

## OUTLINE

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## INTRODUCTION

You know the kind of guy I'm talking about. He's always had a Mom, wife, girlfriend, or possibly a housekeeper or someone to do his housekeeping for him. Then, all of a sudden has had to do the dirty work himself...thrown against the elements by divorce, graduation, financial setback, etc. And there he is, surrounded by piles of dirty laundry, stacks of dirty dishes, dusty furniture and a refrigerator that's barren except for the ketchup and beer. It's a pretty grim scene, and most guys just aren't prepared to cope with it.

Speaking as one guy who was thrown into such a position, I can attest first hand to the horror of discovering how ill-prepared the average American guy is to keep a reasonably clean house. But, it's hard to ask someone how to keep a clean house...it's just not the kind of question that a real man asks. So, I did the best I could. I did the dishes with Windex, ate nothing but T.V. dinners, wore the same socks four times between washings, and generally suffered for several months. Then, I finally overcame my pride and asked how to do housework. By the time I asked, my house had arrived at the point at which wildlife was growing in the refrigerator, I was buying new clothes so that I wouldn't have to wash the old, and in general, my house was a certified disgrace. Yet after what seemed to be a fairly short time, my house was clean, my diet included more than beer and T.V. dinners, and my clothes didn't look like I had slept in them



the night before. I had arrived! I was a reasonably good housekeeper.

So, here you have it...the ultimate "How-To" book. This won't make you lose ten pounds per week, or make you a million dollars, or land you a recording contract, but it just might help you through those first tough weeks of bachelor housework, and in the process make you feel more independent; more like a real man!

### AUTHOR'S NOTE

The housekeeping methods described here certainly aren't the only ones in existence, and some of the methods may not fit your particular situation. The attempt here is to suggest housekeeping methods which do work, are relatively easy and which don't require much more than common sense and this book. What I'm saying is that if you ruin something because you didn't use common sense along with my instructions, I won't be responsible for what may happen as a result.

### DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Michael B. Parcell, I.J. Bizarretty and all the hundreds of thousands of other bachelors who at some time in their lives fit the description of the ill-prepared housekeeper mentioned in the introduction.

## LAUNDRY

Even before the beer cans stack up high and the wildlife begins to grow in the refrigerator, you'll probably run out of clean clothes. Doing the laundry is about the most rewarding of household chores, mainly because it is really easy and makes a quick improvement in your appearance. Not having to wear the shirt in which you graduated from school or wear socks several times between washings, can make you feel an awful lot better. It's assumed that you have access to an automatic washer and dryer. If not, almost everything about washing applies except machine control setting instructions. And as for drying, you'll have to hang the clothes up on some kind of a line.

### WASHING:

The first thing you need to do is to sort the stack of dirty clothes by these four groups: Light colors, dark colors, delicates, and dry cleaning. Separating by colors is easy; lights in one stack, darks in another. If in doubt as to light or dark, put it in the dark pile. Delicates include any fragile material like lace, ties and super-thin materials like women's undergarments are made of. Dry cleaning items are generally bulky (like sweaters, sleeping bags, leather or suede). Watch to make sure wool items get into the dry cleaning group.

To set the machine controls properly, you should know that most machines have controls that set load size, wash temperature, cycle duration and cycle type. Load size is determined



by roughly how much the washer is filled when you've put the clothes in. Wash temperature is set as follows: lights-hot or warm, darks-cold, delicates-cold. Cycle duration is determined by about how dirty the load of clothes is. If it's super-dirty, set the machine for the maximum wash time; if not too dirty, normal (usually about nine minutes of actual washing time) will do just fine. Cycle type refers to what kind of a load you're washing - delicate or normal. Machines vary quite a bit in design, so you'll have to check out your machine before starting out. If in doubt about duration, go shorter, rather than longer.

Most people overdose on use of soap when washing clothes. You can follow the soap box directions if you have them, but don't use more than about half a cup of soap per wash-load. It's a waste. Even though the box says to use more, keep in mind that the company that wrote the box instructions makes money based on how much soap its customers use. Only use bleach if your lights are pretty grim-looking. If you're using liquid bleach, whatever you do, don't add the bleach until there's a reasonable amount of water in the machine. Liquid bleach can eat right through clothes in no time at all. You can use a fabric softener on things like towels, sheets, or undergarments. Since softener types (and bleach types, too) vary so much, best bet is to follow the container's directions, making sure you don't overuse the product. Always try using less. The worst result is that you may have to do it again.

## DRYING:

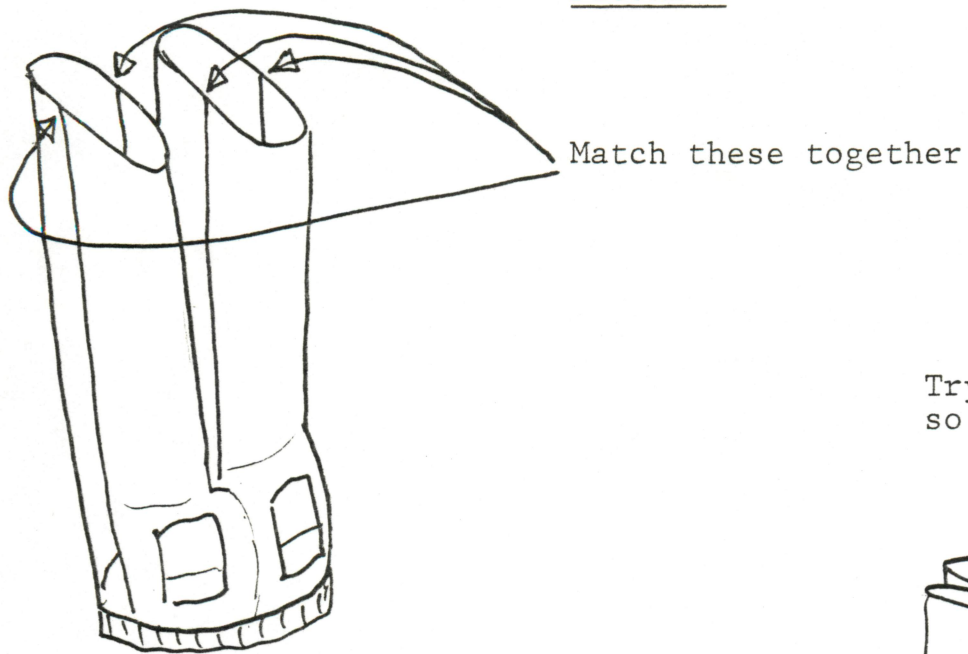
To dry clothes in an automatic dryer, you begin by sorting the clothes to be dried into two groups: delicates and everything else. The definition of delicate is the same as in the washing-sorting operation.

