1924

EC1120 The Housewife and her Workshop

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It is said that the future of America depends upon the training of its young people. What are the most influencing factors in this training of the boys and girls of today to best fit them to see and solve the problems of tomorrow? We unquestionably admit that the first great influence is the mother and the home life. The mother has a double responsibility in being housekeeper and homemaker. To her comes the opportunity of developing in the minds of her children high ideals in personal, family, and community life. In order to measure up to her responsibility, the housewife needs the backing of good health and an efficient workshop. The picture of a happy, understanding mother in her neat, attractive kitchen and home as she worked for them and cared for them in childhood, will be a treasured memory and inspiration to future men and women.

The Human Machine

1. Frame
2. Shifting gears
3. The timer
4. Brakes
5. Turn off switch
6. Speedometer
7. Setting the valves
8. Lubricating oil

Body Posture
Muscle strain
Regular habits
Rest periods
Relaxation
Speed rate
Working plan
Kitchen clothes

3922m

(Over)
For the basis of good home management, let us look to the health of the housewife. A clear brain, quick hands, light feet depend on a sound body. Each part of a machine may be used or abused until it fails to function satisfactorily. The same is true of the human machine, and so we make the comparison. The engineer studies and cares for his engine in order to get from it the greatest amount of work in terms of horse power, with the least amount of waste. To study and care for herself in order to get the greatest amount of work accomplished in terms of woman power, with the greatest ease, and in the shortest time, should be the aim of the progressive housewife.

The Frame - Or Body Posture

In order for any machine to do its best work, the frame which holds it must be made to stand level, balanced and firm. Many people today do not realize that their health, strength, endurance and youthfulness depend on the shape of their body frame, the backbone. When that wonderful column of twenty-four bones is in its natural position, it forms a double curve. That double curve line is the line of greatest strength. The fact that the backbone may be changed into many positions for the movements desired is of the greatest service to the human machine, yet in every case it must be returned to its natural position. Artists tell us that the human body in its perfect form is a specimen of the true harmony of line, balance and proportion. Let us not allow it to become badly proportioned by holding a wrong body posture.

A simple test is shown in the diagram below. Test yourself by means of a wall to see if you are "standing tall". Stand so that the wall touches the forehead and chest but clears the abdomen and touches the toes. Turn, walk away, remembering that good body posture is "standing tall".

The points in favor of every woman holding the correct body posture are as follows:
1. The waist and abdomen muscles are held firm and not allowed to weakly relax.
2. The vital organs are well supported and given room to function.
3. All parts of the body are free and uncramped.
4. The center of gravity is thrown over the ball of the advancing foot which gives body balance and ease in walking.
5. The chest will be thrown high for the best of breathing action.
6. The shoulders straight and broad give a pleasing appearance and personal attractiveness.
A wife, a mother, a housekeeper can not afford to fail in correct body posture. It costs so little and is worth so much in health, in happiness, and personal appearance. A wise old teacher often said to the boys in his school, "Stand up and be a man". Nebraska housewife, "Stand up and be a woman".

Are you hindered in holding a good body posture by the heights of the surfaces at which you must work? Must you bend over to roll the pie crust or stoop as you stand at the stove to stir the gravy? In proportion to your height the surfaces at which you work are best if they measure as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Height of woman</th>
<th>Height of working surfaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 ft. 10 in.</td>
<td>32 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 ft. 11 in.</td>
<td>32 1/2 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ft. 0 in.</td>
<td>34 1/2 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ft. 1 in.</td>
<td>35 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ft. 2 in.</td>
<td>37 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ft. 3 in.</td>
<td>38 in.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 ft. 4 in.</td>
<td>39 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ft. 5 in.</td>
<td>39 1/2 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ft. 6 in.</td>
<td>40 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ft. 7 in.</td>
<td>40 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ft. 8 in.</td>
<td>40 1/2 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ft. 9 in.</td>
<td>41 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ft. 10 in.</td>
<td>41 1/2 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ft. 11 in.</td>
<td>42 in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A simple test of heights for working surfaces may be made by "standing tall" beside the table, and if the surface is high enough that the hand can lie flat on it, then it is only fairly good in height. To add a bread board may be sufficient or better still add casters to the table legs.

How do you sit in a chair? There is a good way and a poor way, as proof of their values, let us try them.

Sit three minutes slouched down in a chair. Let the muscles of the abdomen relax. Let the head hang forward and look down. Let the shoulders round and fall in, even tho' they may crowd the lungs. Cross the knees and then hold that position perfectly quiet.

