

1966

EC66-2205 Streamlining Household Tasks

Alice Burton

Virginia Trotter

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>

Burton, Alice and Trotter, Virginia, "EC66-2205 Streamlining Household Tasks" (1966). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 3987.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/3987>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

AGRT
3
85
E-7
#66-2205
1

EC 66-2205

For Physically Limited Homemakers

Streamlining household tasks



Sponsored by
Nebraska Heart Association
and

Extension Service
of Agriculture and Home Economics
Department of Agriculture Cooperating

J. L. Adams, Director

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN



R02390 13375

Streamlining household tasks....

By Alice M. Burton
Consultant in Homemaker Rehabilitation
Dr. Virginia Y. Trotter
Associate Dean

Is there any homemaker who would not like to complete her daily tasks more quickly and easily?

If you have lowered energy and/or limited mobility, you may tire easily and take longer to do your homemaking jobs. Many shortcuts are possible to simplify tasks, leaving more time for rest periods and personal and family interests.

The first step to making work easier is a desire to simplify your housework. Then, simplified methods must be tried long enough so that they lose their first awkwardness and become natural habits.

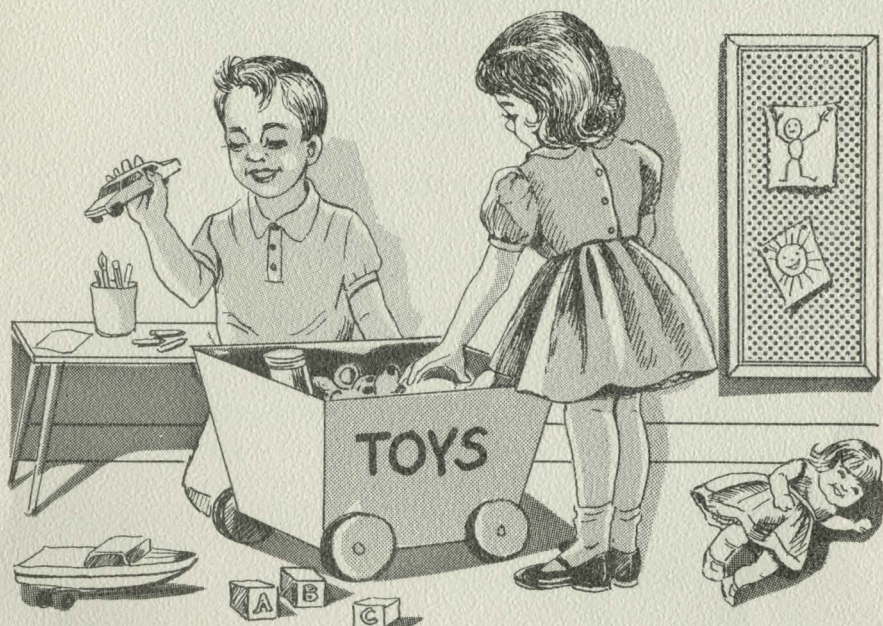
When you first start making daily household jobs easier and quicker, ask yourself these questions:

What Is The Job? Review household jobs to see what they are and how frequently they occur. Which are most tiring? Which use the most time?

Why Is The Job Done? To which category does each job belong? "Must do," "Ought To Do," or "Would Like To Do?" Decide which jobs are most essential. You'll probably find some jobs must be done, whereas others are done mainly because of habit and do not justify the time and energy they require. For example, do sheets and dishtowels really need ironing?



Who Does The Job? Your family's help and cooperation is important. Even young children can put away their toys and hang up their clothing (if the rods are low enough). Children can also help put away groceries, set the table, do dishes and empty wastebaskets. Dad can help when there is heavy or bulky lifting to do. Remember, co-operation works best when the family is in on the planning.



When Is The Job Done? Could you do the job with less pressure at another time? Could you prepare school lunches in the evening instead of during the morning rush? Could you do the job less often? Can you divide a job into parts? Try cleaning the living room today and the bedroom tomorrow. Do your washing two or three days a week instead of all on one day. If your energy is very limited you may want to divide up work in cleaning the living room. For instance, dust one day and vacuum another.

Where Is The Job Done? Would it be more convenient to do the job in another place? Can equipment be kept there, too? Is it inconvenient to iron in the kitchen? Why not iron nearer the bedrooms where the clothes go after ironing. If building or remodeling your home you may wish to locate the laundry center in the bedroom area - the source of most laundry.

How Is The Job Done? Are you doing the job so that it is easiest for you? Almost every job can be done more easily by:

1. Using your body more efficiently.
2. Changing your choice and arrangement of work place, tools and equipment.
3. Trying a new sequence for working.
4. Starting with different materials.
5. Finishing with different products.

USING YOUR BODY MORE EFFICIENTLY

Plan Ahead -- This saves steps and makes the best use of your energy and time. Why not carry a number of things in one trip? Carry the old newspapers to the kitchen basket, and empty ash trays when you go to the kitchen to check the casserole in the oven.

Maintain a Comfortable Position and Good Posture -- Alternate sitting and standing activities. You lessen strain on your muscles when you're comfortable.

Develop Rhythm -- Rhythmic work requires less conscious effort while it eliminates extra motions and saves you energy. Use long easy strokes for vacuuming; use circular hand motions for washing dishes.