Then, to set the machine controls, you first look for the lint-trap filter and free it of any residual lint from previous loads. Most dryers have two basic controls; temperature and duration. Temperature setting for delicates is as cool as possible and for all other types normal to hot. Duration for delicates is about fifteen minutes and about thirty minutes for the other types. As in washing, if in doubt about temperature, go cooler rather than hotter; and if in doubt about duration, go shorter rather than longer. Try not to overload the dryer, as it will be more efficient with a normal size load.

With heavy items, such as jeans or blankets, often they will feel dry before they're really dry. Make sure they don't feel at all damp before you remove them from the machine.

As a rule, make sure you remove the clothes from the machine as soon as possible. The longer they stay all crumpled in the machine after they are dry, the worse off you'll be as far as wrinkles are concerned.

FIGURE I



Clip onto rack  
or then fold here  
And hang on hanger or  
put into drawer

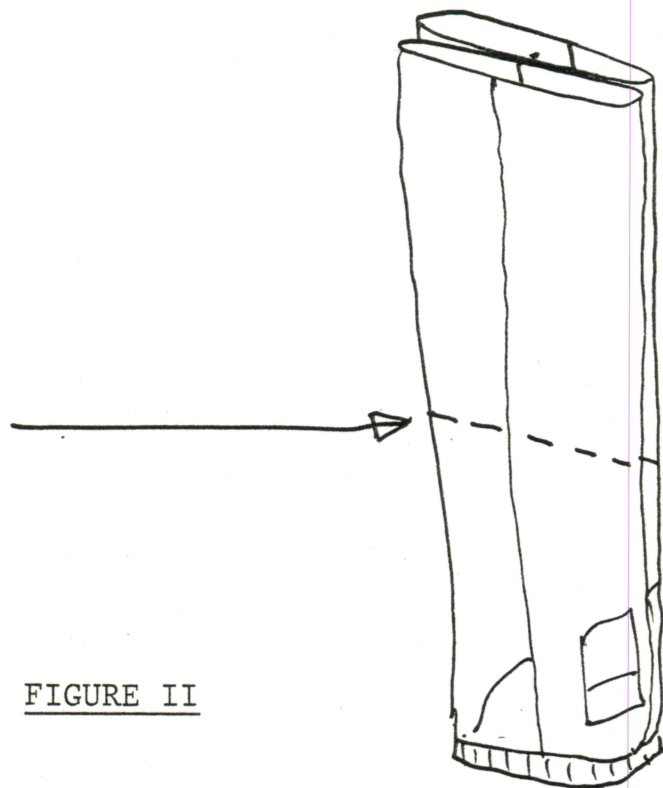
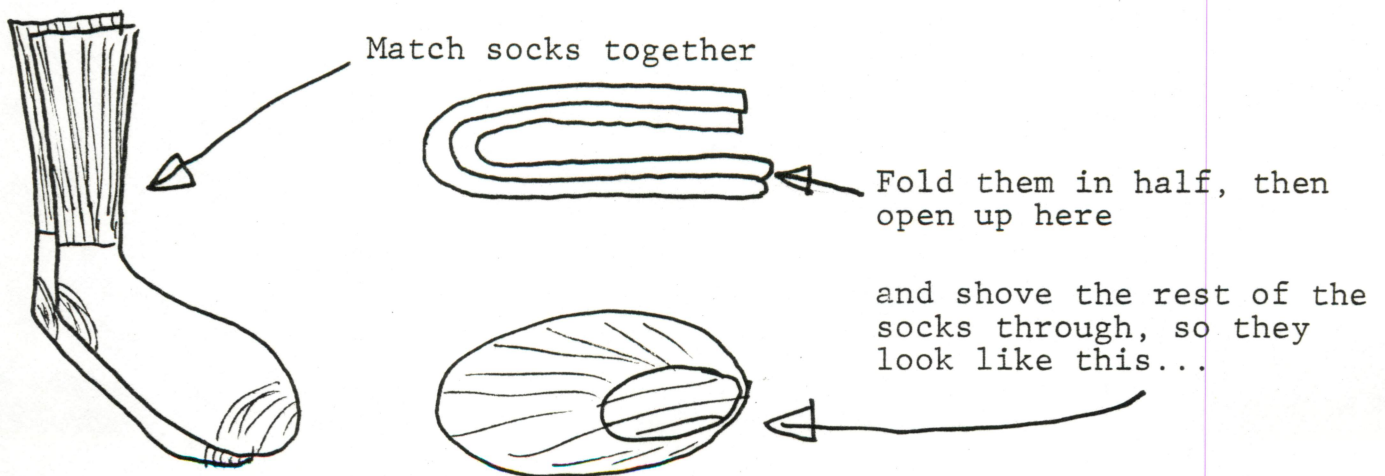


FIGURE II





## FOLDING CLOTHES:

After the clothes are dry, you'll need to fold them. Shirts are easy because all you have to do is hang them on clothes hangers. You may button the top button, but it's not necessary most of the time. Pants may be folded by matching the inseams of both legs, then matching the outside seams. See "FIGURE ONE." Underwear may be folded in half and then in half again as necessary. If you want to, you may roll your socks into a ball by matching the socks together, folding in half and then rolling them as shown in "FIGURE TWO." If you wear T-shirts quite a bit as outside shirts, it pays to hang them up rather than to fold them. They'll look better if you do.

