

# #156 - How to Clean the House When Everyone Is Inside It (Part 2)

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And, you guys, we just did our first ad. Air high fives all around. Okay, here we go.

Hi there! You're listening to The Lazy Genius Podcast! I'm Kendra Adachi, and I'm here to help you be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. Today is episode 156 and it's part two of our little miniseries - how to clean the house when everyone is inside it. Last week, I shared ten principles of lived-in cleaning, so listen to that episode if you haven't yet! It gives a great foundation for today's episode where we'll tackle some specifics: laundry, tidying, bathrooms, dusting, and floors. Let's jump in.

First up, laundry. I'm not sure why there's so much more than usual. Maybe it's the spring weather for some of us that's cold in the morning but warm in the afternoon which means lots of kid wardrobe changes. Maybe we're all outside more in general and getting dirty more often. Or maybe the piles loom larger - dirty or clean - because there's so much more to manage in the home than before. Here are my tips.

First, do a Laundry Day. You're home. You're already there all day. Choose one day a week and make it Laundry Day for as long as everyone is at home. Some of you have shared with me your reluctance to do a laundry day because it feels confining. Well, we're legitimately confined right now; you might as well lean into it. I have two entire episodes about how to create a laundry day that I'll link to in the show notes, but here are the quick benefits. One, you do it all in one day and don't think about it again for another week. Praise. Two, you don't do any other chores as much as possible on laundry day. It's just laundry day, so there's no getting distracted

and forgetting about a load that sits in the washer for seven hours. Three, everyone in the house can actually help. Your family gathers every dirty item of clothing from far and wide, sort it the lazy genius way which I share in those laundry episodes, and you all work on folding and putting away as the laundry is clean. It's the built-in productive activity for the day, not crammed into the cracks of days filled with everything else. So that's my biggest suggestion for doing laundry when everyone else is home - have a laundry day.

Another laundry tip whether you use it for laundry day or not is to wash not based on color but based on where the clothes will end up. If you're going to do a load every other day, please don't go around the house grabbing random handfuls of dark clothing. Those random handfuls, while the same general color, include clothes from all your people that have to be put away in multiple rooms. That's one of the ways laundry is the worst. One load means trips to three rooms and seven drawers. As much as you can, make each load contain clothes that exist mostly in the same space. Again, lots of info in those two laundry episodes.

Next up, let's tackle tidying. Tidying is just putting stuff away, but with everyone home all the time doing more activities than usual, there's more stuff that's out more often. I shared this in last week's episode, but one helpful thing as much as you and your people are able to do it is to clean up one mess before starting another one. That's fairly basic and agreeable to most people, but sometimes real life does not have clearly delineated messes. In that case, try this: simply tidy the places that matter most once a day. Just once. A tidy is a reset. Everything is put in its place. You definitely need at least one reset a day. I feel pretty confident in that. But here are a couple of thoughts to make that happen practically.

It's all about the three Ts: pick a time, pick a territory, pick a team.

Pick a time. Choose one time a day that's consistent every day that you tidy and reset. We have three main times: before lunch, before afternoon screen time so that when I'm alone for a little bit and cooking dinner, the visual clutter of the house isn't an issue, and before bed. The before bed one is the easiest most days because they don't do a ton of damage between pre-dinner screentime and bed. So those are our times. Because those are the times, I don't stress out too much about the state of things during the rest of the day. It's not time for a tidy yet. Messes are meant to be made. It makes the whole thing feel less overwhelming because you'll know a tidy is eventually coming, and everyone more or less expects it.

Pick a territory. The entire house won't be tidy all at once pretty much ever. It just won't. I don't think that's a realistic expectation, so pick your daily territory. It's likely a kitchen and main living area. Maybe it's your bedroom so you'll stay sane when you go to bed to relax or it's a kids room that just gets to natural disaster conditions in a blink. You choose. Pick your territory, and you can pick different territories every day. Knowing that you've done that helps you release the pressure to tidy other places. They're not today's territory, and that's totally great.

