



**Pesach cleaning often feels daunting. Our days are already so packed; how can we fit anything else into our schedules? The trick is to utilize every chunk of time, no matter how small. Over the next few weeks, I'll be showing you how to clean the house quickly and efficiently, room by room.**

## Maximize Your Minutes

Here are four MUST-DOs to successfully utilize any amount of time:

**Make a list** Write down what you can do in each room for small, medium, and large blocks of time. Much of the stress of making Pesach is in our minds. A list will help transfer the stress to the paper, and minimize your wasting time thinking about what to do next.

**Clarify your goals** Are you solely cleaning for Pesach, or are you using the time for spring cleaning as well? How much decluttering are you doing? Although usually unavoidable, decluttering should not be the focus of your cleaning sessions. If you're pressed for time, avoid it entirely. Having clear goals in mind will allow you the focus you need to accomplish quickly.

**Know your halachos** What constitutes *chometz*? How can you nullify it? How much cleaning is necessary? Get clear guidelines from your *rav*. Clarity will shorten your cleaning time significantly.

**Have supplies handy** Create a Pesach cleaning basket so that you can jump right in when you have as little as 15 minutes. Put in some rags, a cleaning spray, a house coat to protect your clothes, a toothbrush, some toothpicks, a sponge, some garbage bags, and whatever else you think you'll need. Keep it easily accessible (for you, not your kids) in the area you're working on that week.



### Night table

1. Remove contents of night table
2. Check for *chometz*, and wipe down drawer with rag and cleaner
3. Return only what belongs in drawer
4. Relocate items that belong somewhere else
5. Throw out garbage



### Corner Cleaner

A soft-bristled toothbrush covered with gauze helps you scrub hard-to-clean corners.

# the Bedroom



### Catch That Dust

Dampened microfiber cloths are the best dusting rags. Unlike other rags, they prevent dust from becoming airborne.

# 30 minutes

### Dresser top

1. Put away all jewelry, accessories, head coverings, etc., in their correct spots
2. Put away makeup (throw away dried-up or old makeup)
3. Relocate items that belong elsewhere
4. Throw out garbage
5. Remove everything left on dresser top, and wipe down with rag and cleaner
6. Return items, and arrange nicely
7. Optional: add a pretty collection basket to catch clutter (sort through it weekly)



### SINGLE CLOSET SHORTCUT

**Really short on time? Rather than cleaning all your clothing closets, remove only those items that will be worn on Pesach, and clean and check them. Clean just one closet thoroughly and relocate everyone's Yom Tov clothing to that closet. Lock up remaining closets for Pesach, and sell the potential *chometz* in them.**

# 15 minutes

# 45 minutes

### Beds

1. Relocate clothing/pajamas on bed to closet or hamper
2. Return anything remaining on bed to its place
3. Strip beds, and throw sheets in hamper
4. Remove mattresses and vacuum/beat mattresses and pillows
5. Check mattresses for *chometz*
6. Wipe down bed frames with cleaner, or polish and check for *chometz*
7. Return mattresses to beds and make up with clean sheets

# 60 minutes

### Hanging section of closet / set of shelves or drawers

1. Remove contents of drawer / a quarter of the contents of hanging closet at a time
2. Fill a garbage bag with clothing that hasn't been worn for the past year to donate or put in storage
3. Set aside items that need dry cleaning for Pesach, throw dirty clothing in hamper, run wash if time permits
4. Relocate items that don't belong in closet
5. Wipe bottom of drawer / closet down with rag and cleaner
6. Check bottom of drawer / closet for *chometz*
7. Check pockets and outside of clothing for *chometz*, and return to closet
8. Call local charity organization to arrange pick up of hand-me-downs

Yael Wiesner is a home management consultant, lecturer, and author of *How Does SHE Manage? (Feldheim, 2011)*



**Pesach is just around the corner! This week we'll be focusing on the living area as we utilize every chunk of time to get ahead.**

## Stay Focused

Distractions can whittle away at our precious cleaning time. Here are four MUST DOs to help keep you focused during a cleaning session:

**Disconnect** Unplug or mute your house phone, cell phone, inbox, and any other communication devices that may interrupt you while you're cleaning.

**Give kids the heads-up** Let your kids know that for next X number of minutes you are completely unavailable, unless there's an emergency. When they inevitably interrupt you anyway ("can you just..."), gently remind them that you'll get to it when the time is up.

**Set a timer** Don't permit yourself to leave the room you're working on until the buzzer goes off. Use the length of a CD as your timer if music helps you work.

**Track it** Write down future jobs as they come to mind during a cleaning session, instead of getting sidetracked and tackling them on the spot (organizing pictures, reviewing old magazines, sorting through CDs, and so on).



# 15

minutes

**Pesach Picks** (pick one of the options)  
1. Go through your silver and serving pieces and choose what you'd like to *kasher* for Pesach. Pack the rest away.  
2. Select the *seforim* and books you'll be using over Yom Tov. Shake them out well, check for crumbs, and wipe down covers.  
3. Go through the toy cabinet. Select a few toys and games which clean easily (without too many openings, nooks and crannies), making sure you have something for every age. Put them aside for you or the kids to clean later.



# 30

minutes

### Desktop in Home Office

- Sort through miscellaneous papers and categorize into piles. File papers, or label each pile and set aside to be filed later.
- Return all books, office supplies, and gadgets to their homes.
- Wipe down computer, printer, phone, etc., and check for *chometz*.
- Clear off anything remaining on desk and carefully lift up all machines. Wipe desktop down, and check for *chometz*.



### Keyboard Cleaner

Use a toothpick dipped in alcohol to clean the areas around the keyboard and telephone buttons.



