

# Keeping Up with Housekeeping When You Have a Health Issue



When you have a health condition, your day-to-day chores don't go away. There are still dishes and laundry to do, groceries to buy, and light bulbs to change.

Whether you have a chronic condition or you're recovering from a health issue, it can feel overwhelming. Here are helpful tips to keep things clean as the chores pile up.

## Make a plan

The first step is to get organized. Write down all your day-to-day chores. Look at the most important things and determine how often they need to be done. Figure out what you can realistically do on your own. Then, ask friends and family for support. Talk with your healthcare team about community resources that can support you, too. Remember: It's OK to ask for help.

## Categorize

Look at your household chores by location. This makes housework feel less overwhelming and will help you plan. Here are some tips on how to tackle some common tasks:

Doing the dishes, keeping the pantry and refrigerator stocked, and cooking is a lot to manage. To keep your kitchen tasks doable:

- **Plan your meals.** Make a list of the items you need to stock. Look for easy, healthy choices. There are many websites with simple recipes. Buy precut fruit and vegetables as a time-saver. When buying prepared food, be sure to check the Nutrition Facts label. Try to stay away from foods loaded with sodium and sugar. Look for ready-made food with a short list of ingredients and additives.
- **Take shopping off your to-do list.** Use an online grocery pick-up or delivery service to make things easier. Or, ask friends and loved ones to grab groceries for you.
- **Know how much energy you have to put toward cooking.** Consider using food delivery services for some meals to lighten the load. If you can't cook at all, meal trains organized by friends and family can be helpful while you recover.
- **Sit down.** Save yourself from standing the whole time by having a tall chair or stool nearby when cooking and cleaning up.

Keeping clothes clean is an ongoing task. Try these tips:

- **Get creative with your baskets.** Keep lightweight laundry baskets in your bedroom and bathroom close to where you change clothes. Line your baskets with shopping bags so it's easier to lift your clothes out.
- **Think small.** Instead of tackling a big bunch of laundry that piles up, do smaller loads. They're much more manageable.
- **Make the washer and dryer as accessible as possible.** Have a chair nearby so you can do laundry while seated. Keep detergent and other laundry supplies where you can easily reach them. Put detergent into pump bottles for easy use or use laundry detergent pods.
- **Get comfortable.** Find a space where you can sit down when folding and sorting out clean laundry.
- **Ask for help.** Friends and family can do the laundry when you're unable to. If you don't have a washer and dryer where you live, ask loved ones to take it to a laundromat for you. Or look up laundry services in your area.

- **Wear clothes that are simple to take care of.** Stay away from easily wrinkled or line-dry only clothes that need more effort.

Cleaning the bathroom can be a hassle, especially if you have a health condition. These tips may help make things easier:

- **Try an anti-fatigue mat .** If you have a condition like arthritis or any pain in your lower body, consider using an anti-fatigue mat to stand on while cleaning areas like the sink or mirror.
- **Sit while cleaning.** If standing for extended periods is challenging, use a sturdy stool to sit on while cleaning surfaces like sinks, bathtubs, and the floor.
- **Use ergonomic tools.** Try long-handled scrub brushes or extendable cleaners so you can clean without overstretching or bending too much.

This includes keeping up with sweeping, mopping, dusting, and vacuuming in various rooms. It can feel like a lot. Here are some ideas to help:

- **Get into the right frame of mind.** Think small to make tasks more manageable. Take frequent breaks. Know that you can't clean at your full strength. And lower your standards a bit if needed. It doesn't have to be perfect.
- **Look into helpful tools.** Invest in an all-in-one electric mop that sweeps, too. It can clean both hard surfaces and rugs. If your residence is fully carpeted, consider getting a robotic vacuum.
- **Keep your supplies nearby.** Make sure your cleaning tools are easily accessible and within reach.
- **Ask for help.** Once again, know that your loved ones are here to help you. You can also look into cleaning services.

Being outside feels great, and doing simple yard work adds more movement to your day. But if keeping up with the outside chores is too much work, your loved ones may be able to help with a garden or regular yard maintenance. You may want to consider hiring a lawn, leaf, or snow service.

Keeping your living space clean is important, but not at the expense of your health. So don't push it. Rely on your support network and other services as much as you need to.

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