Slide, Don't Lift & Carry -- Plan continuous work centers for this. Slide pans from sink to range along a continuous countertop. This is a real advantage if you are on crutches, in a wheelchair, or when a stroke has left you with only one working hand.



If Possible, Use Both Hands -- Your muscles are exercised and you may gain some strength as you use your hand which is limited in motion. When one arm is affected, position it for holding or steadying objects. In case of weakness in both arms or hands, use both hands to apply pressure when you use utensils, equipment, etc.

Use Gravity -- Let items drop into position. A laundry chute saves much lifting of heavy clothes. If possible, position the wastebasket so things drop into it.

WORKPLACE, TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

Provide Good Lighting -- Good general and area lighting is necessary both day and night. Safety, ease and efficiency are all improved with good lighting and fatigue is reduced.

Lay Out Work Areas Within Normal Reach -- Your physical condition may limit your normal easy reach in all directions. You will increase comfort when working at narrow work counters and lowered upper cabinets. When storing frequently used items, avoid using the difficult to reach space near the floor or ceiling.

Provide Correct Work Height For You and the Job -- Try out heights for sitting and standing to find which are most comfortable for you. Build counters or provide pull-out lapboards so that you do not have to stoop or raise your hands above elbow level to work.



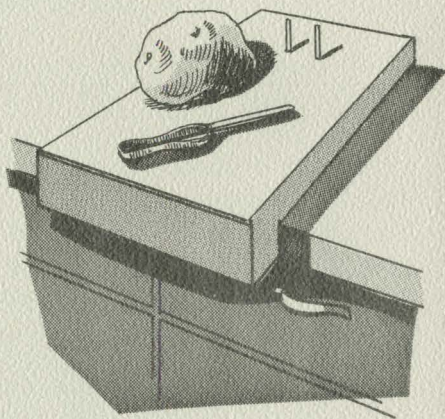
Keep Items Where You Use Them First -- You can save searching and walking to get what you want and take less time to do a job when items used together are stored together. For example, coffeepot, coffee and measuring spoon where coffee is made; lids near range; egg beater in mixing center.

Leave Tools and Equipment in Position to be Used Again -- If you do dishes from right to left, store your dishes in cabinets at the left of the sink. When you store knives on a magnetic rack they are easily reached. If you fold towels lengthwise first you won't have to refold them when you hang them over the towel bar.

Select Appliances with Easy to Reach Controls -- Select appliances on the basis of your individual limitation and comfort. Examples: If you work from a wheelchair you can best use front controls on your appliances; if you are in braces you may not be able to bend and so need controls up higher.

Choose the Best Tools for the Task -- Use a cart-on-wheels to take food and dishes to and from the table. Choose a baking dish which can double as a serving dish and later be refrigerated with left-overs. It is to the advantage of homemakers with heart involvement to use equipment that prevents stooping -- i.e., the long handled dustpan and a sponge mop waxer.

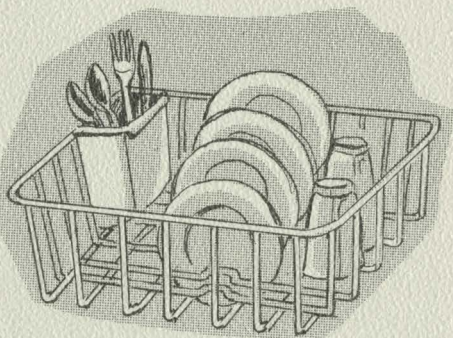
Let a Tool Do Work to Free Hands -- For the hemiplegic or the person with the use of only one arm, some form of jig or clamp to hold tools or utensils is a real help. For example, with a spiked vegetable board a carrot or potato can be anchored by pressing it onto small nonrust nails projecting from a board. The board itself can be secured along the counter top by a bench hank.



Do Jobs in Different Order -- You may make your work easier and quicker by completing all jobs in one room before moving on to another. For example, vacuum, dust and pick-up in one room before going to the next room.

Make One Task Out of Two or More -- Do a general pick-up in the living room on your way to the bedroom to make the bed. Steps saved! Try boiling enough potatoes to serve some whipped for one meal and some au gratin for another.

Leave Out Unnecessary Work -- It is good sense for all workers, but if you have weakness in your arms or hands you will have to minimize lifting. Use your retractable spray hose to fill your pans without lifting them from the counter. Instead of hand-drying dishes, set them on a dish rack and let the air dry them.



Start With Different Materials -- Hand towels, napkins and handkerchiefs of paper may replace linen ones. In the kitchen use time and energy saving foods such as instant coffee, or mixes for cakes, pastries and muffins instead of doing all of the preparation yourself. Some of these convenience foods are even less expensive. Purchase a pie instead of baking it. Choose clothing with easy to care for qualities, such as knits, jersey and permanent press fabrics that do not require ironing.



Finish with Different Products -- Serve whole raw fruits such as apples in a fruit bowl instead of baked apples for dessert. Serve baked potatoes instead of mashed. Serve one-dish meals. Use unironed sheets and pillowcases instead of ironed ones. Use wipe-off placemats or tablecloths instead of tablecloths that require ironing.

Some of the work simplification changes may require changes in your family's standards. A few may even cost more to pay for built-in service. Family discussion and planning will help determine desirable changes and promote understanding and acceptance of these changes.



Contact your County Extension Agent for other bulletins in this series for homemakers with physical limitations.