To be forgotten

"Too much haste maketh waste in walking". The erect standing position must be kept. Place the foot so that toes point in the direction of destination and not the bias progress with toes turned out. Bring every foot muscle into play, stiffen the knee joint and let the walking motion come from the hip joint. Draw in the abdomen and waist muscles, throw the chest high and the weight of the body always on the ball of the advancing foot. With this posture one should be able to walk swiftly and yet not have the appearance or effect of hurrying.

3922a
Shifting Gears - or Muscle Strain

Engines are constructed with three speeds. You know of them as high, intermediate, and low. High speed is used when the resistance is least. The intermediate is used when resistance has increased and low when the resistance is great. You know there are drivers of engines who take pride in chugging, chugging, up all hills "on high" just to say that they have seen their engine do that difficult task. To have changed the gear to low would have made it easier for the engine and a saving in wear on the parts.

In very much the same way, the human engine is so constructed that it can be made to run on high, or low gear. A few muscles can be drawn into plan and used beyond their strength while other muscles intended to aid are allowed to grow weak with disuse. The best example of this practice is seen as people climb stairs for then the resistance is great. To go up on high, take a running start for the stairs, bend your back, cramp in the lungs, grasp the railing with one hand, hurry along as fast as you can and when you reach the top give a great sign of exhaustion.

But to make the best use of the climbing muscles you can change the gear and go up on low, not always slow.

Be sure that you have the erect position "standing tall", look straight ahead, close your mouth and breathe thru the nose, let arms drop to the sides, place the right foot completely on the first step. Let the muscles of the thigh, leg, foot and toes all do their share to raise the body to the step above. It will not be necessary to call on the over-worked arm muscles for help. In this way it should be possible to reach the top of the stairs not out of breath but with a good degree of ease and composure. Make a test of both methods, then practice the correct way until it is your natural habit.
The Timesaver—or Regular Habits

The proud owner of a good gasoline engine has studied the machine and has it set so that it opens and closes the valves at regular periods thus creating the greatest power with the least amount of waste. But the woman, owner of a human machine, takes very little time and makes very little effort to study her own habits and time herself to a regular system.

The human timer should be set by the following regular habits:
To three regular, moderate meals each day.
To rest sufficient and at regular times.
With exercises in proportion to the work done.
By some recreation to please and refresh.

Constipation is the direct result of the abuse of the natural timer of the body processes. More female trouble can be traced to constipation as its cause than to any other neglected body function. This may be avoided and the following are suggestions:

On rising, drink two cups of hot or cold water or lemonade.
On the toilet, at the same time each day.
Exercise by stretching flat on back, draw the knees up toward the body, contract the abdomen, then relax and repeat five times.
Warm the feet by placing them in warm water to aid in the effort to relax.

For the diet include as many as possible of the following:
Fresh fruit, oranges, and apples.
Dried fruit, dates, figs and prunes.
Vegetables, lettuce, cabbage and carrots.
Buttermilk.
Whole wheat bread, bran muffins, coarse cereals.

The Brakes— or Rest Periods

Every automobile is so constructed that its driver may put on the brakes and check its motion as it speeds along. That same power is given to the housewife to break into her own speed, and check it up for rest. The value of rest periods depends on a change in position, a determination to make it a rest time, and fresh air to add the necessary renewing power. It is not a sign of laziness to see a housewife stretched out for rest at regular periods in the day. It is taking time to let nature catch up with itself and regain poise and normal speed rate. Rest periods even if short, taken at intervals throughout the day, while there is still a fund of strength to draw upon means renewed vigor to complete a strenuous piece of work. So often the housewife is called upon to be the advisor, councilor, and peacemaker for the other members of her family. Just at the time when she is busiest comes the demand for encouragement, advice or humor to carry off a trying situation. To be able to rise to these situations successfully, there is a need for the best of control in a rested body and a calm mind.

Turn off the Switch—or Relaxation

After an engine has been running hard for three hours it may have become too hot. To turn off the switch lets all parts come to a stand still. The lubricating oil cools to a temperature at which it is more useful than when hot. The metal parts of the machine contract to their original size and if the switch is again turned on the machine is capable of more work.
After the housewife has been working constantly for several hours leading up to the dinner time, when the family is expected home, her nervous tension may be so high that it is more wearing and tiring than actual work. One way by which she may get along at such a time is to screw up her nerves a little tighter and try to go thru the ordeal of being the Spirit of the home, serving the meal in good condition but feeling too tired to eat of the food which she has prepared. A feeling of vity, disappointment and sadness comes to the members of the household and the meal is not a success.

