in.

- Take everything out of the medicine cabinet too and go through it ruthlessly! Throw stuff away that is expired and truly useless.

- Put your linens out on the dining room table while you work.

- Make yourself a sink of hot soapy water or hot water with your cleaner of choice in it. Get your rags ready.

Now the Nitty Gritty Cleaning!

- Wash the inside of the cabinets and shelves in the linen closet. This is a good time to line them! Don't forget the floor of the closet. Refold the linens and replace them in the closet. Consider spraying them with some nice lavender water or other light scent.

- Wash out the medicine cabinet.

- Wash down walls and window frames, door frames and tile if you have it.

- Take down blinds if they are dirty and soak them in the tub in warm water and dish soap while you clean.

- Wash the ceiling if it needs it.

- Wash the walls. Use caution if your walls are papered or painted, be gentle.

- Wash the baseboards or the area where the floor and wall meet.

- Scrub the tub if you're not using it to soak the blinds. If you are, just wait on this. A scotch brite is great for cleaning the tub if your tub is not resurfaced porcelain.

- Scrub the counter tops, commode tank and outside of the commode.

- Scrub the floor.

- Scrub the shower. Don't forget the walls of the shower or tub area.

- Change your wash water if needed.

- Scrub your blinds with a brush, rinse them and take them outside to dry while you clean the tub, inside and out.

- Wash the windows and mirrors using glass cleaner.

- Wipe down shelves and inside cabinets, cabinet tops.

- Wash the sink.

- If you are going to disinfect, this is the time to do it. If you've been using a disinfectant cleaner, you can skip this part. If you have been using a cleaner that does not disinfect, you can use rubbing alcohol or one of the antibacterial sprays.

•I periodically use bleach all over my floor because I have tile with grout that gets yellowed. I open the window and pour bleach over the grout, spread it with my sponge mop, close the door and let it sit for about 20 minutes. Then I go in and mop it up with water and dry it with a towel.

Here is a tip about getting rid of mold, taken from **The Good Human** (thegoodhuman.com/).

"You can use Borax and white vinegar to make a spray that you can aim directly at the mold in the tub or

shower. Once you spray it, leave it to sit for 30-60 minutes and then go back in and wipe it off. Presto, the mold will start coming off and you did not have to inhale toxic chemicals to do so. Just mix about 2 ounces of Borax and a cup of white vinegar and you are ready to go.

As a back up and a maintenance tip, you can also periodically spray the moldy "areas" with straight vinegar and just let it sit there and soak in. The vinegar will kill the mold that might be growing and it will halt the growth of new mold."

Please be careful if you use bleach.. Don't let me hear that

you have mixed bleach with other household chemicals and cleaners!

•Get your rugs washed and dried and back in the room.

•Replace your knick-knacks and notions, lotions, and potions. Wash the bottles with a cleaning rag before putting them up.

•Rehang the shower curtains, rehang window curtains.

•Light a candle and just look at that clean bathroom!

De-Cluttering in the Kitchen

Most kitchens suffer from a complete clutter overload! The clutter usually consists of at least a few of the following: gadgets, unused appliances, paper, junk drawers, etc.

Here are a few quick suggestions for dealing with some of these clutter issues.

*Work out the organization ideas in your mind, and then on paper, before you actually jump in and begin re-organizing your kitchen. That way you will be better able to decide where you want to start and what changes you want to make.

*As you organize, keep in mind you want your kitchen to "flow". That means you don't want to be constantly running to and fro in the kitchen when you're cooking, serving meals, etc. Try, as much as possible, to group items together according to their use. For instance, you would probably want to place your coffee cups and drinking glasses in the same cupboard. And you would want your coffee cups near the coffee pot! Make sense? This would be a great time to work on creating "work centers" in your kitchen.

*If you have any storage containers for things like flour, sugar, or other household goods, now would be the time to make sure they're labeled clearly.



*Take this opportunity to make a pantry inventory, spice inventory, etc.

*Too many magnets and/or paper/junk on the fridge will make any kitchen look unkempt. See if you can streamline some of these items.

*If you have metal cabinets the inside of the cabinet is a great place to use magnets and hang phone numbers, etc.

