



# THE ULTIMATE SPRING CLEANING CHECKLIST

# START HERE

*“A Clean Home is a Happy Home.”*

Alright, you Martha wannabes—happy Spring Cleaning!

Just don't curse me when you are scrubbing that refrigerator coil with a toothbrush—you were warned!

And remember, Spring Cleaning happens inside AND outside your home so don't neglect either area.

It's also good to keep in mind that **clutter = deferred decisions**.

Every time you set something down and keep walking, you're just making the problem worse.

Lastly, here are two suggestions to make the process fun, fast and almost effortless.

## 1) GET HELP

Many hands really lighten the load so form a team—right now with COVID, you're going to have to rely on your family or roommates since you're probably on some form of self-isolation.

If you do have access to others, get together with a friend or two or three, and over two weekends, take turns cleaning each other's homes.

Either way, suggest an ethical bribe in exchange for help.

Once we can gather again, a day trip to a nature preserve, zip line or other outdoor adventure, amusement park, fairground or maybe a nice meal would all be welcome rewards.

Just be sure to deliver or you'll get a serious pushback the next time you ask for help. If it's just you and friends, put on some favorite tunes, throw back the blinds, and start cranking.

The work will fly by and you'll get to spend some time with people you're fond of and probably get to see less often than you'd like.

## **2) USE NON-TOXIC PRODUCTS**

Why poison yourself and your home if you don't need to? These days, it's super easy to swap out toxic chemical cleaners with environmentally friendly products that still do an awesome job cleaning.

Visit [Earth Easy](#) or [EGW's Guide](#) for recipes, pre-packaged supplies and other ways to clean deep with zero impact.

## **3) HAVE FUN**

Look, Spring Cleaning isn't a day in a hammock reading a juicy novel or water skiing or even taking a nap ... whatever your idea of fun is.

But it also doesn't need to be torture. And if it weren't for Covid-19, you could hire someone to do all this for you if you'd prefer.

But everything on this list is easy to do and will give you a great sense of accomplishment once it's finished.

And since you can't seem to get too far away these days, you might as well enjoy controlling one of the few things you CAN control right now—your home.

# THE CHECKLIST

## Outside the House:

- Take a walk around the outside of your house and any other outbuildings.
- Inspect the exteriors for any needed repairs.
- Climb on the roof, inspect gutters, trim, downspouts, windows, shutters, etc.
- Make a list of any repairs and maintenance, then schedule them with a handyman or add them to your calendar to do them yourself.
- Power wash the exterior of any buildings—your home, any sheds, studios and garages.
- Clean any windows in those buildings.
- Empty out the contents of any out buildings and then sweep the interiors.
- Inspect all items to make sure they still function as intended.
- Repair or replace any parts including batteries.
- Clean and repair outdoor grills.
- Before putting back any items, sort them like with like.
- Add any hooks, shelves, pulleys and other storage accessories to better store your things.
- As you put things back inside, put all your sporting goods together.
- Put all camping equipment together.
- Gather all garden tools and supplies together.
- Arrange all outdoor furniture together.
- Gather organic debris like leaves, branches and other dead foliage from planting beds and lawn.
- Plan and begin any major Spring landscaping projects.
- Now is the time to plant shrubs and trees—just make sure your plans line up with recommendations for your planting zone.
- Your local extension office is a great resource for native plants, timing suggestions and other information on everything from wells and sewers to composting.

# Inside the House:

## CLOTHES + CLOSETS

- Swap cold winter clothes for warm-weather clothing.
- Inspect clothing for needed repairs.
- Review clothing for fit and style, and create a donation pile for things you are finished with.
- Recycle clothing that can't be easily/inexpensively repaired.
- Recycle clothing missing parts, mates, etc.
- Store winter clothing carefully with cedar or mothballs to prevent infestation.
- Load donations into the car or by the door to leave the house on the next errand run.
- Remove everything from the linen closet and wipe down all shelves.
- Reload linen closet by type and size: towels with towels, etc.
- Vacuum and clean all floors.
- Review utility closets for contents—eliminate any unnecessary items, broken parts, etc.

## WALLS + STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

- Wipe down all the ceilings and walls.
- Dust thoroughly, including hard-to-reach places, such as ceiling fans, window casings and crown moldings. Always work from the top of a room down.
- Wipe down all baseboards.
- Remove all light fixture shades, clean the fixtures, and wash the glass or plastic shades.
- Clean around all outlets. BONUS points for removing outlet covers and vacuuming inside. MORE BONUS points for sealing any leaks with insulation.
- Clean and polish metal hardware on doors and windows.
- Contact an air conditioning service company for an annual inspection of your cooling system.
- Deactivate any heat system humidifiers once the weather stabilizes.
- Drain sediment from hot water heaters.

