

# Your Household Responsibilities List

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Without a plan for keeping your house and property in order, it can seem like a nagging to-do list of household chores like doing the laundry, getting the dishes done, or cleaning out the over-crowded storage closet. On top of that, everyday life and work responsibilities can often take precedence over completing routine house cleaning and maintenance tasks. In the face of these challenges, couples can take better charge of their lives by creating a household responsibilities list.

## Why a Household Responsibility List is Important

A household responsibility list can help you and your partner put upkeep on autopilot. Not only does creating this list facilitate getting everything done in a timely manner, it also takes the guesswork out of having to navigate conflicts about household cleaning and maintenance.

Taking care of household chores can be an awkward subject to broach; and if this subject is already a source of conflict, you might be tempted to avoid bringing it up, but dodging this issue will likely lead to further complications. That's why making a concerted effort to create this chore list is important for facilitating mutual understanding and cooperation in your relationship.

The process for creating a chore list is fairly straightforward. You compile a comprehensive list of all the tidying, cleaning, and household tasks that need to be completed in order for your home and property to be well taken care of. To accomplish this end, you as a couple will need to put your heads together to create a list that reflects both of your needs and preferences.

## What to Include on a Chores List

You can organize your master list by category or type of task, but a more practical method of organization is grouping chores by frequency. Taking this approach, the items on your list will be somewhat different depending on what type of space you live in and what is important to the both of you. Below are some common types of chores to get you started in developing your list.

## Consistent Household Tasks

Consistent household tasks involve completing ongoing, daily, weekly, monthly, and seasonal chores. Some of these tasks are even more frequent than daily household chores. Decide which tasks fall in the category of **ongoing chores** in your home and discuss your expectations regarding them. Some examples of these include:

- Preparing meals.
- Doing dishes and tidying up after each meal.
- Making the beds.
- Cleaning up messes and clutter in common spaces.

--Feeding the pets (if you have any).

Some of the typical **daily chores** can also change depending on your individual needs, but here are some examples of common ones:

- Taking out the trash when it's full.
- Taking the trash out for pickup (if required).
- Picking up and sorting the mail.
- Unloading, loading, and running the dishwasher (if you have one).
- Sweeping the kitchen floor.
- Wiping down countertops.
- Squeegeeing bathroom shower doors and walls.
- Sweeping the porches and entrance ways.

**Weekly chores** are probably the most important. An example set of these chores include:

- Making a weekly grocery list, going to the store, and then putting the purchased food items away.
- Watering and spraying the plants.
- Cleaning the bathrooms, including: scrubbing sinks, tubs, showers, and (yes) toilets.
- Sweeping and mopping the bathroom floor and cleaning the mirrors.
- Cleaning and vacuuming the rugs and floors in the house.
- Doing the laundry for the soiled household items like sheets, table clothes, and towels.
- Taking care of your bedroom space, including changing your sheets and tidying up your closets.
- Maintaining the kitchen, including:
  - Removing items from countertops and cleaning the countertops with detergents.
  - Wiping down the outside of the kitchen drawers if they're dirty.
  - Cleaning the stovetop.
  - Cleaning inside of the microwave
  - Cleaning out the fridge, throwing away food that's gone bad, and washing out containers that can be reused.
  - Vacuuming and/or mopping kitchen floors.
  - Dusting blinds and surfaces.

Some tasks aren't required to be accomplished every week, but agreeing on a set of **monthly chores** can help maintain your household and your yard (if you have one). Vital administrative monthly tasks include:

- Managing the household finances.
- Paying the monthly bills.

Some of the other key maintenance tasks fall under the category of deep cleaning which you might want to do monthly or even seasonally. Examples of these tasks are:

- Cleaning inside and outside of kitchen cabinets.
- Scrubbing out the fridge.
- Reorganizing and wiping down the pantry and cupboards in the kitchen.
- Reorganizing closets, storage cupboards, and medicine cabinets.
- Removing clutter and debris from storage and garage spaces.
- Laundering curtains, carpets, furniture, and other fabrics throughout your home.
- Removing tough dirt stains that have accumulated on floors, walls, baseboards, and tile.
- Checking for mold and mildew in bathrooms and scrubbing grout on tile floors and walls.
- Washing windows inside and out (if you're able to do so safely).
- Dusting difficult-to-reach spots like light fixtures.

In addition to paying the monthly bills and deep cleaning inside of your home, there are the **seasonal chores** involving the maintenance of your outside property (if you have a lawn and garden). Examples of these chores include:

- Watering and mowing the grass.
- Clearing the house gutters and drains of debris.
- Weeding and tending to the hedges and flowers in the garden.
- Making minor repairs to both the outside and inside of the house.

To get started, first review the attached Household Responsibilities List that comprises a matrix of the different tasks, estimated time needed to complete them, and the partner or hired help you designate to take care of them. Refine this matrix to fit the specific needs and upkeep of your house and property. Remember that the tasks already listed in this matrix are examples only and should be altered and revised to conform to your preferences and circumstances.

Once you have decided on the household tasks, then estimate the approximate amount of time involved in completing these tasks. Make sure you designate the estimated time needed to complete these tasks for that particular time period. For example, if it is a daily task, then specify the approximate amount of time it takes to complete this task each day; if it is a weekly task, then specify the approximate time it takes to complete this task every week, and so on. Finally, decide if you want to take on each one of these tasks individually, divide them between the two of you, or hire someone to complete them.

The essential rationale for developing this chores list is for you to have an organized and clear set of shared responsibilities that are mutually agreed upon as your contribution toward running the household. In determining what is a reasonable distribution of household responsibilities, clearly other major factors like work and childcare responsibilities also need to be taken into consideration when arriving at a mutual understanding of what is fair. When you are able to arrive and implement a mutually satisfying agreement about these matters, keep in mind that you will have laid a major foundation for maintaining a sense of cooperation and harmony in your relationship.

**HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES LIST**

	<b>ESTIMATED TIME</b>	<b>PARTNER A:</b>	<b>PARTNER B:</b>	<b>HIRED HELP:</b>
<b>DAILY CHORES</b>				
Preparing meals				
Cleaning up after meals				
Washing dishes & cleaning sinks				
Wiping down kitchen counters				
Taking out trash and recycle				
Squeegeeing bathroom shower				
Picking up & sorting mail				
Swiping floors & entrance ways				
Making beds				

<b>WEEKLY CHORES</b>				
Doing grocery shopping				
Cleaning bothrooms				
Cleaning toilets,tubs, showers, sinks				
Polishing mirrors				
Dusting surfaces & blinds				
Changing bed linen				
Vacuuming carpets, rugs, upholstery				
Cleaning & moping floors				

<b>MONTHLY CHORES</b>				
Managing finances & paying billis				
Cleaning inside bathroom cabinets				
Scrubbing out the fridge				
Vacuum baseboards &vents				
Washing windows inside & out				
<b>SEASONAL CHORES</b>				
Weeding & tending to the garden				
Watering & mowing the grass				
Making minor house repairs				

Cleaning curtains, cabinets, carpets, storage spaces				