*Keep the top of your fridge clutter free. If you must store items on top, take a few moments to organize them and make the space user friendly.

*It's not only unsightly to have a lot of clutter on your counter-tops; it also makes cleaning more difficult. Take a long hard look at your counter space and make some decisions concerning clutter and ease of use. You may need to eliminate some items and/or re-organize.

*Don't make things harder than they have to be! Think carefully and take a few minutes to plan before you replace your items in the cabinets after cleaning. Think "user-friendly"! Stacking is fine, but think ahead and try not to stack items you use frequently on the bottom or in the back!

*Streamline when possible. Be honest with yourself when it comes to de-cluttering. Often there are many items in the kitchen that go unused year after year. For instance, how many of your casserole dishes do you really use? As you organize your kitchen, are you coming across items you don't use?

Sometimes it's good to keep a specialty item even if it isn't used that much. For instance, most people have a turkey platter. It's something that you may only use a few times a year, but you do use it and need it! On the other hand; seldom do you need eight muffin pans! So, if there are items you no longer need or don't want now is the time to find a new home for them. Share the wealth!

*Check your window sills. It's easy to let clutter accumulate there as well. Too many plants, decorations, etc.

*Take a deep breath and tackle that junk drawer! (Or drawers!) There is seldom a true need for a junk drawer. To be honest, most of the time it's simply a "catch-all" for items we haven't taken the time to put in their proper place. ~Or that we haven't taken the time to create a place for.

Be brutal! Tools can be kept with the rest of their kind in the tool box. Kitchen gadgets should have their own place. Take stock of the contents and organize them! Usually there is a collection of old phone books, take-out menus, bread ties, etc. in these drawers, weed out the undesirables and organize the rest.

Spring Cleaning in the Kitchen

The kitchen is usually the hardest room to Spring Clean because we use it so much and it's hard to have it out of commission for a day in some families. So I suggest that you utilize your crock pot or other means of having supper on the day(s) you plan to clean it, so that you can concentrate on cleaning instead of breaking to cook.

Take a good look at your kitchen..... does it need:

...to be majorly decluttered? - Then you may need to take several days in this room.

...to be degreased? If you are using natural cleaners, a good mild dish soap will work wonders.

...to have structural work done? Can you clean the area and apply paint or get it ready to paint?



...to be emptied out and started over? Just kidding!

You must choose what you need to do in your kitchen. Do you have time to devote to this

project? Maybe you should not get in to a really deep, deep cleaning of the kitchen. Perhaps you should do a medium clean. You just find your happy place and get in the groove, OK?

First Things

- * Take out trash.
- * Pick up countertops
- * Take everything out of the kitchen that doesn't go in the kitchen... use your 4 bags/boxes/baskets!
- * Take down curtains - wash.
- * Take up rugs - wash.

The kitchen can become a catch-all if you're not careful. If your family has a habit of depositing things in the kitchen, and you're OK with that, try to have a receptacle for all their stuff. Baskets are great for keys, change, pocket contents.

Mail really clutters up kitchen counter tops! Try using a box or basket to hold mail, both outgoing and incoming.

Move out furniture and take everything off your countertops that you possibly can. I will use my living room to store these things while I am cleaning because I have just cleaned my dining room and I don't want to mess it up!

I use laundry baskets to hold everything.

Two two big areas to clean in most kitchens are the refrigerator and the oven. Here

are steps to cleaning out the refrigerator.

- * Make a sink or large tub of hot soapy water.
- * Empty the refrigerator.
- * Throw away outdated, old food.
- * Pull out shelves and drawers that can be taken out.
- * Wash all the shelves and drawers with your hot soapy water (WARNING: Don't put a cold glass shelf or glass drawer in warm or hot water!!! Don't ask....)
- * Wipe down the inside of the refrigerator with your natural cleaner or cleaner of choice. Rinse well.
- * Wipe down gaskets and outer portions of the door, also clean the vent under the door.
- * Replace drawers and shelves.
- * Wipe down jars and food containers.
- * Replace food.

On with the Kitchen Cleaning...

1. Sweep down cobwebs.
2. Make a sink of hot soapy water or use your chemical cleaner. Get out your rags and start washing down.
3. the ceiling if needed, door frames, window frames, baseboards and walls. Wash windows.
4. Take up your rugs and put them in to wash. Take down curtains and wash.