# 45

minutes

### Breakfront

- Remove display pieces one shelf at a time and check items for *chometz*.
- Wipe down each shelf with rag and cleaner and check for *chometz*.
- Shake out tablecloths, cloth napkins, and challah covers from *chometz*. Wash if necessary.
- Clean challah board from crumbs and wipe down with appropriate cleaner. Shake out *bentshers* (wipe down if laminated). Lock up for Pesach.
- Empty, wipe down, and check drawers for *chometz*.



### Coat Closet

- Remove all items from closet floor. Return lost gloves, scarves, sweaters, earmuffs, and miscellaneous items to their homes. Make a pile of items that may be used on Pesach and wash them.
- Remove one coat from the closet at a time, check outside pockets, inside pockets, and outside of each coat for *chometz*. Make a pile for the washing machine or dry cleaners, if necessary.
- Remove and open all knapsacks, handbags, and other accessories and check for *chometz*. Wipe down or wash the bags you need for Chol Hamoed.
- Check hat boxes. Brush hats or set aside to get professionally cleaned.
- Wipe down floor and shelves with rag and cleaner and check for *chometz*. Return all contents to closet.

### LASTING LISTS SHORTCUT

Save all your Pesach lists from year to year to speed up preparations. Keep your cleaning schedule, *mechiras chometz* list, menus, shopping lists, and a list of the quantities your family consumed of basic foodstuffs (matzah, wine, potatoes, onions, eggs, etc.) to save planning time and brain space. Don't lock these lists up in a Pesach box. File them somewhere you can access immediately after Purim.

# the Living Area

**Get Your Silver to Sparkle**  
A homemade dip can brighten your silver better than polish! Line your sink with aluminum foil and fill with steaming hot water. Add one tablespoon of baking soda per liter of water. Dip each piece of silver in the solution, making sure it touches the foil, and keep it in for five minutes maximum. Buff with clean rag. This take only minutes and reaches all crevices!

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**We're up to the kitchen and we're getting hungry! Who has the time or place to prepare a decent meal? Stock up on some of these suggestions so you'll have a variety of foods to offer hungry family members.**

**Large size pasta** I use the big ziti noodles. They are crumb-less, filling, and eaten by even finicky eaters. If a noodle gets stuck to someone's hands or clothes, you'll see it. If the kitchen is already off limits, you can plug a portable electric burner into any outlet.

**Frozen pita sandwiches** Pitas make significantly fewer crumbs than bread. Prepare a whole bunch with the filling of your choice (cheese, tuna, peanut butter, etc.), double wrap, and freeze. At mealtime, set up a sandwich toaster in your designated *chometzdig* spot. Carefully unwrap the frozen pita sandwiches, warm them, and serve.

**Processed/canned/instant/frozen foods** Try adding some of these to your menu: canned veggies, baked beans, pickles, fruit cocktail, frozen fries, hot dogs (fleishig and pareve), instant mashed potatoes, instant meals in a cup, yogurts, cheeses, corn-based cereals, and rice cake sandwiches.



**One small kitchen appliance (suggestions: hand mixer, food processor, flour sifter, bread machine)**

1. Shake out crumbs.
2. Clean well with sponge and cleaner; clean anything washable in sink.
3. Use a toothpick or a toothbrush dipped in cleaner to clean narrow crevices.

**Stain Be Gone!**  
Rub some cooking oil on the plastic parts of the food processor to remove carrot or other vegetable stains. Wash oil off with dish soap.



45 minutes

**Freshen Your Formica**  
The Magic Sponge works wonders on Formica and most smooth surfaces. Wet sponge entirely before use. Spots come off like magic without any cleaning solution! For heavy stains on formica, apply a thick amount of dishwashing detergent and let it sit for a few hours to absorb.

30 minutes

**One kitchen cabinet**

1. Remove contents.
2. Vacuum out crumbs, and wipe down dirt and residue with rag and cleaner. Pay attention to inner walls and inside of cabinet door.
3. Brush hinges and tracks with a toothbrush or rag dipped in cleaner. Dry immediately to avoid rusting.
4. Return to cabinet only the items that belong. Relocate or trash the rest.

**Portable Pesach Kitchen**  
Avoid lining shelves from year to year by creating a Pesach cabinet within reasonable reach in your kitchen. If you can't afford to give up a cabinet, buy a plastic or "do it yourself" cabinet on wheels and turn it into your Pesach kitchen center. Store it during the year in your basement/garage with all your Pesach supplies in it. Simply wheel it into your kitchen when you've turned over!



60 minutes

**Pantry**

1. Separate *chometz* from non-*chometz* items in pantry. Put the *chometz* in a box to be finished/donated/sold. Don't forget products that may have *chometz* as one of their ingredients.
2. Remove all products from shelves.
3. Vacuum out crumbs, and wipe down dirt and residue with rag and cleaner.
4. Brush hinges and tracks with a toothbrush or rag dipped in cleaner. Dry immediately to avoid rusting.
5. Pack away all non-Pesachdig items.

**Freezer section of fridge**

1. Transfer all food from freezer to fridge or an extra freezer.
2. Remove shelves, and soak in bathtub in mixture of cleaning solution and water.
3. Clean and vacuum out all crumbs and food from the bottom of the freezer.
4. Dampen a cloth with very warm soapy water and loosen hardened dirt from walls, floor, and door of freezer.
5. Gently scrub all crevices of freezer shelves with a toothbrush and sponge and rinse off shelves.
6. Scrub down freezer interior with a sponge and warm soapy water. Gently scrub crevices with a toothbrush.
7. Dry all parts of freezer with a clean, dry rag. Return shelves to freezer.
8. Return only non-*chometzdig* items to freezer. Close and wrap everything well so that no spills occur.

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# the Kitchen