## IRONING:

Ironing often scares guys away, mainly because it's pretty easy to have a bad experience with it. An iron that's too hot or material that's too fragile to take much heat can cause some problems. But once you've done the ironing for the first time, you can pretty well tell those items that are going to cause you some problems and handle them differently the next time.

Before going into the operational aspects of ironing, you should know that there are some alternatives. By pulling certain Wash-N-Wear clothes (like some polyester shirts and double-knit pants) out of the dryer before they're fully dry and immediately hanging them up, you may get out of having to iron them at all.

It depends on your clothes and how fast you are at retrieving them from the dryer at the right time. Another method is to hang the wrinkled item on a hanger near a hot tub or shower, preferably right inside the shower or tub enclosure, yet not so close that water splashes on it. Shut the bathroom doors and run the hot water so that plenty of steam forms in the room. After a few minutes most wrinkles give up and the article looks pretty good. This method works well on bulkier items like jackets, too. It may, however, not be too environmentally sound. It depends on your situation.

Make sure that you only iron those things that need ironing. Underwear, grubbies and the like, should look just fine with only folding.

Start by using the lowest temperature setting possible, then increasing the temperature as required. Some irons have spray steam features which can be of particular help in doing cottons, but you can sprinkle water on the clothes by hand and accomplish the same results if your iron doesn't have an automatic spray feature. You can use spray starch if you need to, but don't overuse it by saturating the material to be ironed. Spread the article of clothing to be ironed out on the ironing board (a towel folded onto a flat surface will do if you don't have an official ironing board), so that a fairly big, even surface is exposed (like the back of a shirt). Try a small spot to get the feel of it. If you feel clinging, pull the iron off immediately and make sure the iron's surface is clean and that the temperature is on low. After you have success with the large area, try smaller areas until you have the feel of it. Try not to let the iron set



too long in one spot. And, if there is lacy-looking gingerbread on something you're ironing, make sure it's not synthetic, or it'll melt under the iron's heat.

All in all, ironing isn't that tough as long as you don't use too much heat. That's what causes most of the trouble you might run into.

If you end up with too much lint or hair on your clothes, you can remove it by pressing masking or transparent tape against the clothes. Then lifting the tape (and lint with it) away from the clothes.

#### SOAKING DELICATES:

In the case of some "Fine washables" (sweaters, delicates, and the like), as an alternative to dry cleaning or other forms of washing, you may want to try soaking. Buy a product specially made for this purpose and read the directions carefully. Fill a basin or tub with cold water (never use hot water for this kind of a job. If the stuff you bought says to use hot water, you bought the wrong product), and add the recommended amount of the cleaning product. Soak the clothes for the period of time and as directed by the directions on the product's container, then thoroughly rinse with cold water. Actually, the drying of clothes soaked in this manner is every bit as important as the washing. If not done properly, your garment may end up with terminal wrinkles or in some extremely strange shape. Spread out a couple of layers of bath towels on a carpet in a warm spot (possibly near, but not too near your heater or heater duct). Spread the article of clothing onto the towels,



placing it the way it should look when you're wearing it. You don't have to button buttons or zip zippers. Don't stretch the material. Just arrange it so that it looks natural. Then give it about 24 hours to dry. In certain parts of the country (like the delta states), humidity may not lend itself to the drying part. It's fine to let the garment stay for more than 24 hours, but after 24 hours you should see if it smells like it's mildewing. If so, you'll have to start all over again, and soon. If you get mildewing every time, you'll have to end up taking the item to a dry cleaner. You probably won't have this problem, but if you do, you probably won't be the first person the dry cleaner has bailed out of this situation. One word of caution: Don't hang the item up until it's pretty dry (unless you want a sweater that reaches to your knees).

## KITCHEN

The kitchen is where poor housekeeping is at its worst, and the problem can be rather pressing. It's amazing how week-end spaghetti can generate so much life (and aroma). What makes the biggest difference is having a system for doing the dishes. About all that's left is cleaning the appliances.

### DISHWASHING:

Without an automatic dishwasher:

First you'll need some of the basic tools: A sponge, a plastic scouring pad, dishwashing liquid, a dishrack (strainer) and plenty of hot water. Place the dishes to be washed (after you've scraped off excess food residue) into the sink and fill the sink with hot water. Add a few drops of dishwashing liquid as the water is filling the sink. You should let the dishes soak for a few seconds, then wet the sponge and put a few drops of dishwashing liquid on the sponge. After working up a good head of suds, sponge off each dish completely. If food is stuck pretty well to the dish, use a plastic scouring pad to remove what the sponge alone couldn't. If you have a double sink, as you finish each dish, place it into the other sink. If you have a single sink, after you've finished washing all the dishes, drain the sink. Then, (use a faucet sprayer if you have one) rinse off the dishes completely with water that's as hot as you can stand it. Place the finished dishes on the strainer so that the water will drain off the dishes (cups upside

down, etc.

If you want to, you may dry the dishes by hand, but it's unnecessary in most cases, and then you have the added problem of keeping track of wet dishrags, too. The trick is to use hot water so that the dishes will almost dry themselves. The next day you can put the dishes away.

One word of caution: Don't leave any soap on the dishes. And, a little quality control as you're putting them in the dishrack will help, too.

Make sure that you don't put non-immersible appliances (like some popcorn poppers, etc.) into the water. Just clean the cooking surfaces.

