

Transcript Season 3 Episode 3: Cleaning Basics

Clean. Everyone's favorite five letter word, right? When was the last time someone told you to clean your room or pick up your mess? Now that you are on your own, you might question the importance of cleaning. This week we will focus on the "why" behind cleaning and some tips to help keep you on track.

Podcast Opener:

(Music playing.) Tackle your "Adulting" To Do list with the Grown Up U: Facts for Success podcast. Keep listening as we celebrate Season 3 with podcasts to help steer you in the right direction by providing useful advice for living an independent and satisfying life as a young adult. *(Music ends.)*

Podcast Script:

Tristin Bolton: Hello, I'm Tristin Bolton, Crawford County Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. Today we are talking about the basics of cleaning. I am joined by Casey Ford, the Franklin County Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent.

First, let's start with where did you learn to clean?

Casey Ford: Well, I guess I learned from my parents. They expected me to help out with dishes and to help keep the common areas clean. But I have also lived with my aunt and uncle when I was in my late teens, and I learned more about different standards of cleaning and different ways to clean things. How my aunt and uncle did things was different than my parents.

Tristin Bolton: For most people, we learn to clean from the environment we were raised in. Now, that may mean a few different of things for you- 1. You were raised in an environment that required you to clean, even if you didn't like it. Or 2. You were raised in an environment that didn't place an emphasis on cleaning. Or 3rd. You fall somewhere in the middle.

Considering the way, you were raised, there may need to be some adjustment to your idea of cleaning.

Tristin Bolton: Casey- Why do you think we clean? What is the purpose?

Casey Ford: I think people clean for a few reasons- being comfortable, feeling good about your space, and even health reasons.

Tristin Bolton: For sure! There is a basic standard of cleaning that we should follow, for health and safety reasons. For instance, has anyone ever been sick in your house and then everyone else gets the same illness? That situation may have been prevented with proper cleaning. We know that bacteria and germs are everywhere, so cleaning reduces your risk of exposure. It also reduces dust mites, which can affect your allergies. Also, cleaning helps to prevent pests, such as mice, roaches, ants, and other unwanted guests.

One thing I struggle with is clutter! I receive a ton of mail and other things that really should just be recycled or thrown out. Clutter can be a hazard when it comes to your living space. Make sure you reduce the clutter in your room in case there is an emergency.

Casey Ford: Yes, I think that I struggle a lot with putting things in a “I will get to you pile” and it just stacks up. So, with mail, I try to make a decision about each piece of mail as I bring it into my house. Other things, I try to find storage solutions for – so right now, we are recording this in August, and I have my summer wardrobe out and my winter wardrobe is stored in the garage, so it is not cluttering up the closet. I am also a very sentimental person and it kind of annoys my husband (ha-ha). But I like to keep cards and little mementos. But if I am not careful, they do clutter up a space, so I am always carving out storage spaces for these items. Truthfully, some of these items, such as cards, can be scanned and stored electronically and then you could limit what you keep hard copies of.

Tristin Bolton: So, let’s talk about dividing the responsibility of cleaning if you are living with other people. There are basic things that need to be done. These include, sweeping, vacuuming, dishes, taking out the trash, cleaning the bathroom, which has additional tasks, and upkeep of your bedroom.

Casey Ford: Living with others can be both a good thing and a difficult thing when it comes to cleaning. Like what we talked about earlier, everyone has a different standard of clean, but by having an open conversation, together you can set the expectations and schedule of cleaning for your living space. You don’t have to clean the entire kitchen every day, but you should wash your dishes, wipe down counter tops, and empty the garbage when it is full.

Tristin Bolton: Right! So, it is important to discuss who is cleaning what, when, and how. Maybe make a chore chart or a list of what needs to be done and by whom.

Tristin: Well now that we have talked a bit about what tasks need to be done to keep our homes clean, let’s talk about what kinds of products we need to help us.

Casey Ford: Tristin, did you know that you can do most of your cleaning tasks with just a few basic products? Some of the items you need include, a broom, vacuum cleaning, mop and mop bucket, rags, rubber gloves, soap, baking soda, and vinegar.

Tristin Bolton: Oh, a couple of those items are staples in my home. You will always find baking soda and vinegar. These are both multi-purpose items and are relatively inexpensive. I use vinegar to clean my sinks, bathtub, and even my windows. Baking soda can absorb smells in my refrigerator and freshen up my sink drains. It can even be used as a paste to help remove stains and stubborn spots.

Casey Ford: Those are both great items to have in your cleaning supplies. I do want to make sure that everyone knows that you should always read the labels on all cleaning products and use them accordingly.

Tristin Bolton: Great reminder! It is also important that you have a designated secure place to store any cleaning products you may have. A great place for them to be is under the sink with cabinet door securely locked.

Casey Ford: Another thing to remember is that cleaning doesn't have to be costly. Some of the items we talked about earlier are purchased every few years or months. Those items include brooms, mops, and vacuums. Rags and cleaners may need to be purchased more frequently but can still be inexpensive.

Tristin Bolton: Products like vinegar and baking soda are also inexpensive with multiple uses. Of course, you can purchase commercially produced cleaners, but you can also make your own. Making your own green cleaners to use is good for you and the environment as you reduce the number of chemicals you are using. Here are just a few reasons you would want to make your own cleaners:

1. Most of the ingredients needed, you already have on hand.
2. You save money.
3. Generally, green cleaners work as well as those with harsher chemicals.
4. Green cleaning helps keep dangerous toxins out of your house.

Casey Ford: Those are all great reasons Tristin! I think it's great for people to know that cleaning supplies do not need to break the budget. Just the basics can do the job. Don't you have several recipes for green cleaners?

Tristin Bolton: Yes, I do! The University of Tennessee Extension Service has a great resource that I will share with everyone in the resources section of the podcast website. (Household Cleaning: Develop a Plan <https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/SP459-A.pdf>)

Tristin Bolton: So, let's recap some of the things we have talked about today

- Everyone has a different standard of cleaning, but there are certain things we must all do to have a healthy home.
- When living with others, discuss the importance of cleaning and create a schedule of who is responsible for what cleaning task.
- You need just a few basic cleaning supplies to get started.
- You can save money and impact your health by creating your own green cleaners.

Casey Ford: Yes, I really think that with cleaning – it’s the same as everything else. You have to do what works for you. I have a schedule and I set cleaning timers. I like a good routine and schedule so that works for me.

Tristin Bolton : Cleaning is important to our health and safety, even if we don’t always love to clean.

For more information, refer to our research-based sources.

Thank you for joining us today! This is Tristin Bolton, and Casey Ford, Family and Consumer Sciences Agents with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

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