



If you've ever tried setting up a housekeeping schedule and failed, join the club! Thankfully, **these short pages** from Home Sanctuary will help you come up with a way to organize household tasks that will *actually work* for your family. I suggest dividing up this organizational project into three separate days, so that each step is super easy!

When you set out to make something like a "Housekeeping Chart," it's easy to bite off more than your family can chew. We all get star-struck with the idea that we will run a tight ship, know where all our receipts are and have baseboards that shine. We see the lists of tasks set out by the experts, break them up into a complicated weekly spread sheet and then....implode. Who are we kidding?? We can't keep up with all that!

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- **The reality is, most of us would be thrilled with a general**
- **system that would corral the clutter into a reasonable scale,**
- **help us find permission slips, and keep our homes relatively**
- **germ-free and company-ready. We'd like to function freely**
- **without being slaves to a monstrous spread sheet.**
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- **We want to have a home that embraces the people within its**
- **walls and accepts that life is sometimes messy. We don't want**
- **to become housekeeping tyrants.**
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But we know we need help, and we are tired of the chaos that comes when we flunk the Flylady or drop out of Martha's methods.

Today's task is to make a simple, yet significant step toward the kind of life you want to live.

Not to get overly excited here, but what we are starting today could, quite possibly, change your life. I'm not even kidding.

Day One

Prioritize Tasks - An Eye Opener

1. We'll begin by making a list of the basic tasks that you feel are important to the health and well-being of your family.

We will keep this rather general: keep in mind, we are working on something that will be manageable and not take on a big, scary life of its own. I have a blank Task List for you to download after you read the list below.

I'll get us going, but your list might look different than mine. I haven't included major tasks, like cleaning out the gutters or seasonal tasks like polishing silver (riiiiiight). We are just talking about the everyday things that we want to get under control.

- Grocery shop
- Kitchen floor: sweep
- Kitchen floor: mop
- Dishes
- Counters
- Oven
- Fridge
- Trash

- General Pick-up
- Vacuum living areas
- Vacuum bedrooms
- Cleaning bedrooms
- Dusting
- Entry way
- Laundry: sheets and towels
- Laundry: family clothes
- Craft projects/Personal pursuits (scrap booking, knitting, etc)
- Bathrooms (tub, toilet, sink and counters, floor)
- Paper work (filing, bills, etc.)
- Yard work
- Errands (dry cleaning, dog to groomer, etc.)
- *What else can you think of??*

2. Now. Beside each task, you will assign a number:

1 - This should be done every day

2 - This could be done once a week

3 - This could be done once, every other week

4 - This could be done once a month

5 - This ain't gonna happen

I want you to think about each thing realistically.

If you can't remember the last time you mopped your kitchen floor, perhaps assigning a 3 or a 4 to that task would be reasonable. Don't worry about what you think you "should" do. *Remember, if you currently aren't doing any of these things well, then **any bit of improvement will help.*** You can always go back and tweak this later, when you are flush with success.

That is ALL you have to do!! You don't even have to do any ACTUAL WORK today! Woo HOO, I love being a Company Girl!

Tomorrow, we will start figuring out how to work these tasks into your lifestyle. Let me assure you, you aren't going to have to kill yourself to set this up. But in order to make it work, you WILL have to step up your game just a bit.

I don't know about you, but I'm READY to step up my game! I'm excited about making my home sparkle with peace, order and beauty! It's going to happen for all of us.

Hey! Here's a blank pdf you can download to make this even easier!

[Download Household Task List](#)

Day Two

Where Does Your Time Go?

The second step of setting up your miracle housekeeping schedule is to take a look at a typical week in your life. For you chart and list-lovers, you will be in heaven for a few days. And for those of us who are visual learners, this exercise is perfect. I hope you will stick with me as we work through setting up a housekeeping system that actually works! We're doing this in small bites.

Let's set this up horizontally. Here is a simple chart I've made so that you can follow along. You can print off a blank one for yourself. [Download Horizontal Time Schedule](#)

{ Horizontal Time Schedule }

Or, Where in Tarnation Does My Time Go?