#### With an automatic dishwasher:

Even though new dishwashers may be advertised as being able to do the whole job, it's a good idea to help the machine a little by knocking off giant gobs of food which may be stuck to the dishes before loading them into the machine.

You shouldn't load non-immersible appliances or plastic items. Some plastic dishware (like Melmac) are supposed to take the heat, but don't put anything precious that's made out of plastic into a dishwasher and expect it to make it without possible damage.

Arrange the dishes so that each item is clear of others and so that the racks are pretty evenly loaded. There's usually a little holder made for the dishwashing soap to be placed in. Follow the soap box directions, making sure you don't overuse the specified amount. If the water in your area has a lot of minerals in it, you may need to use a water spot



removing agent (it makes the water wetter). You can tell after the first load if you're going to need it.

Most machines are pretty fully automatic, so just start it off on the first cycle (usually a wash cycle) and let it do its thing.

If your machine is the portable (on wheels) kind, you'll have to hook up the hose from the machine to the kitchen faucet, and then turn on the hot water. If so, make sure that the sink beneath the faucet is empty and open, because the water will come blasting out from there during the washing.

Whether you use an automatic dishwasher or not, there's a tip that makes the job much easier. Always keep the sink filled with soapy water. As you generate dirty dishes, after removing excess food, put them in the water to soak until you do the dishes the next time. They'll clean up an awful lot easier and better.

Teflon coating should never be scraped. Be sure to use a sponge to clean such surfaces.

A steel wool scouring pad may be required to clean some pots and pans, but try to use it sparingly. After using the steel wool pad, throw it away unless you're going to use it in the near future, because it'll rust within a couple of days.

#### APPLIANCE CLEANING:

##### Refrigerator/Freezer:

Keeping the refrigerator clean is easy. Whenever the inside gets to the point at which you can see spots of food

or mold, it's time to clean. Use a damp sponge. If that doesn't work, try a little bit of household cleaner, making sure that you clean up fully with water afterward. Nothing tastes worse than food that's been tainted with cleaning agents.

The freezer compartment on a non-frost free machine is easy to clean, because when you defrost (by placing pans of hot water in the opened and turned off freezer) you go through an involuntary cleaning.

If you have a frost-free machine, cleaning may be a bit more difficult. If you touch a sponge to the metal paneling inside, the sponge will most likely stick. Best bet is to unplug the machine (some units have special settings for defrosting which accomplish the same thing) and wait until you can clean it with a sponge.

It goes without saying that you should wait to defrost your freezer until the machine is barren, because most of the food you'll remove will be subject to spoilage.

The outside of the refrigerator/freezer should clean up just fine with household cleaner and a damp sponge.

#### Stove/Oven:

The trick to keeping a stove and oven clean is to not let it get out of control. If you spill something, try to clean it up right then. If not, you'll spend twice as long doing it later.

Most stoves, whether gas or electric, have removable drip pans under the burners. You should remove these (usually by lifting out the burners or grills) and try washing with soap, water, a sponge and a plastic scouring pad. Soaking may be required.

The stove top may be cleaned with a damp sponge and a household cleaner. Use a plastic scouring pad for tough spots.

The oven is usually a different story. You may be able to get by using a damp sponge and a plastic scouring pad, but the odds are slim. You'll probably have to resort to an oven cleaner (unless your oven has a self-cleaning feature, in which case all you have to do is turn it on and clean the debris out later). There are many kinds from which to choose, but it's probably your best bet to first try one recommended for use in a cold oven. Make sure that you follow the directions exactly, because oven cleaner is bad stuff. It's easy to wipe out the floor or yourself if it gets onto something it shouldn't be on. When using oven cleaner, the most important thing besides being careful not to handle it improperly is to make sure you fully remove any residual after the cleaning is over. If you don't, you'll make fumes that are pretty strong the first time you use the oven.

Most stoves and ovens can be taken apart fairly easily, so you can get to those hard-to-get-to spots.

And, if your first try with oven cleaner doesn't do the trick, try it again on the troublesome spots. Of course the best bet to keep the oven clean (once it's been cleaned already) is to use a foil oven liner. They're cheap to buy and even cheaper to make on your own. Just place strips of aluminum foil snugly on the bottom of the oven. Be sure to turn the outside edges of the foil up, so as to not let excessive liquids spill over.



#### Toaster/Toaster Oven:

Most toasters have a tray that slides out or can be somehow removed fairly easily from the rest of the unit. Once in a while this should be pulled out and washed, particularly if you use it quite a bit. Make sure you don't immerse the whole unit into water.

#### Microwave Oven:

A microwave oven is essentially like a refrigerator as far as cleaning is concerned. But due to the heat that can be generated inside the cooking area, you should religiously clean up as soon as you see a spot appear.

#### Sink:

The sink, if it's stainless steel, shouldn't need any real cleaning. But a porcelain sink will need some attention. Stains from potmarks and food can be removed with household cleanser. Because of its abrasive nature, use it sparingly and only when really needed. Never use abrasive cleansers on stoves or refrigerators because most of them will show signs of scratching afterwards.

### FOOD

The true test of determining who is and who isn't a good housekeeper is to look at how the person handles the food situation. The job of determining what to buy, selecting the highest quality, knowing where and how to store food, knowing how to cook food, and knowing how to serve a meal is performed well by very few bachelors. To get by, however, all you need to do is to follow some of the basics suggested

here, and have a strong stomach.

First, however, it should be noted that there are times to shop and times not to shop. Diet books tell you not to shop when you're hungry, but diet books are written largely for overweight housewives and not for the by-now starving bachelor. So shop when you're fairly (but not ravenously) hungry, and always work from a list created over a period of at least a couple of days. There's little worse than finding after you get home that you forgot something that you really need.

