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### **Cleaning From Top to Bottom *Tips and Secrets for a Cleaner, Healthier Home***

When it comes to the routine of cleaning, homeowners tend to be more concerned with stacks of dirty dishes (66 percent), piles of laundry (58 percent) and dust balls on their carpet (57 percent), according to a survey commissioned by 3M, maker of Filtrete air cleaning filters. But they often forget about other areas of the home – such as bedding, shower doors and even stuffed animals – that can be breeding grounds for bacteria, mildew, dust mites and foul odors.

Healthy Housekeeper Laura Dellutri offers these tips for cleaning your home from top to bottom and making it healthier in the process:

**Start at the Top:** Ceiling fans, tall mantles and bookshelves, and the tops of door frames tend to subscribe to the “out of sight, out of mind” motto. These areas often harbor dust, so it’s important to wipe them down regularly to help remove dust buildup. Start at the top and work your way down, collecting all of the dust and dirt that falls to the floor while you’re cleaning.

**Wipe Down Windows and Walls:** Don’t clean windows the old fashioned way – newspaper can cause ink residue and paper towels leave lint behind. Your best bet is to use microfiber cleaning cloths and a professional window squeegee to get a streak-free, spotless shine. To prevent streaks on shower doors and walls, apply lemon oil to the door twice a month. This will help repel soap scum and shampoo, while also adding a nice shine.

**Think Horizontally:** Dust mites are nearly everywhere. In fact, the American Lung Association estimates that roughly four out of five homes in the United States have detectable levels of dust mite allergen in at least one bed. Reduce dust mites by encasing your mattress and pillows, and wash your bedding in hot water about once a week. Also, since dust mites are microscopic, place strips of duct tape on the mattress case to prevent the dust mites from sneaking through.

**Clean the In-between:** While cleaning what you can see, don’t forget to clean what you can’t see – the air you breathe. Use a high performance air filter in the home, such as the Filtrete 1” Ultimate Allergen Reduction filter from 3M, to help capture particles such as pollen, smoke, dust mite debris and pet dander from the air that passes through the filter. Be sure to change your filter at the start of every season, or every three months.

**Freeze the Fur:** Stuffed animals can harbor dust mites so it’s important to pay special attention to them. Place stuffed animals in a large plastic bag and freeze them for four to five hours. Remove them from the freezer and plastic bag, and use a vacuum with a HEPA filter to remove any leftover dust particles.

**Finish With Floors:** To keep floors in tip-top shape, vacuum and clean them weekly. You can easily make your own floor cleaner by adding a few drops of mild liquid dish detergent to a gallon of water. Hot water can break down floor finishes after time so use water that is barely warm. Finally, don’t forget to clean the floor under large pieces of furniture, which may require you to temporarily move them elsewhere. Corners of rooms and the back of closets often are overlooked, so be sure to clean these areas as well.

## **Kitchen Clean-Up**

Certain areas of the home, especially the kitchen, can breed and harbor germs that not only cause odors but can spread to family members. These low-cost cleaning tasks, when done regularly and properly, can be effective in making the home healthier for your family:

**Trashcans:** Trashcans should be cleaned monthly using a chlorine bleach and water solution. Simply combine one cup of non-chlorine bleach for every three gallons of water and pour the solution into the trashcan. Swish the solution around in the trashcan, and wait about five minutes for the chlorine to kick in and kill the germs.

**Refrigerators:** Cleaning the refrigerator monthly will improve the safety and quality of your food. If you are tired of cleaning spills and food particles from your refrigerator, then cover shelves with washable shelf liners. They will catch most of the food spillage, and will make cleanup quicker and easier. Once a month, throw them in the dishwasher for a good cleaning, and then place them back in the refrigerator once they are dry.

**Sinks:** Since bacteria can accumulate in cracks and crevices, pay extra attention to these areas when disinfecting. Also, stainless steel sinks can be tough to clean and can look spotty due to water spots and lime build up. To keep the sink shiny, use a soft buffing wheel to restore the luster. Then, use a cloth to generously apply mineral oil to the sink. Water will bead up and roll off the sink, keeping it shiny and helping prevent spots.

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## **About Laura Dellutri**

Laura Dellutri is today's hero for busy working families. She is a public speaker, radio and television personality, and the author of four books, including her new book, "The Overworked Mom's Stress Free Homekeeping." Laura travels across the country to share her homekeeping and lifestyle savvy tips, and you can watch her twice weekly on the nationally syndicated television show *The Daily Buzz*.

## **About 3M**

A recognized leader in research and development, 3M produces thousands of innovative products for dozens of diverse markets. 3M's core strength is applying its more than 40 distinct technology platforms – often in combination – to a wide array of customer needs. With \$23 billion in sales, 3M employs 75,000 people worldwide and has operations in more than 65 countries. For more information, visit [www.3M.com](http://www.3M.com).

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