

The Holiday Cleaning Checklist

Get guest-ready in short, easy sessions over four weeks. Check off one task at a time, and save anything high or heavy for a helper.

Clean Smarter, Not Harder

- **Work in 20–30 minute sessions.** Set a timer and stop when it goes off.
- **Keep your feet on the floor.** No chairs or boxes. Save high jobs for a helper.
- **Sit when you can** and pull items up to counter height instead of kneeling.
- **Wear non-slip shoes** and let mopped floors dry before walking on them.
- **Never mix cleaning products**, especially bleach with ammonia or vinegar.
- **Carry less, more often**, and keep a hand free for the stair railing.

Four Weeks Out: Declutter and Make a Plan

Clear the decks so everything after goes faster.

- ☐ Decide who's coming, where everyone will sleep, and which rooms guests will use
- ☐ Walk through the house and list what needs attention, room by room
- ☐ Clear kitchen counters and put away anything you don't use weekly
- ☐ Sort the coat closet so guests have somewhere to hang their things
- ☐ Fill one bag for donations and one for trash, and get both out of the house
- ☐ Check supplies: dish soap, paper towels, trash bags, toilet paper, cleaners
- ☐ Line up help for high or heavy tasks: ceiling fans, fixtures, furniture, holiday boxes
- ☐ If the budget allows, book a one-time professional deep clean now

Three Weeks Out: The Deep-Clean Jobs

Do the big, messy jobs early.

- ☐ Clean the oven. Run a self-clean cycle weeks ahead with a window open and pets out of the kitchen
- ☐ Microwave a bowl of water with lemon slices, then wipe the inside clean
- ☐ Clean out the refrigerator and toss expired condiments
- ☐ Run the dishwasher empty with a cleaner tablet or a cup of white vinegar on the top rack
- ☐ Wash holiday table linens and check for stains
- ☐ Wash serving dishes you only use once a year
- ☐ Have your helper dust ceiling fans and fixtures and change burned-out bulbs

Two Weeks Out: Guest Spaces

Focus on the rooms visitors will use most.

Guest bedroom

- ☐ Wash all bedding, including the mattress pad and spare blankets
- ☐ Clear a drawer and some closet space, and add empty hangers
- ☐ Add a nightlight and make sure the bedside lamp is easy to reach
- ☐ Set out a charger, tissues, a water glass, and the Wi-Fi password
- ☐ Clear an open path from the bed to the door and bathroom

Guest bathroom

- ☐ Scrub tub, shower, toilet, and sink with a long-handled scrubber
- ☐ Wash or replace the shower curtain liner
- ☐ Check for a non-slip bath mat and add a non-slip mat inside the tub
- ☐ Stock toilet paper, a plunger, fresh towels, and hand soap
- ☐ Add a nightlight for late-night trips

Living and dining room

- ☐ Vacuum upholstery and under cushions
- ☐ Wipe baseboards with a long-handled tool or microfiber mop
- ☐ Clean windows and mirrors at reachable heights
- ☐ Tape down or remove rugs that slide or curl at the edges

The Week Of: Entry, Kitchen, and Floors

- ☐ Sweep the porch and walkway and clear away wet leaves
- ☐ Make sure outdoor lights work for guests arriving after dark
- ☐ Put down sturdy doormats inside and out
- ☐ Set up a spot for shoes and coats near the door
- ☐ Wipe cabinet fronts and handles, sitting down if more comfortable
- ☐ Clean the stovetop and range hood filter
- ☐ Vacuum and mop main floors in sections, keeping a dry path to walk on

The Day Before: The Quick Refresh

- ☐ Quick wipe of the guest bathroom and fresh towels
- ☐ Make up the guest bed
- ☐ Five-minute pickup in each main room
- ☐ Set the table if you're hosting a meal
- ☐ Stop. Anything not done now doesn't need to be done

The Morning Of: Ten Minutes, Tops

- ☐ Empty the trash and dishwasher
- ☐ Wipe the kitchen counters
- ☐ Turn on the porch light and a few lamps
- ☐ Sit down, have a cup of coffee, and enjoy it

A guest-ready home doesn't have to be a spotless one. Focus on the bathroom, the guest bed, and the kitchen, and close the doors on the rest.