#### DETERMINING WHAT TO BUY:

To make a good shopping list, try to visualize meals you like to eat. Don't waste time on specific meals you never eat at home (like lunches if you eat on the run, or at the job). If you can characterize your own meals this way, you're halfway home. All you have to do is list the individual parts of those meals and you're off to a good start on your shopping list. (For example, if you like pancakes for breakfast, just list pancake mix, milk, butter, eggs and possibly syrup). You have to add some all-purpose items (if they don't appear on the list anyway) like milk, eggs, bread, butter, and possibly sugar, too.

As you make the list you may have to check your on-hand inventory to see if there's enough to get out of buying it until next time. Make sure you don't count spoiled food as good; check perishables before calling them good.

Every list should include foods from the following basic groups: meats, vegetables, fruits, and dairy products. A sample shopping list appears in "FIGURE 3."

As you shop, check off the stuff you buy, as you go. At least then you'll know what you've bought and what you still have to buy.

One word of caution here: Don't buy giant portions unless you're sure you can do them justice. Waste is a bad scene, and expensive, too.

#### SELECTING QUALITY FOOD:

Recognizing quality food will come with experience in buying, but there are a few tips that'll help you right off. Here are a few of them:

-When you buy fruits, they should be fairly firm. If they're overly soft, they'll most likely be rotten by the time you get ready to eat them.

-When you buy eggs, it pays to open up the carton and check to see that the eggs aren't cracked.

-Never buy bent cans or anything in a damaged container. You're buying some potentially big problems at little or no savings.

-Unless you're really a brew-your-own nut, buy instant coffee. It'll cost less, taste about as good, and be a lot less messy to use.

-When you buy frozen foods, buy the kinds that come in bags (cooking pouches). Then all you have to do is boil the pouches in water and serve (less the bag, of course).

-If you buy fresh fish and aren't going to use it



the same day, it's important that you freeze it right away. Do it by putting the fish into a plastic bag (you may have to cut the fish up to do this) filled with water and then sealed. Use a bag sealer if you have one.

Try not to buy fresh vegetables with mold on them. And stay away from vegetables with shoots (a sign that they've approached going to seed) starting on them, as in the case of broccoli.

Common sense plays a big part here, and experience plays the rest. If you make a goof and buy poor quality food once, it's unlikely that you'll make that same mistake again very soon. Time will improve your eye for quality food.

#### WHERE TO STORE FOOD:

This may sound like a silly section, but it is important to put the food you've just bought in the right place. Most of the job is easy enough: Frozen food in the freezer, fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator, and dry goods in the kitchen cabinets. You may store coffee in the refrigerator if you have the space. If you buy a big sack of potatoes or onions, store them in a cool, dry place, so your refrigerator doesn't get too crowded or have to work as hard to keep that amount of bulk refrigerated.

#### HOW TO USE A CROCK POT

A Crock Pot (sometimes referred to as a slow-cooker) is almost custom made for bachelors. If you're considering getting one, get the kind that has the removable crock so that you

can put the finished meal in the refrigerator without having to transfer it to another container. In the morning, just chop up any fresh vegetables (after you've washed them, of course) that are handy, add a can or two of some rather bland prepared soup (like "cream of whatever," or tomato), sprinkle some seasoning salts on the brew and by dinnertime you'll have super homemade soup. Almost any variation is great. Try adding hunks of meat or chicken, too. Be your own chef! It's very easy and has some extra benefits: Your house will smell like grandma's and it'll impress the hell out of any guests you may have when you serve them some of your own homemade soup. I guess bachelors just aren't supposed to know how to make homemade soup.

With a crock pot, you can experiment with little risk. There are only a few don'ts: Don't let the fluid level go too much above or below the full point of the pot (add or subtract water or extra ingredients to compensate) and don't use vegetables in cauliflower/broccoli family, if you can help it, only because it'll smell pretty bad while it's cooking.

#### ELECTRIC SKILLET:

An electric skillet can make an amateur pretty professional. Get one that has teflon coating on the cooking surface, a lid over the cooking surface, and an indicator by food type and temperature (a code that tells you that when cooking fish you should set the temperature at 380°, etc.). An electric skillet is good for cooking eggs, pancakes, fish, hamburgers, sandwiches and a whole bunch of other common bachelor-type items.

When using teflon, make sure that you use a teflon spatula, too. Scratched teflon is as good as no teflon at all.

#### SERVING A MEAL:

Assuming that it's impossible to put off having company for a meal indefinitely, you'll need to know how to serve.

First off, the table setting should be something like the one shown in "FIGURE 4." Add extra items to the table so that they don't get too bunched up. Spread them around. Make sure salt, pepper, butter and other items your particular meal may require are on the table. Try to visualize yourself eating the meal with the things you have on the table. If you make it through the meal, then you're doing fine.

Serve the food from the left side and drinks from the right side of the Servee.

Try to have the whole meal ready at about the same time (this is pretty hard, especially at first), so you don't have to keep popping up and down.

Include, a serving tool (spoon, salad tongs, etc.) with each item and place on the table.

Refill wine glasses before they're empty and don't fill them all the way to the top.

A lot of this stuff is too suave and a lot of overkill for most bachelors, but it may come in handy sometime. You never know when the President might drop in for a bite to eat.



