

FREE PARTY DE-CLUTTERING & CLEANING CHECKLIST

Get party ready step-by-step.



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Get your house party ready: de-cluttering and cleaning checklist

When I'm cleaning before a party, I try to do things in stages. It helps prevent overwhelm and makes the process seem so much more manageable. We're going to focus on the public rooms – those rooms that your friends and family will see at your party.

All of these tasks may not apply to you, but I've tried to come up with a really thorough list. If you can cross something off because it doesn't apply to you -- hooray!

Start with quick clutter busting

Work one room at a time, and work quickly. Right now, you're focused on obvious clutter-busting. We're not doing deep clutter-busting. Now is not the time to purge your closet or cabinets. This is about getting rid of the junk that's in your line of sight. Give yourself a big, satisfying checkmark every time you complete a task.

Go through each room, and work on these two things:

1. Take a trash bag with you and toss any clutter as you go.
2. If you have unfinished projects, clothes, or games scattered about, put those items away in the rooms where they really belong.

Once your rooms are de-cluttered, you'll be able to clean much more effectively.

ENTRYWAY

- Toss or shred any junk mail.
- Put any mail you need to keep where it belongs: bills to be paid, etc.
- Put any shoes away in the appropriate bedrooms.

COAT CLOSET

- Make room for guest coats by moving your jackets to your master bedroom closet or by taking any outgrown coats to Goodwill.
- Gather hats and gloves together in a basket.

KITCHEN

- Toss any trash on your counters and/or kitchen table.
- Find room in your pantry for any food (like bread) that you store on your counters.
- Toss any papers on your refrigerator door.

LIVING ROOM

- Put any magazines or newspapers in the recycling bin.
- If you have any seasonal décor out, put that away.

DINING ROOM

- Is your dining room table a dumping ground? Toss or put away those items in their proper homes.
- If you have any seasonal décor out, store that away.

One to two weeks before your party

This is the time to tackle any projects that have been hanging out there, unfinished and taunting you. Throw these extras into your cleaning routine, but don't do anything that can't be appreciated by your guests. You don't need to clean the oven before Little Johnny's dinosaur birthday party.

- If you have neglected containers on your front porch, enlist your kids to get them planted.
- Does your husband need to trim the shrubs? Get him on it.
- Wipe down your kitchen cabinet fronts.
- Use Mr. Clean Magic Eraser to attack fingerprints on walls and door jams.
- Kids are great at swiping dust off baseboards and vents with a microfiber cloth.
- Taller husbands are great candidates for tackling ceiling moldings and ceiling fans with an extendable duster.
- If you can reach it, dust your foyer light fixture.
- Vacuum your curtains or valances.
- If needed, schedule to have your carpets cleaned. (This of course, requires you to move furniture, which is easier to do when your house is clutter-free.)

Two days before your party

This is when you'll clean the party floor of your house (or schedule to have it cleaned). If a room won't be accessible during your party, skip it because you'll be busy with so much else.

- Sweep your front stoop and wipe down your front door.
- Dust end tables, lamps, picture frames, knick-knacks and chair/table legs.
- Close your blinds and do a quick sweep down the front with your duster. (You're not deep-clean dusting in between slats.)
- Wipe down counter tops.
- Vacuum and/or sweep and mop.
- If your party will be outside, do you need to mow the lawn or rake leaves or sweep your deck or patio? Can you get someone else to do that for you?

One day before your party

At this point, you've already tackled all the dusting, vacuuming and moping, so you've just got to polish up your high-traffic rooms. You'll also want to run any last-minute party errands, like picking up flowers, balloons or your cake. Don't forget to charge your camera battery!

KITCHEN

- Wipe down any appliances that sit out.
- Clean your stove top.
- Wipe down the outside of your microwave.
- Empty the dishwasher.
- Reload the dishwasher with any dirty dishes.
- Hand wash any remaining dishes and put them away.
- Now that your sink is free of dishes, give the sink and faucet a quick shine.
- Put out fresh kitchen towels.

LIVING ROOM

- Fluff and straighten your pillows and throw blanket.

POWDER ROOM

- Wipe down the sink.
- Clean the toilet.
- Dust the countertop, faucet and light fixtures.
- Polish the mirror.
- Empty the trash can.
- Put out fresh hand towels.
- Stock the powder room with extra toilet paper and Kleenex.
- Put out a fresh bar of soap or refill your soap dispenser.

Start your party prep

As soon as you're done with these chores, you can start decorating for your party. Decorate one indoor party area at a time (dessert table, photo booth, favor table, etc.) so that not everything is equally un-done if you run out of time.

MORNING OF YOUR PARTY

This is when I have to try really hard to be calm with my family when they do "outrageous" things like eating breakfast and thus creating more dirty dishes. (Deep breath, mama!)

- Hang front door decor.
- Put any dirty dishes in the dishwasher or quickly wash and put away hand wash items.
- Make any last-minute party food.
- Attach balloons to your mailbox.

AFTERNOON OF YOUR PARTY

- Set out any food that doesn't require refrigeration.
- Set out chilled drinks.
- Pre-scoop ice cream into candy cups.

I hope you'll see the theme here: enlist as much help as possible and start as early as possible. It will just make your party day so much easier and calmer for you if you get ready gradually. I don't always master this list because #life, but the closer I come, the less worn out I am by my party and the more fun I have.