

**Outlet:** *Good Housekeeping*

**Topic:** Holiday Cleaning Tips

**Source:** Meg Roberts, President of [Molly Maid](#), a [Neighborly](#) company and the nation's leading residential cleaning company

## **Holiday Cleaning Countdown**

Everyone is crunched for time and spending hours cleaning the house at the last minute is no way to start off the holidays. Molly Maid suggests breaking up household tasks over the five days leading up to a gathering to make the holidays a little less stressful for everyone:

### **5 DAYS OUT: Porch, foyer and central closet**

Concentrate on clearing up and organizing clutter. Wipe clean glass doors, light fixtures and doorways and knobs. Vacuum or sweep floor, mop if necessary.

Make sure there are clean doormats at every entrance. This will make a significant impact on minimizing debris brought into the home.

Storage containers, closets and spare rooms make great temporary homes for clothes, shoes, toys and the mail that hasn't been sorted. Get the clutter out of sight with a focus on high traffic areas.

### **4 DAYS OUT: Bedrooms, hallways and stairs**

Dust top to bottom, including ceiling fans, light fixtures, vents, nooks and crannies. Wipe down doorways, furniture and knickknacks. Vacuum floor, especially under the bed, along the baseboards and under furniture. Mop floor if necessary. Lay out fresh linens and towels in guest bedroom(s).

Dusting light fixtures, ceiling fans, blinds and cabinets are easily forgotten. Dust with a microfiber cloth prior to performing chores in a room. Dust first, then vacuum!

For a guest room that also serves another purpose, reduce clutter as much as possible, such as putting away all paperwork in a home office and loose toys in a kid's room. Remove anything you or the regular occupant might need during your guests' stay so that they truly have a space to call their own.

### **3 DAYS OUT: Bathrooms**

Dust top to bottom including light fixtures and vents. Disinfect toilet, tub, shower and surfaces. Wipe clean cabinets, doorway(s) and knickknacks. Wipe clean sink, mirror. Vacuum and mop. Replace shower liner(s).

Pull all bath towels and mats and take to laundry room; start a load.

Add two denture cleaning tablets to the toilet and allow their fizzing to easily remove stains and clean the bowl. If you have little kids, they may like to add the tablets – getting others involved with these household tasks makes it easier on everyone!

Use a handheld vacuum to quickly remove stray hairs and debris near baseboards. Sweep, then mop floor with appropriate product.

Return freshly laundered towels and mats to their proper places.

## **2 DAYS OUT: Living room, dining room and family room**

Dust top to bottom, including ceiling fans, light fixtures and vents. Wipe clean doorways, mantels, furniture, inside and out of cabinets and knickknacks. Vacuum furniture, along baseboards and under furniture. Mop if necessary.

Plan to address all your flooring types and a vacuum is the first step for any surface – if the settings are adjusted. Use the bare floor setting for tile or hardwood, which will disable the beater bar used for cleaning carpets. The beater bar can scratch a delicate floor. The crevice tool is a great vacuum attachment which will remove crumbs and debris from baseboards.

For hardwood, use a dust mop next and do not use a cleaner as it will likely leave residue and actually attract dust.

For ceramic tile, a manufacturer-recommended mild detergent works best. Never use abrasive products, as they can scratch the tile, or bleach or ammonia-based cleaners, which can discolor the grout.

For cleaning natural stone tile, also follow manufacturer's instructions, which likely will call for a soap-based product. Never use abrasive products, as they can scratch the tile, or bleach or ammonia-based cleaners, which can discolor the grout. Also do not use lemon juice, vinegar or other acids on marble, limestone or travertine.

Mix the cleaning product according to manufacturer's recommendations and keep a soft brush ready to tackle stubborn stains.

## **1 DAY OUT: Kitchen**

Dust top to bottom, including ceiling fans, light fixtures and vents. Wipe clean stove, fridge, microwave, small appliances cabinets, counters and sink. Wipe clean cabinets, islands and racks. Vacuum and mop the floor.

To clean the stove, remove all burner covers or pans from the stovetop and shelves from the oven. Soak them in soapy water in the sink. Wipe down all surfaces on and in the appliance. Mix some baking soda in a small bowl with enough hydrogen peroxide to make a paste. Scrub with the rough side of a sponge and baked-on gunk will come right off. Also, the top of most stoves lifts up for easy cleaning. A more heavy-duty cleaner may be needed for the oven, or you can opt to set the self-cleaning cycle but be sure to get kids and pets out of the house while it runs as the fumes can be a health hazard for them.

Don't forget to wipe down the bottom of the inside of the fridge. Crumbs and other bits of food fall to the bottom of the refrigerator as items are taken in and out. Pull out the produce drawers and wipe the surface below clean

A fresh container of baking soda or a small plate with new coffee grounds will help absorb smells and keep the refrigerator smelling great with so many odors from a variety of foods!

## **Post-Holiday Kitchen Clean Up**

Just like that, the holidays have come and gone again. After baking batches of cookies, roasting turkeys and carving the roast beast, the kitchen needs more than just a routine clean to remove all of that built-up holiday grime. The following tips target the kitchen, especially after holiday cooking:

- **Disinfect Dishwasher Racks** – Run an empty dishwasher on the highest setting without detergent to clean the grimy racks. Afterward, spray the inside with a solution of water and vinegar to remove any foul smells.
- **Behind the Stove Sweep** – From dust bunnies to crumbs, the ground underneath the stove hides many unwanted kitchen gunk. Shimmy the stove out from the wall so you can sweep the ground behind it and wipe down the greasy sides.
- **De-Cloud Wine Glasses** – Hand-wash wine glasses after each use to keep them crystal clear. For any already cloudy glasses, soak them in warm vinegar for 15 minutes before cleaning with a plastic scrubber.
- **Wipe Microwave Interior** – Add vinegar to water and boil the solution in the microwave for three minutes. The walls will be coated with acidic humidity that will help lift off any tough messes.
- **Clean Refrigerator Coils** – Take a vacuum cleaner attachment and a long-handled brush to clean accumulated dust and dirt surrounding the condenser coils in the bottom grille of the refrigerator. Fresh coils can increase the appliance's efficiency and reduce electricity bills.

### **Other after the Party Tips**

A best-kept secret is using Pepsi or Coca-Cola to remove burnt stains from pots, pans and casserole dishes. Pour in the soda, let it sit overnight and the stains will practically wipe off.

Remove hard water, lipstick and coffee stains from glassware by adding a half cup of white vinegar to warm, soapy water. Soaking overnight will help loosen and remove the stains.

Buff out scuffs on a polyurethane hardwood floor by rubbing the area vigorously with a soft cloth. If this doesn't fully remove the scuff, try a small amount of floor cleaner.

Red wine spilled on the carpet? Act quickly! Don't let the stain set before you spring into cleaning mode. A little salt on the stain will help prevent it from setting and prevent larger problems. There are a few options for removing the stain: white wine, club soda and commercial carpet cleaner are the most popular. Pour your cleaning solution of choice onto the stain and gently blot up as much wine as possible. Remember, rubbing will force the stain into the carpet.