FIGURE 3

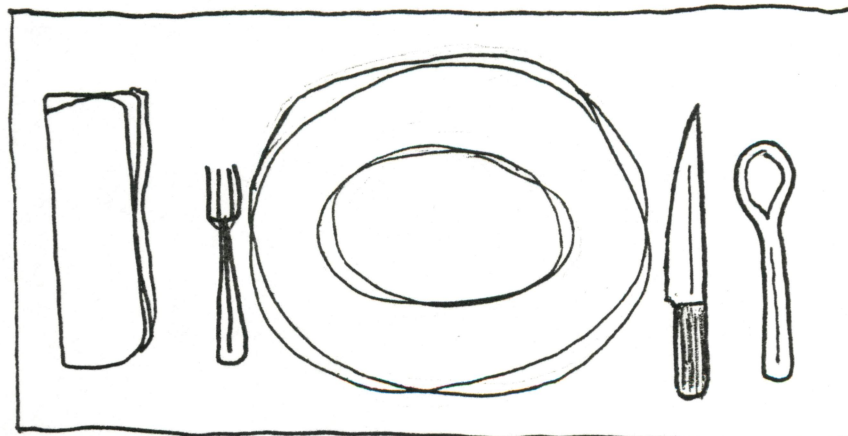
SAMPLE SHOPPING LIST:

<u>MEATS:</u>	<u>VEGETABLES:</u>	<u>FRUITS:</u>	<u>DAIRY:</u>	<u>MISC.</u>
Hamburger	Carrots	Apples	Cheese	Cookie/Cake Mix
Steak	Celery	Oranges	Milk	Flour
Chicken	Lettuce	Juices	Eggs	Butter
Fish	Tomatoes	Grapes	Cottage Cheese	Sugar
	Potatoes			Syrup
	Frozen Corn			Spices
	Frozen Mixed Vegetables			Catsup
				Coffee
				Booze
				Frozen Pizza
				Cleaning Products
				Paper Products
				Vitamins
				Animal Food *

\* No fair eating the animal food yourself.

FIGURE 4

TABLE SETTING



## BATHROOM

The bathroom is small enough that it's easy to be taken care of in just a few minutes. It's even easier still, if you have a sytem to keep it looking sharp.

### TUB/SHOWER CLEANING:

Before deciding to attack the bathtub ring, you'll need to know what kind of material your tub/shower is made of. Basically, there are two groups: (1) Ceramic tiles, porcelain and ceramic slabs (harder type materials), and (2) Plastic tiles, fiberglass and formica topping material (softer type materials). If there is any doubt in your mind as to the type your tub/shower is made of, go to your local building supplyman and compare his samples until you can match up one with yours. (Essentially all that's required is to recognize the difference between the types' visual appearances and how they sound when tapped with your fingernails).

For the harder type materials, you may use household cleanser and a damp sponge to clean the surfaces of the tub/shower. Use the cleanser sparingly and don't apply more pressure than necessary while scrubbing. The whole idea behind the effectiveness of household cleanser is the abrasive agent it contains. By rubbing too hard you inflict unnecessary wear on what you're cleaning. Besides, it's extra work.

Rinse with warm water, making sure that you don't leave any residue from the gritty cleanser.

Once the tub is clean, you can pretty well keep it that way if each time you take a bath you add a little bit of dish-

washing detergent to the running water as the tub fills. The surfactants in most dishwashing detergents will make the water "wetter," and thereby making it less able to stick to the side of the tub. Some people say that you'll never have to clean off bathtub rings again if you use this system. Although I haven't had that much luck with this particular system, I must say that it does help and should at least reduce the frequency of bathtub ring cleaning you do have to do.

For cleaning the softer type bathroom materials, you should use cleaning products specially marketed for use on softer type materials. They contain fewer abrasive agents and should help protect the materials being cleaned. A damp sponge and the cleaning product should do the job with no problem. Use the cleaning agent sparingly and don't rub harder than necessary. Let the product do the work for you.

Rinse with warm water, again making sure that any gritty residue gets washed away.

The dishwashing detergent trick discussed earlier works well here, too.

#### TOILET CLEANING:

The toilet, at least the stool, is almost always made from harder type materials; so household cleanser is what you should use. Once the exterior is cleaned and rinsed (in the same manner as in the case of the tub), clean the inside of the bowl using a toilet brush and cleanser.

After it looks pretty good, flush, then add toilet bowl cleaner in the amount recommended on the product's container. You should let it stand as directed, then flush.



The toilet seat may be cleaned with household cleaner.

#### VANITY/BASIN CLEANING:

The basin should be cleaned with a cleaning compound that matches its material type and in the same manner as the tub. The counter top (if any) may be of a different material than the basin, so check it before attempting to clean.

Usually household cleaner will do just fine for the counter top when aided by a damp sponge, so try this method first before bringing out the big guns.

#### FIXTURE CLEANING:

Fixtures, whether they're plastic or metal plated, need to be cleaned gently. Never use strong abrasive cleaners (like household cleanser) on them.

Fixtures usually look bad because of water and soap spots, or in extreme cases, large deposits of minerals. To remove water and soap spots, use a damp sponge and household cleaner first. Then use a dry dishrag and a product for window cleaning to give the final polish. White vinegar works here, too.

If after this process you're left with mineral deposits on the fixtures, consult your local building supplyman for a tougher product. He should be familiar with your area's problems (different techniques are required to remove different types of deposits) and may suggest a good method for you.

No matter how tempted you are to use an abrasive cleaner or steel wool to get the deposits off, resist the urge. You'll

most likely be left with permanent scratches. The toughest thing you should use as a tool is a plastic scouring pad, along with the other cleaning agents suggested: No steel wool.

#### USING DISINFECTANTS:

To make the bathroom smell motel-clean, use a bit of disinfectant liquid on a damp sponge after the room is cleaned. This is especially important in the bottom of a shower stall, if you have one.

### FLOOR CARE

Taking care of floors isn't too hard. Most of what it takes to keep floors looking good is a system for cleaning them. Each of the three basic floor types (carpeting, vinyl and wood) has a specific system.

#### CARPETING:

##### Vacuuming:

A good vacuum cleaner can make a shabby carpet look much better. Vacuuming is quick and easy to do. (See the section on vacuum cleaner care, too).

Start by visually checking the floor for and removing any big or hard objects, such as rocks, coins, bobby pins, etc. These kinds of items will mess up the vacuum cleaner, and you'll end up by picking them up by hand later anyway.