And pick a team. If you live with other humans, do this together. The afternoon tidy is always a family tidy. Some of the others are too, but I've mentioned this before in several places. We

scream Family Tidy! Or Family Pick Up! We play a fun song really loudly, and we tidy until the song is over. It rarely takes more than one song to get everything done, mostly because we're hitting the "clean up one mess before you make another one" about 70% of the time.

And if you find that there's just too much stuff, that tidying is too hard because of everything that is always out, you might have a bit of a stuff problem. I talk a little about that in last week's episode if you want to go back, and you can listen to episode 78 called The Lazy Genius House Purge if you're feeling the itch to get rid of all your stuff. Don't do that. Spoiler on that episode: don't do that.

Okay, next up: bathrooms. How do you clean the bathrooms when everyone is always home? The problem here is two-fold: it's a time thing - cleaning the bathrooms feels like such an annoying, time consuming chore, and you don't want to spend your time doing it. The other aspect to the problem is that with everyone home, the bathroom gets grosser faster. Like a lot grosser if you're at my house. The boys are just... they're just gross.

So first thing, there is a really great order to clean the bathroom. I did a whole episode called The Lazy Genius Cleans the Bathroom that I'll link to the in the show notes, but here's your most important tip. Dust the bathroom before you spray it down. I've heard from so many people ever since that episode aired that that single tip has saved them multiple times. So in terms of actually getting the bathroom clean, listen to that episode for details. If you don't have time for that, the quick overview order is pull everything out of the bathroom, dust it, spray the tub, shower and toilets to start soaking, swiffer or sweep the floor, clean the surfaces - mirrors, sinks, toilets, and showers in that order, mop, and then put everything back. Again, a whole episode.

For the sake of everyone being in the house, there are four things that I think will save your bathroom from becoming too gross too fast. One, dust it. Every couple of days, grab an old sock. I have a few in our laundry room with all the cleaning stuff. A sock is such a great quick duster, and one of the reasons the bathrooms feels gross is because it collects dust like any other room in the house, but that dust also collects the grime of the bathroom. That's why everything is dull and filmy and gross. So dust. Don't feel like you have to clean the whole shebang. Just dust the sinks and maybe the seat and top of the toilet as often as you think about it. And since this isn't really a detailed cleaning task, it's an easy one to give to kids. Put socks on their hands and let them go at it. If they miss a spot, who cares. Anything helps.

Second tip, rinse out the toothpaste in the sink every time. If your kids leave globs, call them back and have them rinse it out. Again, what is it with kids and toothpaste. But that single focus can make a difference in how clean or dirty the bathroom feels.

Three, keep the bathroom mostly tidy. Tissues don't land in the trash can and are left on the floor. The handtowel never finds its way back to the hook. Somebody left a pair of shoes in there. There's also your cocktail muddler for some inexplicable reason. Chances are your bathroom is fairly small and not full of a ton of stuff even when it's messy. It's a really easy room

to keep tidy. Less than a minute can have you back to zero. If your bathroom is driving you crazy, keep it tidy.

And the fourth tip is to have your boys pee in the water. If you have elementary age boys or maybe any age I don't know, there's pee, just, there's pee everywhere. Telling them to pee in the water. Aim for the water. The keeps the splashing at a minimum and you avoid those fun surprises you find when you clean the toilet and want to throw up and then burn your house down. So that fourth one is a bonus, but pee in the water.

Then when you have time to actually clean a bathroom, the dusting, toothpaste, and tidying will likely give you quite a leg up in getting it done. Again, listen to my bathroom episode. I have a weird superpower of figuring out the best order to clean stuff. Trust me on this.

