

HEALTH HUB

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Spring Cleaning:
Refresh Your Space,
Relieve Your Stress





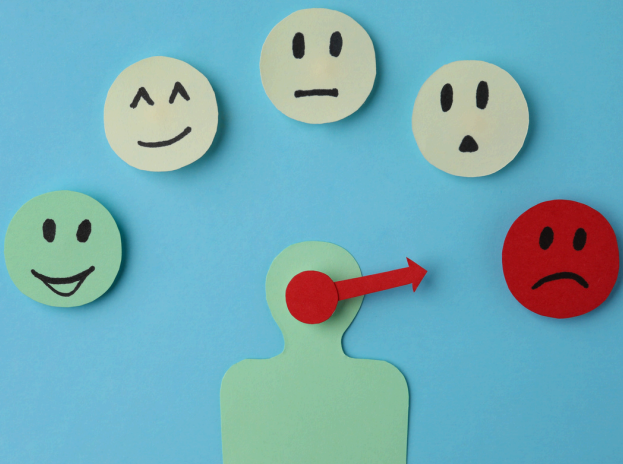
"SPRING CLEANING ISN'T JUST ABOUT DIRT AND DUST—IT'S ABOUT CREATING SPACE FOR NEW BEGINNINGS."

Spring Cleaning: Refresh Your Space, Relieve Your Stress

Written by: Codie Crosby, Health Educator

As the seasons shift and the days grow longer, many of us feel the urge to refresh our living spaces. Spring cleaning isn't just about dusting shelves and decluttering closets—it can also have profound effects on our mental and physical well-being.

It's been proven that a clean, organized environment can significantly reduce stress levels, boost productivity, and improve your overall mood. Whether this applies at home or the office, taking time to tidy up has more benefits than you might realize.





The Link Between Clutter and Stress

Research has shown that a cluttered space can contribute to higher levels of cortisol, the hormone associated with stress. When surroundings are chaotic, the brain struggles to focus, leading to feelings of overwhelm and anxiety. By taking the time to tidy up, you can create a more peaceful and inviting atmosphere, allowing yourself to relax and recharge.

Cognitive Overload:

When life is constantly surrounded by distractions, the brain becomes “battlegrounds for attention”. Everything in your day-to-day competes for your focus and attention. This can feel like a few different emotions, but stress is the main outcome. On the other hand, having order helps reduce the competition for your attention and reduces the mental load. Some people might be better than others at ignoring distractions, but distracting environments can overload your cognitive capabilities and memory. Clutter, disorder, and messes can affect more than just our cognitive resources. They're also linked to our eating habits, productivity, mental health, and decision-making abilities.

Not all clutter is bad:

It's important to remember clutter isn't all bad, and we shouldn't aim for perfection. Real homes don't look like the ones in magazines and social media!

Disorganized spaces can sometimes spark increased creativity and lead to new insights. While living in constant disorder isn't productive, striving for perfection in cleanliness can also be counterproductive. Perfectionism can be linked to feelings of overwhelm, anxiety, and poor mental health.

Finding balance in your tidying up routines can make maintaining your space easy. The goal of cleaning isn't to add more stress, rather it's intended to eliminate stress!



Tips for a Stress-Free Spring Cleaning Experience

Consider the following six strategies to maximize the stress-relieving benefits of spring cleaning!

1

Start Small

Tackling one area at a time prevents feeling overwhelmed and keeps the process manageable.

2

Create A Checklist

Writing down tasks can provide a sense of structure and accomplishment as you check off completed items.

3

Declutter First

Removing unnecessary items before deep cleaning makes the process more efficient.

4

Use Aromatherapy

Scents like lavender or citrus can enhance relaxation and create a fresh, uplifting atmosphere.

5

Play Music or a Podcast

Listening to something enjoyable can make cleaning feel less like a chore and more like a therapeutic activity.

6

Create a Schedule

Establishing a reoccurring pattern when it comes to cleaning can take away the stress of what to do and when.



Check out this Workshop
The Magic of Tidying Up

The Long-Term Effects of a Clean Space

Maintaining a clean space isn't just about aesthetics—it fosters a sense of control and stability, which can be particularly beneficial for mental health. Regularly tidying up prevents clutter from accumulating, keeping stress levels in check year-round.

This spring, take the opportunity to refresh your space and your mind. By incorporating simple cleaning habits into your routine, you can create a healthier, happier, and less stressful environment for yourself and your loved ones.

See an additional resource at the end of this Health Hub for some cleaning tips for individuals who are sensitive to cleaning products or have Asthma.