If your vacuum cleaner doesn't have a cleaning tool attachment, use a broom and go around the edge of the carpet and immovable furniture, sweeping the area the vacuum cleaner won't be able to reach. Sweep whatever dust or debris there may be into the path of the vacuum cleaner, unless it's too big a clump of junk, in which case you should

pick it up by hand. If your vacuum cleaner does have a cleaning tool attachment, use it to perform the sweeping for you.

Most vacuum cleaners are self-explanatory. Use the higher setting for doing longer-length carpet piles (like shag) and use the lower setting for doing shorter - length carpet piles.

When vacuuming, go fairly slowly and in one direction over the entire area. Then go over the entire area again, but this time at right angles to the direction in which you first vacuumed.

If it appears that the machine doesn't pick up as much as it should, check to make sure that the bag isn't full and that the air path isn't blocked.

#### Shampooing:

Certain carpets, such as orientals, are special and need to be cleaned by professionals. If in doubt about cleaning your carpet, call in a professional.

When the carpet gets spots, the best thing to do is to clean them up before they get a chance to set. Cold water with a mild solution of carpet shampoo (mild solution of liquid detergent will do in case of an emergency) and a sponge should take care of most spots if you can get to them right away.

Try to work up a bit of lather to help lift out the stain, but don't do it by rubbing. Do it by blotting the spot. If you can, leave a blotter (old towel or the like) over the spot overnight.



If the stain is really set and it won't come out with washing by hand alone, or if the carpet as a whole looks pretty dirty, you should rent a carpet shampooer (most supermarkets have them for rent for a couple of dollars per day plus shampoo).

Before doing any kind of shampooing, always vacuum first. If you don't, you'll end up making mud at the base of the carpet.

Remove all movable furniture. Mix the carpet shampoo and water as directed in the container portion of the machine, making sure that you don't overuse the shampoo. If the carpet smells bad, you can add a little bit of deodorizer to the shampoo mixture. It'll help at least temporarily.

Use the shampooer as though it were a vacuum cleaner, going over the entire surface of the carpet in two different directions, one after the other. Make sure that you don't soak the carpet. That's about the only way you can hurt the carpet in the process of shampooing.

After shampooing, allow plenty of time before you walk on it, or replace the furniture. If your furniture has to be placed on a damp carpet, make sure that you place the legs of the furniture on pieces of cardboard or plastic and not on the carpet directly. This will do two things: It'll keep any metal footings from rusting on the carpet and it'll help dissipate the weight of the furniture over a larger area, thereby helping keep the legs of the furniture from digging into the carpet.

Before walking on the carpet, vacuum again. All that's

done in the process of shampooing is that particles of dirt are loosened and hopefully moved toward the surface of the carpet; it takes vacuuming to actually remove the dirt.

If this process doesn't work, you can still try a steam carpet cleaning system. You can rent it (at supermarkets, too) and try it yourself or call in a professional. If you do it yourself, be sure to follow directions on the machine exactly. It's easy to soak a carpet without really being aware of it with a steam carpet cleaning system.

Some dry, spray-on carpet cleaners are on the market. Although they may work under some circumstances, probably it's a better idea to stick to the older methods of carpet cleaning if you can.

#### VINYL:

Whether or not you have never-needs-waxing vinyl flooring, the first steps are the same.

You start by sweeping with a broom, then damp mopping with warm water and a mild soap solution. Clean the mop at fairly short intervals so that you don't make mud.

After you've gone over the whole area and have let it dry, examine how it looks. If it looks pretty good, you're finished, as you probably have a never-needs-waxing floor. But if there's no shine to it at all, you probably don't have a never-needs-waxing floor, and you'll have to wax.

Get the kind of wax that you only have to damp mop on and that shines itself. Apply it according to label directions, making sure that you don't miss any spots. It's super important that the floor is clean when you wax, or else the wax will hold the dirt semi-permanently on the



floor; and that can cause real damage to the surface of the vinyl.

Once every so often (usually every six months to a year, depending on how much you wax) you'll probably have to strip the old wax off with wax stripper. It's not too hard. It's essentially the same as regular waxing except that after the stripper has lifted off the old wax, you have to remove (by mopping) what's left. Make sure that the waxing-stripping only is done to non-never-needs-waxing floors.

If you do wax, make sure that you don't rush the drying. If you do rush it, you may end up with footprints embossed on the vinyl until you wax again the next time.

#### WOOD FLOORS:

Wood floors come in all different forms, all the way from rough lumber that's been varnished to expensive parquet inlays that have been hand-rubbed to a rich lustre.

Start by examining the floor to see what it's going to need. If it's varnished or resined it'll have a hardened surface. If it's waxed, the finish will be softer and will probably feel a little waxy when touched.

For varnished or resined floors, start by sweeping with a broom to get rid of the big stuff and loose dirt. You can use a vacuum cleaner that has a cleaning tool attachment system if you want to for this. Then damp mop (not too wet), going over the whole area with some vigor. Too much water can be a problem, because if there are any imperfections in the finish (and there usually are many), the water will penetrate



the wood and can cause spotting. Reclean the mop often so as to reduce the amount of abrasion that occurs to the finish.

For waxed floors, you start by sweeping off the entire surface and then damp mopping. After the floor has dried thoroughly, apply floor wax according to the can or bottle directions. Again, don't overuse the wax. Rub it as well as you can into the finish as you apply the wax. The wax is the only thing between the wood and the elements, so it should be a complete coating.

Whether or not the floor you have is varnished or resined or waxed, if you're a maniac for shining floors, you can rent a buffing machine. If you do, aside from following the machine's directions, make sure you don't let the machine stay in any one spot very long. Heat (from friction) can build up fast and damage the finish.

As in the case of vinyl, waxed floors will need stripping occasionally. Follow the same steps as with vinyl, only be very careful not to overexpose the wood to the stripper, as damage may occur. Try a small, inconspicuous spot first.