Alright, we've done laundry, tidying, and bathrooms. Dusting and floors are left. So dusting. Everything does feel really dusty. Again, dusting is not a perfection chore. Good enough is totally good enough. Remember that principle from last week? So here's what you do, try anywhere from once a day to once a week, you put a sock on everybody's hands. You line those hands up, you get your bottle of dust cleaner, and you spray down the line of socked hands. Skip the cleaner if you want to; the socks do a good enough job on their own. Then you give everyone a territory and sound the bell. Again, dusting is nice when it's done perfectly, when everything is picked up, when you can't see the line of where you stopped. I get it. Sometimes the sun shines into my living room and it's very clear what hasn't been dusted in weeks. But again, we're going for what works. Right now, most of us are doing nothing. We're just trying to make it because it feels too overwhelming. Having a mediocre dust job done by your socked children is better than nothing. Plus it gives them something to do. And finally floors. The daily accumulation of crumbs is something else. Plus our kids are in and out of the house all the time which is great, but there's also dirt and stuff tracked in. The floors are a situation. A couple of things for the way life is now.

If you're not yet a house that takes off your shoes when you come inside, consider becoming one just for quarantine times. It actually makes a big difference.

Next, sweep or Swiffer or vacuum the most commonly dirty part of the floor as often as you think about it. We have as I've mentioned before a sort of L shaped main living area with a kitchen, an eating area, and the living room. That part of the house has the dirtiest floors by a factor of ten. It's where the food and dirt from coming in the back door both live their best lives, so the floors in there are always dirty.

Now here's a quick thing to remember. Your tools and the location of those tools both make a big difference in this kind of scenario, so consider that maybe your vacuum is just too far from the dirtiest part of the house. Or maybe you need to look into getting a vacuum that you haven't had since you inherited it when you got your first apartment. Tools and where you keep them matter here. So we have a little broom closet off the kitchen with all of the floor tools. We love our vacuum. It's a Dyson V7 I think? It's cordless is the point, so me or Kaz or even the kids can

whip it out and vacuum the kitchen and under the table really quickly. We do that at least twice a day in that little main space.

Mopping is a different animal. I mopped that same L-shaped floor last week for the first time since all this happened, and it's because Kaz took the kids to a walking trail for an hour. I took that hour to tidy and mop the floor. Would I have enjoyed that hour more in the hour if I had just sat and read? Probably. Would I have been irresponsible for choosing to read instead of mop? Not at all. I will say that high energy music makes a difference, and now the floor is mopped. I don't have to think about it again for weeks. Those mopped floors have contributed to the main area of the house feeling way more clean than it is and was totally worth spending my hour on. Again, if you choose to spend your hour differently or if I had, no sweat. We all get to decide what we need in the moment. I do often remember something I heard from The Nester years ago that she doesn't like cleaning but she does like the way she and the house feel after she's done. Sometimes we have to have a future mindset when it comes to cleaning. Sometimes it's harder to get that activated. Just remember that you're not a terrible person for choosing to sit instead of clean.

In summary, the overarching thought from your Instagram comments the other week is that cleaning just doesn't feel like it does anything because stuff gets dirty again. True. This is very true. But remember there's a difference in having nothing cleaned for eight weeks as opposed to one. There is a continuum of dirty, and you might be feeling the angst over your house because you're not happy with good enough being good enough. Kind of dirty might be a better alternative than disgusting. That's not a shaming thing. That's an invitation to live in a dirty house that feels a little better than the dirty house you're in now. Maybe these few ideas, whichever you choose to try out, could make a difference in the level of dirty and how you experience your house. In this case, tiny moves, really small steps, things that feel like you're adding a drop to an ocean do make a big difference. We've still got weeks left of this, so pick one thing from this episode to try. And remember the ten principles of lived-in cleaning from last week. You can do this. Or don't do it. It's your life, it's your house, and you know what you need the most. If worrying about a clean house is low in the list, dude keep it there. You are the boss. These are just some ideas that you can use whenever you might be ready for them.

Okay, that's it for today! Thanks so much for listening! P.S. My monthly newsletter *The Latest Lazy Letter* goes out this Wednesday, so if you'd like to get a little more Lazy Genius in your inbox, head to [thelazygeniuscollective.com/join](http://thelazygeniuscollective.com/join) to get it. Alright, until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. I'm Kendra, and I'll see you next week!