

# Deep-Down Clean

The experts help make spring cleaning less daunting  
by Glenda Rogers

**F**or many of us, the onset of spring brings with it memories of our mothers and grandmothers breaking out the heavy artillery: buckets, mops, scrubbing brushes and more. Dirt was beaten out of rugs as they hung on the clothesline and furniture was moved in the hunt for dust bunnies. But in our hectic world of dual-income families and fast-food dinners, even the most conscientious homeowners might wonder if it's possible to achieve a true spring cleaning these days.

If your time is at a premium or the list of tasks is just too daunting, consider hiring a professional. Many housekeeping services offer "deep cleaning" specials or "spring cleans" for about \$115 to \$145 per hour for three to four workers.

If professional help doesn't fit into the budget and you are not dissuaded from tackling the task yourself, however, the pros have a few tips to help you do the job right.

To avoid feeling overwhelmed, start small. Begin by simply airing out the house. Open the windows for 30 minutes, taking advantage of cross ventilation. Be sure to pick a day when pollen count is low and there is no wind.


Leone Ackerly, founder of Mini Maid, recommends breaking the big job of spring cleaning into smaller tasks. "Take it one room at a time," she says. "As you finish a room, you'll feel a sense of accomplishment."

She also recommends wearing a work apron with pockets and loops to keep cleaning tools handy. Other cleaning supplies and liquids can be carried along in a handled bucket as you work your way around the room.

Amy Olson of The Maids housekeeping service adds that in order to "deep clean" a space, you have to do it by sections. A section, she explains, is the area you can comfortably see and reach standing in one spot. "Work from top to bottom, left to right around the room," she says.

That means starting with ceiling fixtures. Dust fan blades and remove the light cases. Olson recommends washing your light casings in a sink filled with warm, soapy water. Line the sink with a washcloth to prevent damage to the casings.

Work your way down the walls, dusting pictures and decorations, and finish with a good cleaning of the baseboards. "Finally, the floors are the last thing to clean in a room," Ackerly says.

Following these simple steps will keep you from backtracking and wasting valuable energy. Enlist the help of family members to get the work done more quickly. Use the advice from the experts, and your house will meet even your grandmother's standard of clean. 

## The Final Step: Floors

### Ceramic Floors

A microfiber mop is the best tool for cleaning ceramic-tile floors—never a sponge mop, which will pull dirt into grout tracks. A solution of 1 gallon of warm water, 1 tablespoon of borax and 2 tablespoons of clear ammonia is recommended.

### Hardwood Floors

To clean and add sheen to hardwood floors, try steeping two teabags in a quart of boiling water for a few minutes. Pour the tea into a bucket, dampen a soft cloth with it and clean the floors. The tannic acid in tea creates a beautiful shine.

### Vinyl Floors

For vinyl floors, mix a tablespoon of borax in a gallon of warm water and wash the floor with a mop or cloth.

Source: [DIYnetwork.com](http://DIYnetwork.com)