

Tricks, tips for cleaning quickly



There is nothing like impending company to light the spark of motivation for getting a home clean. However, we don't always have a lot of time to do the thorough cleaning we would like. Following are some tricks and tips for clearing through the clutter quickly.

- **Make a list and prioritize:** The rooms that will be most visible while company is over are the ones that should be taken care of first and foremost. These likely include the entryway, living room, kitchen and guest bath.

- **Clutter control:** Take a large basket or bag through each of these rooms and first clear out any extraneous clutter, such as items that belong in other rooms. Once you remove some of the stuff from the rooms, you'll have a better idea of what needs to be cleaned the most. For example, you may be able to get away without vacuuming, but you may need to dust down visible surfaces.

- **Out of sight, out of mind:** Chances are guests aren't going to go through closets or look under beds. So if time is really of the essence, stash items in those spots until a more permanent storage place can be found. Take out the items you'll need for entertaining in advance, such as serving platters or coffee cups. This way you don't have to open up cabinets and closets and expose guests to potential disarray.

- **Create a cleaning kit:** Use a small basket or organizational caddy to house dust rags, glass cleaner, an old toothbrush for crevices, paper towels, and any other supplies you use frequently. Tote the supplies from room to room as you clean and save time hunting for supplies.

- **Vacuum sparingly:** Vacuuming can be a labor- and time-

intensive task. Limit vacuuming to high-traffic areas. Don't feel the need to move furniture and clean underneath at this point in time. Run the vacuum over the kitchen floor as well, to save time sweeping up possible crumbs. If your kitchen floor is one that hides dirt well, you may be able to spot-clean and forego mopping as well.

- **Focus energy on the guest bath:** A guest bathroom or a first-floor powder room will be frequented by guests. Spend a good deal of your time making sure it sparkles. Few people want to make use of a dirty bathroom. Ensure there is fresh toilet tissue and that the soap dispenser is full of hand soap. Place a few fresh towels on a hook. Wipe down the mirror, sink, floor, and toilet thoroughly. And don't forget to lift up the toilet rim to scour hidden stains. Afterward, empty the trash pail and spray a little air freshener.

- **Concentrate on the kitchen:** The dishwasher can be a good place to hide dishes that may have piled up until you're ready to run the load. Also, clear off the counter and empty the trash in the kitchen so everything is tidy and fresh. You may also want to put on a new tablecloth if the older one is stained or full of crumbs.

- **Do a once-over:** After you've cleaned and relaxed, walk through the rooms and spot-check some items you may have missed. Remember, you're more likely to notice things that are out of place. Guests won't notice all of the miniscule things you observe.

- **Check the air:** Leave the home and come back in to see if there are any offensive odors. Fabric refresher sprays or a mild air freshener can take care of them. Keep a subtly scented candle lit for ambiance and to keep the air smelling nice.

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Pictured from left to right, front row: Natalie Hadley, Megan Kats; second row: Brenda Miller, Stephanie Eagleburger, Alyssa Thomson; back row: Carol Richmeier, Shawn Schock, Amber Shelley, Kelly Milton, Brandi Graham, Pamela Spargo. Not pictured: Kerri Payne and Bailey Loughry.

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Pictured, left to right, McKenzie Linner, Amanda Wiltfong, Heather Loftus, Holly Puga and Alisha Simmons

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