5. Put a load of dishes in to wash while you work, or go ahead and wash all the dishes by hand.

6. Clean the top of the refrigerator, the stove exhaust hood, all large appliances. Go ahead and spray cleaner in the oven if you're adventurous. Take out the drip pans and put them in a pan of hot soapy water to soak.

7. Clean of shelves and inside cabinets. Wash them down. Order and organize your pantry food and your pots and pans.

8. Wash inside your cabinets while they are empty.

9. Re-line cabinets if needed. Did you know that in the "old days" we used to use newspaper for this?

10. Replace everything that goes in the cabinets, washing and dusting off as you go.

11. Wash down the outside of the cabinets, use de-greaser if needed or a wood soap. Dry them and then polish them with lemon oil if they are finished wood. This is going to be the really hard, arm-breaking scrubby part for me today. My cabinets just need a really good deep scrub. But when its done, it will make the whole kitchen look better!

12. Don't forget the areas over the stove!

13. Change your wash water if needed.

14. Wash down all the bottles, canisters, containers, etc. that sit on your counter tops.

15. Scrub the counter tops. Wash and replace the drip pans.

16. Sweep the floor. Make up your mop water and get to scrubbing. I will use a scrub brush this morning and scrub under the stove and all around the cabinets. Then I'll mop the rest of the floor.

17. Can you move the stove and clean under it? That would probably be a good idea.

Consider setting up a Baking Center if you cook and bake a lot. I sat mine up in one of my cabinets. I put these items in the Baking Center:

- Mixer
- Food processor
- Flours
- Yeast
- Baking powder and soda
- Salt
- Cornmeal
- Shortening
- Oil
- Spices

You could put more in it, like measuring spoons and mixing bowls. It really is a time saver for me!

Finally...

* Put all your curtains and dry rugs back down when the floor is dry. Give the appliances one more look and a polish.

* Rearrange all your counter top things.

* Light yourself some candles, make some tea and enjoy your kitchen!

De-Cluttering the Dining Room/ Eating Area

In today's world of hectic schedules the family dinner is becoming a rare occurrence. Dining rooms are quickly becoming either a well-decorated but seldom used room or a dumping ground for clutter. So, we'll focus on a few ideas you can use to organize whatever area you're using for dining, whether it's a breakfast nook, dining room, or kitchen table.

The first thing to mention is also the most obvious; you can't use a table if it's covered in

clutter! If your table top is littered with books, purses, and newspapers you will be less likely to remove all of it to sit down for a meal. At that point it becomes easier to either eat in the living room while watching TV or stand in the kitchen. So, as is the norm, de-cluttering will be your first task. The important thing to keep in mind though is that you must maintain this new tidy surface. If you don't you will quickly find yourself back where you started...eating in another room! Some decoration on the table top is fine, as long as you keep up with the dusting and cleaning and can either remove it or work around it at meal times.



Organizing the dining area can be tricky. If your area is in the kitchen then dealing with setting the table can be quite easy. However, if your area is a room or so away you may have to get a little more creative.

Some of us can make use of furniture (china cabinets, buffets, etc.) to store serving

dishes and table linens so they're handy. Others have to make do with carrying what we need from room to room. You can use trays, make several trips, have everyone fill their plates buffet style in the kitchen, or you can make use of your wonderful family helpers! The important thing is to figure out a system that helps mealtimes flow well and stick to it. It will eventually become habit and you'll wonder why you hadn't been using the dining area all along!

The next thing to do is to focus on de-cluttering the rest of the area. The table and chairs should be easily accessible. If the dining area is also used as the homeschool room you will need to address those issues as well. We have done different things over the years, adapting as needed depending on our current home (we are a military family and move quite a lot!)

and the differing educational needs of the children. Here are a few ideas for homeschool issues:

*Have children bring their books to the table and then remove them when school is over. This will be a chore each and every day they have school. Perhaps you can make it seem more pleasant for them if they have an individual container or basket to carry their school books in?

*Use existing furniture for school item storage. Alternately, you can store supplies and books under the same furniture.

*Create shelves or bookcases to hold items.