## WINDOWS

- Wash windows inside and out.
- Wash window screens with warm water and mild soap, scrubbing each screen with a brush, then rinsing thoroughly.
- Clean drapes and window treatments. Read labels for cleaning instructions. Dry-clean fabric shades.
- Swap out heavier drapes for lighter drapes.
- Wipe wooden blinds with a damp cloth. Metal and vinyl blinds can be cleaned with warm water and mild soap. Vacuum any dust.
- Dust and clean any curtain rods, hooks and valances.

## **FURNITURE + RUGS**

- Clean upholstered furnishings.
- Take cushions outside and gently beat them.
- Clean stains according to any care labels. Use the vacuum's upholstery or crevice tools to clean inside all furniture seams.
- Move furniture and vacuum beneath it.
- Dust and polish any wood furniture. Use only organic materials on fine antiques.
- Vacuum and clean any rugs. Note any wear and send valuable or antique rugs to a reputable cleaner to be cleaned and repaired if needed.
- Flip and rotate mattresses.
- Wash pillows.
- Change out bedding. Swap autumn or winter colors for colors or bright whites, neutrals or natural linens.

## **BATHROOM**

- Discard expired medicines, cosmetics and beauty products.
- Empty all cabinets and wipe down inside and out.
- When putting things back, organize medicine cabinet(s) and under sink cabinets by type of product.
- Relocate extra supplies to the linen or utility closet.
- Clean any makeup brushes and other items that regularly come in contact with skin.
- Wash and sanitize all surfaces and fixtures.
- Clean and reseal grout lines.
- Refresh and redo any caulking that is failing.

## **KITCHEN**

- Empty all cabinets and shelves.
- Thoroughly wipe down the insides and outsides of all cabinets and shelves.
- Inspect canned food, spices, etc. for expiration dates and freshness.
- Sort items like with like then reload cabinets, keeping categories distinct and easy to understand.
- Label shelves for clarity.
- Empty the fridge and wipe down all shelves, drawers and other elements.
- Review contents for spoiled/expired food and discard.
- Recycle any glass, metal or plastic containers.
- Dust refrigerator coils. Be sure to turn off power at the circuit breaker first.
- Defrost the freezer.
- Wipe down the inside of the microwave and any ovens.
- Run a sanitizing cycle with special cleaners through the dishwasher.

## **LAUNDRY**

- Wash the exterior and interior of any washing machines and dryers.
- Clean the lint trap and dryer vent.
- Wipe down any shelving and cabinets.
- Check and clean as needed the dryer duct.

## **PAPERS + HOME OFFICE**

- Review your files and update any household inventories.
- Discard owner's manuals and other instructions for anything you no longer own.
- Clean computers outside and in.
- Wipe cases down and dust and sanitize any keyboards and mice.
- Clean monitors.
- Organize your files on the computer, clearing off the desktop and creating subfolders in your DOCUMENTS or MY DOCUMENTS folder.

## **ELECTRONICS**

- Dust and clean all electronics.
- Check all connections and cables, tighten as needed.
- Wipe down and sanitize any remote controls.
- Discard owner's manuals and other instructions for anything you no longer own.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

- Change batteries in smoke detectors (twice a year) and remove any dust around sensors.
- Check the status of all fire extinguishers and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Make sure everyone knows how to operate a fire extinguisher.
- Review all escape plans.
- Check any collapsible ladders, ropes and other emergency exit supplies for 2nd floor and higher rooms.
- Review emergency and first aid kits, replacing any outdated supplies with fresh ones.
- Make sure the kit includes a list of emergency numbers, especially the nearest poison-control center.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

While this list is comprehensive, it doesn't include livestock or other particularly rural chores.

Feel free to let us know if we've overlooked anything, big or small.

What are some clever ways you've found to make Spring Cleaning more fun? We'd love to hear from you.

## NEXT STEPS

Now that your home is clean ....

If you want to clean up your mind here's an invitation to our class [Unstuff Your Mind](#).

If you're ready to take a big leap into getting and staying organized you can learn more about [The Unstuff Your Life System](#), our 10 week program designed to teach you how to get and stay organized.



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**Andrew Mellen**

*Professional Organizer  
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