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							

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This works most simply if your schedule is fairly consistent each week, i.e. stay at home mom, or working from 8-5. If you have a nursing schedule or work retail hours that change from week to week, you will have to make some adjustments, or perhaps make more than one chart to reflect your situation.

Just fill in the **general blocks** of time: departures, arrivals, work, school, nap times, episodes of "Dancing with the Stars" that you just can't miss. You will start to see where your time is spent, and where you might have "empty" blocks of time that *could* be used for your housekeeping tasks. Looking at your life as a horizontal chart might help you start realizing just how much you pack into a week! And how easily time can get frittered.

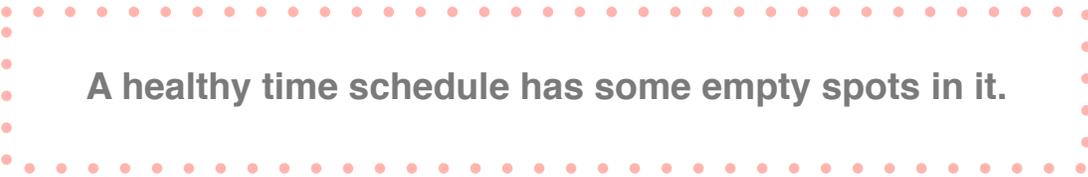
Is your day jammed with activities from morning until night? Do you have any time for yourself or for fun? Do you have time to accomplish the very basics of family upkeep? Does the computer hog every spare moment you have?

Sometimes it's important to take a good, honest look at our days. There's a beautiful verse in Psalm 90 that says, "Teach us to number our days, so that we may get a heart of wisdom." I like that reminder to keep the bigger picture in mind, so we can live each day to the fullest.

Today's task is to take a few minutes to fill in the time chart.

It doesn't have to be perfect or pretty. If you want to get fancy, you could use colored pencils to indicate blocks of time, like work or school, but that's completely up to you. This is entirely for your benefit.

Then, may I suggest saying a prayer over your schedule? *Ask God for wisdom.* If yours is too full, perhaps you can reconsider some of your commitments.



A healthy time schedule has some empty spots in it.

Tomorrow, we will take Steps 1 and 2 and combine them into a **Housekeeping Schedule** that will free you from feeling like a failure in this department.

You'll see how adding a *small amount of general structure* will bring back the joy you've been missing because the laundry and chaos have beaten you down.

You will feel empowered to give yourself permission to have fun at home AND find time for personal pursuits.

It is exciting to know that there is hope for all of us! So hang in there, my friend.

What do you notice about your time when you see it laid out horizontally?

Day Three

And Now, A "Real World" Housekeeping Schedule

Trying to keep up with housekeeping tasks can lead to frustration, anger and depression when you just can't manage it all. Let's face it, life is busy and most of the time we have too much on our plates to do everything as well as we'd like. I can't bear to look at another "expert's" housekeeping gold standard schedule without feeling like an inept failure. That's why I love this "Real World" system of sanctuary.

Today, we are going to try and put our emotions aside and look rationally at creating a Housekeeping Schedule that will get you past the inertia that sets in when things get overwhelming. **Did you have a chance to do Day One and Day Two tasks leading up to Today's Grand Reveal?** They'll really help you get ready to make this simple schedule.

Let's lay a few ground rules:

1. Decide on a realistic level of cleanliness for the season of life you are currently in.

Your housekeeping standards will change many times over the years, depending on the time you can devote, your energy level and even your

own attitude. The ages of your children will affect how much you can do yourself, and how much you can delegate. So don't be too hard on yourself if THIS particular go-round with creating a schedule doesn't look like much.

2. Don't set your standards by your mother-in-law's, Martha Stewart's or your neighbor's.

Often, "clean enough" is enough.

3. Group tasks together that make sense.

For example, creating one chunk of time per week to run errands, rather than running around every day, will free up more time. A whole day that was supposed to be devoted to home tasks can get eaten up with a simple trip to the Post Office, so you want to limit the times you have to get out and about, if possible.