#### VACUUM CLEANER CARE:

Vacuum cleaners usually require service for two things: Replacing bags (because it stops vacuuming), and belts (because it stops beating the carpet). The most frequent need is to unclog the air path. If the machine starts to miss undue amounts of stuff on the floor as you vacuum, check the

air path for blockages (usually hair and the like, especially if you have any pets which shed). Start at the end of the hose if you're using the cleaning tool/tube type machine or at the bottom of the "beater" section of an upright, and work your way back toward the motor, following the air path. Usually you can unclog the blockage by using your fingers, but in dire cases a coat hanger-type wire may be used (carefully, of course). The most common blockage is a full bag, in which case just replace it with a new one. If the unit is an upright and the beater section (the roller with brushes on it) quits, the usual cause is a broken belt. They're cheap (usually less than a couple of dollars) to buy and easy to install yourself. Most models have an easy release for the underside grill. After removing the grill, you'll see the belt. Usually the roller comes out to facilitate the belt change.

Make sure that you're using the right machine setting, too, for the job you're doing. Often times a machine setting mismatch for the job you're doing will result in poor machine performance.

## MISCELLANEOUS CLEANING

This section includes tips on cleaning a variety of household items that haven't fit too well into any single section up to this point.

### WINDOWS AND MIRRORS:

The trick to cleaning windows and mirrors is to be able to finish the job without leaving streaks. You can always spend hours going over the same spot to achieve perfection, but a good technique should get you out of having to. Using the right tools for the job helps. A glass cleaning agent and a lint free towel will do for such jobs, like mirrors and cabinet glass. For bigger jobs (like picture windows) a 12" squeegee and sponge are good.

Start by using the cleaning agent (or water) freely along with either a sponge or rag or durable paper towel. Go over the entire surface. Depending on how quickly the cleaning agent dries, you may have to apply some more before final wiping. If you're using a squeegee, make even strokes and as few of them as possible to cover the area. Then, using a towel touch-up the lines between strokes. The trick is to use bold and wide strokes to reduce the amount of lint and spotting.

### WALLS:

Before cleaning walls, it pays to check out the kind of



surface cover first. Wall paper, if not waterproof, will most likely tear when cleaned with too much moisture. And some cheap water base paints may dissolve if you rub too hard. So take it easy, especially at first.

A sponge and household cleaner do well on most grimy areas. For big areas and ceiling you may want to use a spring-type mop to reach portions. Try a spic-n-span type product if the job is a big one. Oh, yes, be careful not to flood an electrical outlet with water while cleaning.

#### BLINDS:

Most venetian blinds clean up real well with just a sponge and window cleaner. When cleaning blinds, make sure the drapes (if any) are well away from where you're cleaning. The accumulated dirt and dust, if too close to drapes, can force you into cleaning them, too.

#### DRAPES:

Drapes should be vacuumed frequently, using an appropriate attachment on the vacuum cleaner.

When drapes get very dirty and something major has to be done, start by removing them from their rods and removing the holding pins. Try not to let them get crumpled more than absolutely necessary. Next stop is your local laundramat, providing they offer drape cleaning service. Ask them to wash and press the drapes. If they recommend dry cleaning, go for it, since they know what they're saying. Being too rough on

drapes will ruin them. Drape cleaning is one job definitely not recommended for beginners to perform, unless you've really got your act together.

#### UPHOLSTERY:

Most carpet shampoos serve as upholstery cleaners, provided the exterior is of a cloth-type material. Clean in the same manner as for carpeting. Regular vacuuming should be done, too.

Leather material upholstery requires basically the same cleaning procedures. Techniques vary with the products so check its instructions first.

#### DUSTING:

In dusting there are two general kinds of surfaces you'll be addressing: One is wood and polished surfaces and the other is non-wood surfaces.

For wood and polished surfaces (except glass), use a dust-rag and some furniture polish. Just a bit of the spray will do the job. Don't overuse it. Use bold strokes and cover the entire surface of what you're dusting.

For non-wood surfaces your best bet is to use a dust-attracting product. Spray it onto the dust-rag and dust, while using bold strokes and not too much of the product.

Don't forget furniture legs and the tops of electrical outlets. A little quality control is in order after the job seems to be done.

#### DIRTY GROUTING:

Dirty looking tile grouting looks unsightly as well as unclean. To lighten it, try using a bit of liquid bleach

(50% bleach, 50% water) mixed in a bucket and a brush.

Rubber gloves are a must and be careful of your eyes, clothes, and anything else in sight while doing this job. Repeat the job twice, making sure you finish by rinsing very extensively with clean water.

If that doesn't do the trick, regrouting isn't too hard to do.

Check with your local building supplyman for the specifics. It can make a big difference.

The bleach-and-brush technique takes care of mildew, too. Just be sure that what the mildew is on can take the bleach before you go at it.

#### HOW TO MAKE A BED:

Making a bed is a bit basic, but here goes! On top of the mattress goes the mattress pad. On top of the pad goes the bottom sheet (it usually has elastic edges that'll stretch around the mattress corners). On top of the bottom sheet goes the top sheet. Tuck it in at the foot of the bed. On top of the top sheet go as many blankets as you use, all tucked in at the foot of the bed. On top of the blankets goes the bedspread, draped gracefully and uniformly over the entire portions of the bed that are visible. Fold back the bedspread from the top (head of the bed) about 18". Lay the pillows in place, then replace the bedspread over the pillows. With a few pats here and there to adjust miscellaneous bulges, you should have a fairly made bed.



HOUSEHOLD ITEMS YOU SHOULD HAVE ON HAND

Disinfectant

Squeegee

Dustrags

Plastic Scouring Pad

Glass Cleaner

Dishwashing Detergent

Furniture Wax

Floor Wax

Fabric Softener

Aluminum Foil

Sponge

Dishrags

Paper Towels

Bleach

Steel Wool Pads

Dust Attractor

Carpet Shampoo

Laundry Detergent

Ironing Starch