Quite a different way would be to turn off the switch of nervous tension and drop into a chair, for a three minute rest period. Now pretend that you are a jointed doll with all elastic power gone. Let your eyes travel very slowly from a point on the ceiling over your head to a point on the side wall. Follow down the side wall to the floor along the floor until your eyes are fixed on a point at your feet. Let your head fall with a thud on the chest, then to the left side, to the back, to the right and again on the chest. Close the eyes and think: "This too will pass"

Or as a third device to calm those nerves and relax those muscles, just stretch out on a bed or cot, raise the feet above the head, close the eyes, let every muscle drop its tension and think, - "God is in his heaven and all is well with the world". After three minutes with more steady nerves, a feeling of composure, a spirit of helpfulness and cheer, TURN ON THE SWITCH and go about the serving of the meal to make it an hour of joy for all.

Every art calls for practice, so relaxation should be classed as an art. "Try to relax; learn to relax; practice relaxation and reap its good results".

**Speedometer-or Speed Rate**

Not all machines are built with engines of equal speed rates. Nor are women equally quick in motions. Each woman has her own speed at which she works with the greatest degree of accuracy and satisfaction. A woman's speed rate varies with: (a) her physical condition, (b) her knowledge of the job at hand, (c) the plan she has of doing the work, (d) the tools with which she must work.

Any attempt to artificially speed up and say, "Now, I will hurry", will only increase the nervous tension and be the cause of many accidents. Then to accomplish the most, let us -

*Work a good plan,*

*At our own speed rate,*

*With the best of tools,*

*In a rested, healthful condition.*

**Setting the Valves-or Working a Plan**

Before any machine can function well, adjustment must be made so that the valves will open and close at regular times. A household with a plan whereby work is to be done in a logical order, will progress more smoothly and satisfactorily, than it would without that plan. The household plan must allow for exceptions. Every housekeeper has interruptions which must be met. But a plan once tried and broken is better than no plan at all. Conditions vary in every household and the plan used by one woman would not be the plan needed by her neighbor. However, it is possible and profitable for a housewife to have a plan for her work from day to day and week to week, in order to accomplish the most in each season.

"Plan your work
Then work your plan".

3922a
The following may be the basis for the plan which you need:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>September</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routine duties</td>
<td>1st week - Sewing for opening of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd week - County Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd week - Canning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4th week - Fall Sewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st week - Entertain friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd week - Canning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd week - Sewing (table linen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4th week - Preparation for club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st week -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd week -</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd week -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4th week -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuesday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routine duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wash day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fold clothes for ironing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wednesday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routine duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thursday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routine duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon free for club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or to go to town, or to neighbors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routine duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean living room or bed rooms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clean kitchen and porches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for Sunday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Altho' I know this is not new,
And may not fit the needs for you,
To start you plannin', talkin', thinkin',
Was why I wrote this down in Lincoln.

**Lubricating Oil - or Kitchen Clothes**

The lubricating oil for the machine means smooth, easy action of the parts. The costume which the housewife wears should permit free, easy movements as she works. Yet, how often we see women in the kitchen with a dress too long, too loose, too tight, or too heavy to permit her easiest action. Her clothes are actually a hindrance and tire her as she works.

There are two grades of lubricating oil, that which keeps its lubricating qualities and that which soon forms a sticky paste. The wise engineer chooses the best quality for he knows it means economy in the long run. Does the housewife realize that the underwear, shoes, corset, and dress which she wears as she works may have high grade qualities and be clean, attractive, and comfortable or low grade qualities, and be unsanitary, unattractive and hindering. The out-of-style silk dress, the old kimono and the run-over shoes, regardless of their cleanliness, comfort, and appearance are too often worn in the kitchen.

The lack of lubricating oil would soon mean a grating sound very annoying to the one who used a machine. The lack of comfortable, appropriate clothes for the woman in the kitchen may soon produce that irritated feeling which is shown by hasty, unkind words so unpleasant for one who must work with such a housewife. Then, let us choose good lubricating oil in the form of meat, attractive, comfortable kitchen clothes.
The Influence of an Attractive Workshop

Beauty has a lifting power which is too often overcome by the effort to economize. The kitchen is the housewife's domain, so let her make it a place of beauty as well as service. Every human being has a sense of joy and pride at being able to create a thing of beauty, whether that be a cake, a cabinet, a cornfield or a kitchen. Let us take a share of joy in making our kitchen "the prettiest little workshop that ever you did see". The atmosphere shed by the room in which one works can not be overlooked. The state of mind is the direct result of one's surroundings. Disgust, discontentment and discouragement all grow swiftly in the mind of the woman who as she looks up from her work is greeted by dark, soiled walls, bare windows, which only express weariness at the thought of cleaning, furniture nicked and ill suited to her needs, the dark oil cloth on the table; cut and torn, open shelves for pots and pans, a rough, splintered floor strewn with sticks and trash. From her window she sees the old dead tree, the ash can beneath it, old cast off machinery, and the old unpainted shed with the rubbish heap beside it.