4. Life is not all about cleaning.

But having things neat and tidy affects your life in a very big way. My husband feels loved when he walks into a clean living room, and that makes all of us much happier. Believe you me. But he would rather have me cheerfully loving on him than bitterly yanking clothes from the dryer. Sometimes you have to make choices and cleaning loses out. *People come first.*

5. Be flexible.

A schedule should serve YOU, not the other way around. Things happen. Life changes. Don't come unglued if your schedule doesn't work all the time. Just pick up where you left off as best you can.

6. Delegate.

There is no reason that you, and you alone, should do all the work. That does not mean that your children should be your slaves. But each child should be able (and expected to) pick up their own things, and perhaps do one or two simple things around the house on a regular basis. We can cover that more, later. But realize that you will almost always have to help them remember to do their jobs, so just *get over it*. Kids have amnesia, and they also suffer from "Can't See the Mess Syndrome."

7. Don't overplan.

If you work a full day and then have to take your kids to basketball practice, don't plan a "whole house" overhaul on that day, unless you just love being frustrated. Maybe that's an evening in which you collapse on the couch with a bowl of ice cream. That's OK! You need time to relax, too.

Alrighty.

Let's get down to business. I will give you examples of a Stay at Home Mom schedule, and a Work Outside the Home Mom schedule. I've kept these very simple and general, and not included many outside activities, just so that you can see how I've divided up the work. Your own schedules

may look completely different than mine. And if you are a nurse, or work retail hours that change from week to week, you may have to make **more than one schedule** to reflect your situation. There is a Blank Schedule for you to download when you click on it.

First, I've taken a look at the things I want to do daily and included them in my Minimum Maintenance routine. These things don't go into my weekly schedule. I normally do most of my Minimum Maintenance in the evenings, when the kids can help (5-10 min), because I like to wake up to a tidy house.

- *What is Minimum Maintenance, you say?? So glad you asked. Uh,*
- *just The Most Incredible Tool you could ever get ahold of. Yes, I'm*
- *including MM information as a bonus, and I'll get to that later. For now,*
- *just know that I've survived WHOLE YEARS on doing little more than*
- *that each day. Somehow, Minimum Maintenance makes the rest of the*
- *housekeeping tasks much more manageable.*
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Now, when I was a SAHM, I liked to do my major housecleaning on Mondays. That gave us more time on Saturdays for other things, and allowed me to supervise the kids' simple chores, which seemed to drag on forever. When I was distracted with my own jobs, I couldn't help them accomplish theirs.

{ My Weekly Housekeeping Schedule SAHM }

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Min. Maint.	Min. Maint.	Min. Maint.	Min. Maint.	Min. Maint.		
Major Pick Up Vacuum Dust Bathrooms	Laundry - Family Clothes	Grocery Shop Errands	Clean one room thoroughly: Rotate Rooms of the house, one room per week Kitchen could be every other week (fridge, oven, mop, etc)	Laundry - Sheets/Towels Personal Pursuits: crafts, scrapbooking, DIY projects	Projects Yard Work Help kids with rooms Sports	Church Family Time Plan Menu Plan Next Week
Sports Practice		Church	Sports Game			

[Download Housekeeping Schedule SAHM](#)

You can see that Monday and Tuesday are the hardest housekeeping workdays, but then those things are done and the rest of the week is fairly easy. *Since most of your time is spent caring for children, I use the term "easy" loosely.*

For a working mom, things are a little trickier because you have to work AROUND your "paid" work schedule. Again, doing your Minimum Maintenance is the magic pill that will make things run more smoothly, but you will still need the cooperation of all family members. Theoretically, since you are gone during the day, your house "should" stay cleaner because you aren't there to mess it up, but some would argue that point. Some pretty big messes can be made "after hours."

