

Dusting and Vacuuming

The furniture and floors throughout our home need to be cleaned regularly. Dust accumulates quickly on all surfaces. Besides looking unsightly, dust aggravates allergies and asthma. Let's learn how to tackle the dust and clean the rooms in our home.

Before you start, look at the room. Pick up things that don't belong on the floor and put them away. Clear clutter that tends to accumulate on dressers, tables, and other surfaces. Hang up clothes. Make the bed.

It's much easier to clean when you don't have to spend a long time tackling clutter first! You can make the job easier if you remember:

A place for everything, and everything in its place.

Practicing this principle saves time and energy. You'll know where to find things when you need them and waste less time looking for them.

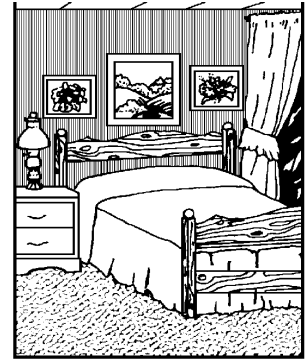
You know how horses are kept in a corral, fenced in so they don't get lost. Use the same idea with your belongings: corral them by putting them into boxes, storage trays, drawers, or plastic bags. The containers can be as simple as a shoe box or a bigger cardboard box. Plastic storage containers of many sizes and shapes are available at discount stores. Zipper seal plastic bags of different sizes can hold letters, papers, pencils, hair bows, jewelry and so many of the small things that clutter our rooms.

Once everything has a place, be diligent and put things away. It always seems easier at the time to just drop things on the bed or floor, or set them down. Pretty soon though, other things get set on top of them and we can't find what we need. When this happens, you'll have to spend extra time sorting through things and putting them away. You'll be thankful if you develop the good habit of putting your things where they belong.

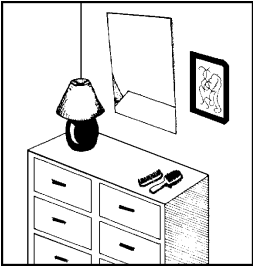
After any clutter has been cleared, you're ready to clean. Gather the supplies you will need: dust cloths, window cleaner and paper towels, vacuum cleaner, dust mop or broom. You may also like to use a spray polish or other special cleaning products. Whatever you need, bring everything into the room you are cleaning. A box or plastic caddy to hold your supplies is handy and makes it easy to carry them from room to room.

When you clean a room, **start at the top and work down**. If you sweep the floor first, and then clean off the table, dust and crumbs will probably fall onto the floor you just cleaned!

Use a **dust rag** that grabs and holds dust. There are many types made for this purpose, including disposable cloths that can be used for dusting by hand, or attached to a mop to dust floors. Avoid feather dusters. They



tend to scatter dust, not pick it up and remove it. You don't want to just move dust from one surface to another. You want to collect the dust into a rag and then shake the rag outside, away from open windows and doors. It pays to have several quality dust rags to use as you clean. When one is full of dust, use another one, and then shake them all outside at one time.



Dust the tops of dressers, shelves and other furniture first. If it is above your head, ask an adult for help. Carefully dust knick-knacks, clocks, picture frames and anything else that has collected dust. After dusting several surfaces, thoroughly shake the dust rag outside, or switch to a clean one.

Once the top surfaces are dusted, look at the lower shelves, drawer fronts, furniture legs and windowsills. Work your way around the room until you have dusted everything from top to bottom.

You're almost ready to clean the floor. Check the **baseboards** first. In most rooms, baseboards run along the bottom of the wall where it meets the floor. These get very dusty. Run a dust rag or a dust mop along the baseboards, then shake the mop or rag outside.

Fold up **small throw rugs** and shake them vigorously outside.

Carpets should be **vacuumed** at least once a week. Dirt and dust settle into the rug. Dirt is ground into the fibers every time we walk on it. Carpeting lasts longer when it's cleaned regularly. Ask an adult to help you learn which settings to use on your vacuum cleaner. Different types of carpeting in your house may require a different setting.

Start in one corner of the room and vacuum in outward strokes as far as you can comfortably reach. Overlap each stroke a few inches so you don't miss part of the rug. Work your way back toward the door, vacuuming each section of the room as you go. Do not vacuum "helter-skelter" attacking a little dirt in one corner and then something you see on the other side of the room. This wastes both time and energy.



If the room has wood, tile or other hard surface floors, use a dust mop, broom or a bare floor attachment that comes with many vacuum cleaners. If you sweep or use a dust mop, have a dust pan handy to collect and dispose of loose dirt. Use the same technique as vacuuming: start on one end of the room and work your way back to the door.

Put your cleaning supplies away and enjoy you clean room!