Now, stand back and take an honest appraisal of the room. Do you have too much stuff on the floor? Do decorative items get knocked off the walls as

people walk by them? Is your china cabinet crammed with stuff to the point that you can't focus on any one thing in particular? Do your knick-knacks collect dust because you don't have time to keep up with them? If so, it may be time to sort through and streamline these items. For instance, if you have several items you like to display, you can always alternate what you leave out. You can change your decorations with the seasons. That way you can display your favorites, but not be overwhelmed with cleaning chores!

Keep this in mind: We should always be careful not to sacrifice functionality for the sake of ornamentation!

The bottom line is, you don't have to settle for eating any old where! Create a comfortable and usable dining area you and your whole family can enjoy.

Spring Cleaning the Dining Room/Eating Area

It is difficult to dictate what should be cleaned in the dining room/eating area because some have dining rooms and some don't. Some use the dining room regularly and some don't.

So we are going to have differing levels of need for our eating areas.

I have a dining room that we use every single day. It's the first room that anyone coming into the house sees, so I try to make sure it is always presentable and neat. Since we eat in it most every day, I also have to be sure to get it clean every day.



Here are some general cleaning recommendations for most any room, with a few suggestions thrown in here and there for the eating area. You may have ideas of your own; go ahead and use what works for you!

First Things

- De-clutter. Get everything out of the eating area that doesn't belong there on a daily basis. If you have a real clutter problem, get out your 4 boxes, baskets or bags and label them like we did for the master bedroom. You will throw away some things, store some, put away some or give away some.

If you are having serious storage issues in your dining room/eating area and need help with that, refer again to the **De-Cluttering The Dining Room** article.

- Clean out hutches, cabinets, clean off shelves, tables and chairs. Get everything out of this room but the furniture.

- Move things off walls and off of all surfaces.

- Anything that can be wet, go ahead and make a sink of hot

soapy water and immerse it. Anything else, just sit it on the kitchen counter for now.

Now Start Moving Things Out Of Your Way

- Take down curtains, toss in the wash if you can or air them outside.

- Take up rugs, wash or air.

- Take up chair pads, wash or air.

- Get the chairs out of this area for now.

- Get rid of cobwebs. use a towel on the end of a broom or other tool. Don't use polish or cleaner for this you can streak your ceilings and walls!

The Nitty Gritty Cleaning Part

- Make up a pan of hot soapy water or use whatever chemical you like.

- Wash ceiling and walls if needed taking care with the kind of wall coverings or paint you have.

- Wash down the door frames and window frames. Wash doors and baseboards. Dry if needed.

- Wash windows.

- If you can touch up paint in this room, now is the time to do it.

- Clean the furniture, wash and/or polish. Clean and polish chairs. Spend time cleaning and polishing the table.

- Replace anything that truly goes in the storage areas of this room such as the hutch, cabinets, shelves, etc.

- Sweep,vacuum and/or mop. Polish wood floors.

- Bring chairs back into the room.

- Spread out your tablecloth, if you are using one. Place a nice little arrangement on the table or a candle.

- Replace curtains and rugs.

*Spring Cleaning
Printables*

On the final pages of this CHK Spring Cleaning e-Book, we will include all the Spring Cleaning Printables we prepared to help you organize your thoughts and

tasks for Spring Cleaning. These can also be found on the web at: christianhomekeeper.org/blog/spring-cleaning-printables/.

Cleaning Supplies Checklist

*The desire of the lazy man kills him,
For his hands refuse to labor.
~ Proverbs 21:25 NKJV ~*

Check off the supplies you have, then check off the others as you get them ready.

General Supplies

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cleaning Solutions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bleach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cleaning Cloths |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bucket |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Scrub Brush |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Paper Towels |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Broom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Scouring Powder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Furniture Polish |

Natural Cleaning Supplies

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Baking Soda |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Borax |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Washing Soda |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Essential Oils (choose from lavender, lemon, grapefruit, rosemary, eucalyptus, and thyme) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Tea Tree Oil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | White Vinegar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Glycerin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Pure Soap Flakes (like grated Ivory soap) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Spray Bottle |

Other

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Weekly Planner

*Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might
~ Ecclesiastes 9:10a NKJV ~*

List each day's tasks; check off when completed.

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