{ My Weekly Housekeeping Schedule WOH Mom }

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Min. Maint.	Min. Maint.	Min. Maint. Fold last night's laundry	Min. Maint.	Min. Maint.		
Work	Work	Work	Work	Work	Major Pick up Vacuum Dust Yard Work Help Kids with rooms Sports	Church Family Time Plan Menu Plan Next Week Catch up on Laundry
Sports Practice Bathrooms	1-2 Laundry Loads	Church	Sports Game Work on one room	1-2 Laundry Loads		

[Download Housekeeping Schedule WOHM](#)

You may have to break big tasks, like laundry, up into smaller pieces to get them done. More of your housekeeping will have to fall on the weekends. I found that I had to relax some of my standards during the week so that I wasn't grumpy all the time. I wanted my kids to remember me enjoying life, (and them!), rather me yelling at them.

One last point: If you notice, I have not broken my tasks down into detailed sub-tasks and specific chores in most cases. I have left things pretty loose and general because I find that when I start complicating things, I DON'T FOLLOW THROUGH. That's just me, I'm PATHETIC that way and I hate that about myself. I also don't assign specific times to my tasks because they are tucked into the overall job of parenting and keeping

the wheels on things. I cannot stress myself out over sticking to a time schedule along with everything else. Life's too short, man.

Today's task is to print off a coupla blank Housekeeping Schedules and play around with plugging in your jobs.

You probably won't make the "perfect" schedule right off the bat, so maybe try 2 or 3 different options. If you need to make a 2-week or 1 Month schedule because it just doesn't all fit into one week, that's perfectly fine!

[Download Housekeeping Schedule Blank](#)

Creating a simple and general schedule frees you from thinking that you have to try and dig out from your disaster in one day.

On Monday, do Monday's jobs and don't worry about Tuesday's jobs.

On Tuesday, do Tuesday's jobs, and so on.

Give yourself time to get the tasks into a "pipeline" and you will see how beautifully it can work.

Be patient and stay committed to creating some order, and it *will* happen.

You can do this!!

Bonus Material



If you're mired in chaos and on the verge of a meltdown due to the state of your home, this section is especially for you. If you don't get anything else out of this e-book, THIS is what you need. Come now, dry your eyes and read on:

First, you are in good company. Millions of smart, capable and attractive people struggle with creating order in their homes. Lack of organization does not mean that you are *less intelligent* or *less worthy* than those whose homes seem spotless at any given moment. Let's just say that we ALL have our issues.

Organizationally Challenged people are often perfectionists, needing the right containers, proper storage and ample time to put things in order. When none of these planets align, they cannot complete the tasks at hand. I fall into this category.

Messy people are often "People" People. Our social obligations and personal desire to meet the needs of others outweigh the need to clean. If someone needs a shoulder to cry on, this is the person for the job because organizing can always wait.

We are savers. We want to hold on to precious memories of our children, so we keep burp cloths and broken toys, and every scribbled picture and craft they ever made. We keep old Halloween costumes and Christmas outfits, just because they were soooo adorable in them. We hang on to Grandma's baking pans and Aunt Martha's sewing machine because we are keepers of the family mementos. But all that stuff can keep you from enjoying life when it starts suffocating you.

We are busy. Family activities are important, but they can wreak havoc on household management.

OK, we have some bad habits. We think of our homes as a place to "relax and hang out," like when we were kids. We let things go so long that it seems impossible to even begin. We see housework as drudgery.

And maybe we lack focus. We start cleaning one thing, see something else that needs our attention, and before you know it, the original item is long forgotten.

Sometimes we simply see housekeeping as not worth the effort. It will just get messy again, so why bother? Besides, there are so many more important and interesting things to do, it is hard to take the time to do such boring, menial tasks.

There can be scores of reasons that your house gets out of control, but the result is almost always the same. Disorder affects your family's ability to function, it brings friction to your relationships, and robs your family of peace.

If it's any comfort, most people struggle in this area to some degree. But we Company Girls want to be free of this, and that's why we're here!

So where do we start??

Why, Minimum Maintenance, of course.

Minimum Maintenance is the simple idea that:

There is a minimum amount of effort that goes into each day to make it work.

