



# It's That Time Again: Spring Cleaning Made Simple

By Vonetta Booker-Brown

**S**pring cleaning. Although you can thoroughly clean your home at any time, the term itself conjures images of making a new start; of clearing out old junk that's accumulated over the winter to make room for the freshness of a new season. It seems like a daunting task, but the benefits of a clean home and peace of mind are well worth it. Plus, it's not as hard as it seems! Here are some tips for a more effective spring cleaning.

## Get Organized:

Spring cleaning is a big task, so a little organization can go a long way in not getting overwhelmed.

"Always clean your home starting from top to bottom and from the furthest point away from the exit door in any

room," says Steve Thagouras, owner of Stamford, CT.-based TailorMaid Services ([www.tailormaidservices.com](http://www.tailormaidservices.com)).

To sort out what you have to do, make a checklist of tasks for each room—then set aside a specific amount of time to work on them.



Keep supplies close at hand in an easy-to-carry basket, to expedite cleaning. According to Thagouras, the following eight basic cleaning products should be enough to handle 80-90 percent of a home's cleaning needs:

- Soap scum remover
- Mildew remover
- Window/glass cleaner
- Tub/tile cleaner
- All-purpose cleaner/de-greaser
- Soft scrub (or equivalent)
- Non-abrasive cleaner
- Furniture polish
- Floor cleaner/disinfectant (for mopping)

## Make it Fun...

Spring cleaning doesn't always have to be a chore—with the right preparation, it can be tons of fun! Here are some ways you can make your spring cleaning enjoyable (or at least tolerable!):

- Crank up your favorite tunes
- Keep energy crashes at bay by keeping light, healthful snacks nearby
- Have your kids help clean (after all, they probably helped to make the mess!)

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- Set aside some reward time afterwards for a job well done—a nice bubble bath, dinner with a friend, a good book, or whatever appeals to you. It'll keep you motivated!

### **Closets: Givin' It Away...**

Our closets say a lot about us—and when they're spiffy, we often feel better about the overall order in our homes and lives. Spring cleaning "is the perfect time of year to take a long, hard look at your clothes," says Nancy Belon, organization consultant and founder of New Canaan, CT.-based Simply Organized ([www.simplyorganized.org](http://www.simplyorganized.org)). She recommends setting aside a certain amount of time to separate items into "keep" and "donate" piles, and storing seasonal items in clear plastic storage boxes or garment bags. Among the items that may be saved for next year, go through them once more to determine whether they should really make the cut. "I find that a lot of my clients only reuse ¼ of the articles saved," says Belon.

### **The Air in Here...**

Clean indoor air is just as important as its outdoor counterpart. Indoor air pollutants such as dust mites, pet dander, and smoke particles can irritate health problems such as asthma, runny noses and allergies. Here are some tips for cleaner indoor air:

- Open windows when the weather permits (unless you suffer from allergies) for a little while daily, to keep fresh air circulating through the home.
- Vacuum once or twice a week (while the windows are open). Use a vacuum with a HEPA (high-efficiency particulate) filter, which traps air particles that can aggravate asthma and allergies. Without HEPA filters, up to 70% of dirt can be re-ejected back into the air while vacuuming. (Eww!)
- Houseplants not only look nice—they help to keep indoor air pure and fresh. Popular kinds include the bamboo palm, rubber plant, corn plant and Boston fern.

### **Heavy-Duty (Yet Simple) Short Cuts...**

- A small amount of lemon oil or Resolve® spot remover goes a long way in cleaning water spots off of shower doors.
- An opened box of baking soda behind the toilet absorbs bathroom odors.
- Mix baby powder in with cat litter to keep it smelling fresh.
- A damp cloth sprinkled with baking soda is effective in cleaning crayon marks off of walls.
- Got a slow drain? Clean it by covering it with baking soda and pouring boiling water over it.

Keep these tips handy for a fast track to a sparkling home!