Mental and Physical Benefits of Spring Cleaning

Beyond reducing stress, spring cleaning has several other health benefits:

- **Boosts Mood:** A tidy space can lead to a sense of accomplishment, triggering the release of dopamine, the feel-good hormone.
- **Enhances Productivity:** An organized environment minimizes distractions and improves concentration, making it easier to complete tasks efficiently.
- **Promotes Physical Activity:** Cleaning itself is a form of exercise, helping to improve cardiovascular health and increase movement throughout the day.
- **Improves Indoor Air Quality:** Dusting, vacuuming, and decluttering can reduce allergens and improve respiratory health.



SAFE CLEANING FOR PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA

Cleaning with non-toxic cleaners is a great way to both clean your home and manage asthma. Here are some suggestions for cleaning and decreasing asthma triggers. These recipes are easy, inexpensive, and non-polluting.



MOLD & MILDEW CLEANER

Baking soda, borax, or white vinegar

Any of these can be used to scrub mold-infected areas. Dry areas when finished.

Lemon juice and salt or white vinegar and salt

Mix a paste of lemon juice and salt or white vinegar and salt to scrub mold-infected areas. Dry areas when finished.

TIPS

When showering or bathing, turn on the bathroom fan and allow it to run for 15 minutes or longer. If the bathroom does not have a fan, open a window for 15 minutes or longer.

Replace or wash moldy shower curtains.

Fix leaky plumbing and remove other unwanted sources of water.

WINDOW & MIRROR CLEANER

**Vinegar
Water
Liquid laundry detergent**

Pour ¼ cup vinegar into a 16-ounce spray bottle and fill to the top with water. To prevent streaking, add 3 to 4 drops of detergent into the spray bottle. Mix well, spray on the surface, and scrub with a cloth diaper, lint-free rag, or sheet of newspaper.

STAIN REMOVER

**Borax
Water**

Mix ¼ cup of borax with 2 cups of water. Use a sponge or cloth to dab the solution on the stain. Let it dry. Use another clean cloth moistened with water to scrub the stained area.

DUSTING & POLISHING

Olive oil or almond oil

Use a soft fabric with a few drops of oil for polishing surfaces.

TIPS

Organize clothes and toys in clear plastic trash bags or bins.

Wash stuffed animals in hot water and dry them on a high heat setting. Sealing toys in a plastic bag and placing them in the freezer overnight or for at least 5 hours also kills dust mites.

Wash all bedding in hot water and dry it on a high setting every few weeks.

Vacuum and dust with a damp cloth at least once a week, preferably with a HEPA vacuum.

Take off shoes before entering the house to cut down on contaminants that can be spread through the house.

TUB, TOILET & SINK CLEANER

**Baking soda
Liquid castile soap**

Sprinkle baking soda onto porcelain surfaces. Squeeze a couple of drops of soap onto the surfaces. Scrub the porcelain surfaces with a damp rag. Rinse well to avoid leaving a hazy film.

DRAIN CLEANER

**Baking soda
Vinegar
Boiling water**

Pour ½ cup of baking soda down the drain first, followed by ½ cup of vinegar. Let the drain bubble for 3 to 5 minutes. Finally, pour about a quart of boiling water down the drain. Repeat the process if the drain is still clogged.

A drain snake or a plunger can be used as a non-chemical method to unclog a drain.

PEST CONTROL

**1 quart water
1 crushed garlic clove
1 minced onion
1 tablespoon ground cayenne pepper
1 tablespoon liquid laundry detergent**



Mix the water and food ingredients. Let stand for 1 hour, strain, and add the liquid soap. Pour mixture into spray bottle and spray it around the house for pest control.

TIPS

Avoid saving boxes, paper bags, or newspapers in piles.

Do not leave open food or dirty dishes lying around the kitchen.

Keep counters free of crumbs and spills.

Keep garbage containers closed.

Rinse recyclables before putting them in a bin.

Avoid using pesticides. Use traps or baits instead.

OVEN CLEANER

**Baking soda
Water
Scouring pad**

Mix 1 cup of baking soda with enough water to make a paste. Apply to interior oven surfaces and let stand for at least 30–45 minutes. Use a scouring pad to scrub soiled areas of the oven and use a harder object, such as a bread knife, for larger food deposits.

Do not use this cleaner on self-cleaning ovens.

FRESH AIR

Throw out harsh chemical cleaners and scented household cleaners.

Use mild, unscented detergents for clothes and avoid scented fabric softeners.

Stop using air fresheners and deodorizers.

Do not smoke cigarettes in the home.

SLC SALT LAKE COUNTY
HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Office 385-468-4892
Español 385-315-0049

www.slco.org/health-safety-housing
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Adapted with permission from the Rhode Island Health Department
Recipes provided by the American Lung Association
in Washington and the Boston Public Health Commission