It's not NO effort, and it's not a LOT of effort...but it IS effort. *I'm really liking the word "minimum" right about now, how about you?*

But first, let me tell you my story:

When I first quit my job to stay home with my babies, I really wanted to do a great job as a homemaker. My biggest challenge was that my mindset had gotten a little messed up. After several years of working, I had gotten into the habit of thinking that "home" time was "relax" time. You know, kick back and unwind and watch T.V. It took me awhile to figure out that, like any job, homemaking took some effort and some pride. But where to start?? I had my hands full with the little ones and was overwhelmed at keeping house AND keeping everyone fed.

One day, in a rabid search for organizational inspiration at the Container Store, I stumbled across Bonnie's Household Organizer. In it, Bonnie gives some guidelines for a *simple daily maintenance routine* that I've adapted to my own family's needs over the years. When life starts getting out of control, I often find that I've forgotten to put it into practice and I have to pull out my dog-eared book for a refresher. Minimum Maintenance (along with my general weekly schedule) helps get me back on track and gives me *hope* that I just might make it.

- **Remember?** Minimum Maintenance in a nutshell is this:
- **acknowledging that *every day* a minimum amount of**
- **effort will go into that day to make it work.**
-

Minimum Maintenance is not a thorough cleaning process. It is a morning run-through of the house, that gives you a successful start to your day, *whatever happens*.

Here is what Bonnie says:

1. Spend 5 minutes per room, picking up and straightening.

NO MORE THAN 5 MINUTES! (Except the kitchen, which gets 15). When your friendly timer goes off, you move on. *Oh, good!*

2. Don't start cleaning too deeply during your morning run-through.

Save that for later. *Oh, now we're talkin!*

3. Don't let the needs of others control your life.

Telephone calls, your favorite soap, PTO asked you to drop everything and bring brownies, etc. YOU decide how to spend your time.

4. Make the dinner decision early. (By 10:00)

Deciding early give you more choices, even if you are deciding to eat out. It gives you control. Try an [easy monthly menu plan](#).

5. Start from the outside in.

Clean off the top of the counter before you attack a drawer.

6. Categorize items as you go: start grouping stuff as you pick up.

Don't get bogged down in specific, precise categories, just simple groups so that when you begin to really organize, half the job is already done.

7. Learn to pick up before the mess becomes monstrous.

We often don't pick up a little piece of paper because the rest of the house is so messy. For today, just pick up the stuff you took out and used TODAY.

8. Make the picking-up process a habit.

At first it will take great effort, but soon it will become a second nature. *Clean as you go*. Having paper towels or pop-up wipes handy in each bathroom makes it easier to do a quick swab o' the deck.

So even if my closets are a disaster (and some of them are!) picking up and straightening the areas we live in gives me a euphoric feeling of success. Knowing that I HAVE to move on after 5 minutes in each room helps keep me from getting bogged down in my quagmire of despair.

Sometimes it has worked better for me to do 5 minutes per room in the evening, rather than in the morning. I like to wake up to a neat house, and getting the kids to pitch in to for quick pick up gave them an excuse to stay up 5 more minutes. *As if they needed it.*

I encourage you to get out your timer and get rockin with Minimum Maintenance today. I would be willing to bet my last dollar that you will feel incredibly beautiful and powerful when you can see your countertops once again!

Hey, there's nothing like a little bit of success to give a big boost to your self esteem. *And we can all use some of that!*

And just to make it official:

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that every day, a minimum amount of effort must go into that day to make it work. Not NO effort, not a LOT of effort, but a minimum amount of effort on my part; done regularly, and cheerfully (optional), it will create an atmosphere of sanctuary for my family and the people I love.

Signed, _____



Hey there, thank you so much for allowing me to be your “Company Girl.” The power of simple companionship cannot be underestimated in life. I believe in taking the hand of the person beside you and saying, “Let’s do this together!” I am still on my journey, learning how to organize so that I can do the things I want to do with my life. I want to create, and give, and love others...and when clutter kept me from doing these things, I knew I needed to change. These tools have helped me in the past, and they continue to help me today. I hope you’ll find them beneficial, and that they will help you get on with the more important things in your life, too: loving people and pursuing dreams!

Warmly,

Rachel Anne

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