

## **IDEAS FOR IMPROVING ORGANIZATION IN THE HOME**

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Taken from a combination of suggestions from *Focusing on Christian Womanhood* and an audiotape by Kay Arthur entitled "Marriage and the Home: Time Management."(Chattanooga, TN: Precept Ministries).

### General Suggestions

1. Know what you have to get done before the day begins by making a list the night before. This saves time wasted in prime hours trying to decide where to start and what to do. You might number the things you plan to do according to priority and logic.
2. Get up early. Before you get started, have a devotional time. Ten minutes or more in personal worship is vital as you commit the day to God and ask His help in getting your work done and doing it for Him.
3. Plan for dinner in the morning to see what foods need to be thawed or fixed ahead. Don't wait until the last minute to start thinking about dinner.
4. Train your children to help. They are your best helpers and their involvement is part of being a family. You can start this at an early age; it is good for them. Be sure to praise them for it.
5. Look at your list and see what can be delegated. This is the secret to getting your job done and also in training your children. It takes extra time to teach a child to make his own bed or set and clear the table or empty the dishwasher, but it will save you time for the next fifteen years if he knows how. Come alongside your child and never give him a job without doing it with him until he is trained. This also builds a bond with your child. Make it fun; don't be cranky.
6. Walk through the house and pick up clutter on a daily basis. Your house will look clean even when it isn't, if it's always picked up. Litter and toys and newspapers and dishes are much easier to notice than dust, although you will eventually need to dust. Clutter is more noticeable than unclean drawers.
7. Have the rule that "everyone picks up his own messes." Teach children that chores are something to be done before play.
8. Always pick up the house at night before you go to bed. It's so much easier to get up and face the day if you aren't facing a mess. Also, teach each child that they are responsible to pick up everything in their room before they go to bed.
9. Have their clothes laid out for the next day so you know what they need and can have them ready.
10. Teach everyone about a place for everything and everything in its place. If you or they are going to put it up, put it where it belongs because eventually they will have to find it. It only takes a few more minutes to put things where they belong.

11. A good policy is to have beds made up immediately when you get out of them. A room looks neater immediately. Each person makes up his own, so you teach young children how to do it.
12. If you begin a project, finish it before you begin another. Finish what you begin. This is where we get defeated. If you start three things in three different rooms, then you have three different messes.
13. Do what needs to be done. Don't do something just because it has been your routine to do it. Don't dust until the house needs dusting or vacuum until it needs vacuuming. Change sheets on the beds one bed at a time when they need it, not necessarily all on one day a week.
14. Start your more thorough cleaning in the hardest place. Get the unpleasant job over first and the rest will move faster.
15. Try not to leave a messy house. When you do so, you'll be thinking you have to go home to a mess the whole time you're away. There is nothing like walking into a house that's neat.

#### Food Shopping

1. Try to shop once a week and shop from an organized list. Every extra visit to the grocery store means you will spend more money and time than if you go in with a list.
2. Keep your shopping list with pen handy so can write it down when you notice you are out of something.
3. Confine your shopping to one or two grocery stores, if possible. You waste time running around in stores you are unfamiliar with.

#### Food Preparation

1. Plan menus a week in advance. Make a 3x5 card for each menu you now prepare. Add a new card for each menu your family now enjoys. In a short time, a week's menus and shopping list can be prepared in seconds by simply choosing seven cards.
2. Try new recipes so your meals will be varied, not predictable.
3. Get a crockpot, use your oven timer, purchase appliances that will liberate you so when you are out during the day, you can come back in the afternoon and still have dinner prepared or underway.
4. Plan nutritionally balanced meals and avoid too many convenience foods that have little nutritional value. Keep fresh fruit vegetables and small raisin packs, etc. for snacks instead of sweets and junk food. Remember, you are passing on either lifelong good or bad eating habits to your children.

5. Serve leftovers attractively. Buy larger roasts, turkeys, ham and chickens, and plan to use slices of meat for sandwiches, pot pies, casseroles, salads, stir-fry and soups. Use tortillas for wraps.
6. Serve meals attractively. Observe “company manners” at each meal.
7. Keep cleaning up as you go. This makes facing clean-up easier after a meal so much simpler and appealing than when the kitchen is a mess. Keep your sink filled with soapy water, and it only takes a few seconds to wash what you’ve used.

### Cleaning The Home

1. Keep clutter under control. Dust can wait – keep toilets and sinks clean.
2. Read thoroughly and file (together where you can find them) instruction booklets which come with household appliances to get the most benefit from them.
3. Make your house easy to clean by:
  - a. Limiting decorative items on tables and walls to the number you can keep dusted and clean.
  - b. Keeping a box of cleaning items in several places throughout the home: one in the bathroom, one in the kitchen, upstairs, downstairs.

### Care of Clothing and Family Laundry

1. Be careful in your stewardship. Be efficient in making what you possess last.
2. Resew buttons before they fall off.
3. Sew tears before washing to prevent further damage in the washing and drying process.
4. Treat spots before laundering, so they won’t become permanently “set”.
5. Wash dark clothes together, white cottons together, light-colored and delicate fabrics together, etc. It is easy to permanently stain good clothes if you aren’t careful about this.
6. When you use the dryer:
  - a. Dry loads of wash according to color and weight of fabrics.
  - b. Hang garments on hangers as you take them from the dryer to minimize wrinkling and ironing.
  - c. As you take clothes from the dryer, sort and fold them according to family member and/or room.
  - d. If you don’t hear the dryer go off and clothes are wrinkled, rather than iron them, put them back in the dryer with a wet hand towel for ten minutes.

7. Iron more often and in smaller amounts, and it doesn't seem like such a daunting task. Keep a spray bottle of water handy or use a steam iron.

#### Purchasing Clothing and Household Items

1. Buy according to a budgeted plan. Avoid buying on impulse. Keep a list of items that need to be replaced, working them into a budget and looking for good buys.
2. It is no bargain to buy items on sale just because you "like them" when you don't need them. Also, avoid buying individual clothing items that don't go with things you already have. It's no bargain if you have to run all over town trying to put together an outfit. These "partial outfit" items often end up unused.
3. Keep sales receipts and reevaluate purchases when you get home. If there is doubt whether you need it, return the item.
4. Before purchasing, read labels concerning fabric content and care. Purchase easy-care things such as permanent press sheets and pillowcases, children's clothing, tablecloths.
5. Keep out-grown and out-of-style clothing sorted out of drawers and closets. It is hard to see what needs to be purchased when you cannot see at a glance what is still being worn.

#### Hospitality

1. Entertain regularly. You will keep your house better all the time! Don't get all gourmet-stressed. Try take-out or potluck. God will bless your generosity, and you will become more confident by doing it.
2. Don't wait until everything in the house is perfect before you entertain. You will never get around to it. People come to visit you, not to inspect your house.