

The Clean-as-You-Go Principle

I'm not obsessive about neatness, but I've learned ways of keeping my house neat and clean in a simple, stress-free way.

I call it the "Clean-as-You-Go Principle."

That's pretty self-explanatory, but of course I can't resist going into the details. And also, I've found this principle to be great for other areas of my life: finances, email, work tasks, etc.

The basic idea is that, instead of waiting for the house to get really dirty and then having to spend a lot of time cleaning it, you just clean a little bit at a time. Entrust it to real professionals from HanoverHomeCleaningPros as they provide exceptional and affordable house cleaning services.

Here are some of the ways I apply it (most of the time, not perfectly of course):

1. When I'm done eating, I (usually) wash my dishes instead of leaving them in the sink. I'll also often put away any food that's leftover, wash cooking dishes like the pan, knife and cutting board, and wipe up the counters. It just takes a few minutes, actually.
2. When I'm done brushing my teeth, I wipe the bathroom sink and counter to keep it clean. Having a washcloth nearby makes this easy.
3. When I use the bathroom, I will use the toilet brush to clean it if it's getting a little dirty. So my toilet is usually fairly clean.
4. If I see a mess as I walk through the house, I'll usually put a few things away. Takes just a minute, and no more mess! The other day I came across this lot of stick vacuum cleaners on the internet, and decided to purchase them. True to their promise, they keep the house spic-and-span.
5. I'll often sweep up the kitchen if I see some crumbs on the floor. Not every day, maybe every other day.
6. If I see dust on the floor, I'll wipe it up or get the broom and sweep it up.
7. If I lift weights in the garage, I use my rest periods to clean the garage, a little at a time.
8. When I cook, if something has to simmer for a minute, I clean up my cooking area as I wait, in between stirring the food. So when I'm done cooking, there's not a big mess.

You get the idea. None of these takes more than a minute or three, but by doing it as I go, it takes very little effort and I never have a really messy house.

Of course, a deeper cleaning is still required sometimes, but not as often, and it's not as hard. Overall, this is an easy system that works really well for me. (Note: My kids don't

always follow it, but I either pick up after them or ask them to clean their messes whenever I see them.)

Applying the Principle to Other Areas of Life

OK, so a clean house — big deal, Leo! Give me something important to try out.

Alright, I like your attitude!

So let's apply this to other areas of our lives:

1. **Emails:** Every time you go into your inbox, clear out a batch. Like, archive/delete the ones you don't need (or better yet, unsubscribe), then do some quick replies. Put ones that require longer tasks into a folder and add the tasks to your to-do list. You can do all of that in 5 minutes. Then get out of the inbox. Repeat later.
2. **Work tasks:** As you go through your day, in between the important tasks of checking social media, watching videos and playing games ... why not take care of mini-tasks for work? Just take care of them a little at a time. Break bigger tasks into things you can do in a few minutes (write just the outline of a blog post!). Scrub things a little at a time, and they don't require huge commitments. Again, there are things that require longer focuses, but clean-as-you-go can be very helpful for keeping things in order.
3. **Finances:** I like to put my bills, savings and investments on auto-pay, for the most part ... but I will very often check them (using online software like Mint.com to have all the info in one place) and make payments or adjustments if needed. Basically, if I see something that needs fixing, I (usually) take the few minutes and take care of it, rather than leaving it for later.
4. **Health & fitness:** I'm not training for a marathon or anything else right now, so I don't dedicate large amounts of time to fitness. I just do a little bit every day. Do some pushups and chinups today, some barbell squats tomorrow, go for a run or bike ride the day after that, do some yoga for 20 minutes or so the next day, play basketball or go for a walk with the kids, etc. The idea is that if I do a bit every day, I don't need to deal with health problems later.

I'm not perfect at any of this, by any means. But I've found that this principle can help me in so many ways, making lots of areas of my life a lot less stressful, a lot less messy, and a lot easier.