But suppose in its stead she looks up to see light cherry walls, shelves now enclosed by doors, a white oil cloth or zinc topped table which expresses cleanliness and is a joy to clean. That old rough floor is now covered with linoleum and the old trunk from the attic on casters keeps the wood and sticks in their place. She looks out from her window and sees Nature's rare beauty in fruitful shrubs which hide the old shed. A climbing vine clings to the old tree trunk, sturdy bright sunflowers grow where the rubbish heap was and typify strength, vigor, and pride as they turn their heads to the sun.

No matter how limited her means, every housewife may make some improvement in the attractiveness of her kitchen. It may only mean the remaking of the curtains, the cleaning of the walls or the rearranging of her equipment. But it means more health of mind and body for all who must work in that shop. Let us strive to have kitchens so attractive that they spell hospitality, cleanliness, and convenience to every one who enters.

The attractiveness of the kitchen rests on five qualities:

(a) Convenient size
(b) Good ventilation
(c) Sufficient light
(d) Cheerful walls
(e) A practical floor covering

(a) Convenient size. The size of a kitchen is determined by the purpose for which it must serve and the number of people who are to work in it at one time. The kitchen is the crux of the farm home. It is the working center of the house. The function of the kitchen should be the preparation of food and the washing of utensils. However, the farm kitchen has been used for many purposes, such as the washing of hands, combing of hair, shaving, washing of clothes, and a place where men remove their boots and shoes. These operations are all necessary but too unsanitary to be carried on in the kitchen where food is being prepared. An adjoining room, porch, or basement would be better for such processes. Then by taking out of the kitchen all work not needed in the preparation of food, we may have a smaller room, more convenient, and where quick, easy motions are possible for the worker. For the small kitchen 7 ft. x 9 ft.; 8 ft. x 10 ft.; or 8 ft. x 12 ft. are good dimensions. When the one room must serve as dining room also, 12 ft. x 14 ft. is a good size. In a room longer than it, is wide the equipment may be arranged to much better advantage than in the square room.

3922R
(b) Good ventilation. The producing of odors, the formation of steam, and the use of fire which takes up oxygen of the air, are three reasons why it is very necessary to plan for good ventilation in the kitchen. A window above the outside door allows for the escape of impure air and the entrance of fresh air without a direct draft on the worker. To lower the windows from the top is a good plan but in cases where that can not be done the use of the window board device as shown below, helps greatly.

(c) Sufficient Light. Sufficient light is best made possible when the kitchen has two outside walls. A northeast or northwest corner are the best choices because an east window makes a cheerful kitchen for the morning hours when the housewife is working there. The north wall allows for ice box or storage room best protected from the heat of the day. The kitchen windows are best placed at least 34 inches from the floor in order to allow for table space below if desired. A window in each exposure allows for cross ventilation and light from both directions. The glass area should not be less than 20% of the floor area. Both day light and artificial light should be arranged for at all working centers, the stove, table, and sink. A woman can not be expected to do her best work if she must stand in her own light and work under a strain to see her work. The light coming from the center of the ceiling with a wall light near the sink and table mean much to the convenience of the worker.

(d) Cheerful walls. The most common and practical walls for the kitchen are hard plaster which may be tinted, painted, enameled or calcimined. The oiled waterproof and varnished papers are very satisfactory if the wall is in good condition. Oil cloth is perhaps the most sanitary and durable of them all. Whatever the wall covering may be, it serves the same as the picture mat and is the background of the picture in which the housewife is the principal character. The same as for picture mats we will choose soft, subdued shades but light in color to reflect light and make the room seem cheerful. Pure white would be used only for a room, the natural lighting of which was very limited. White is hard to keep clean and is not soothing or restful to the eyes. A pleasing effect is always secured by the use of buff and tan shades.
(e) A Practical floor covering. "To save is to have". One of the most Valuable labor savers for the housewife is the durable, well finished kitchen floor. Constant scrubbing of a floor with soap and water splinters the wood and shortens its life, while oil and wax that floor would preserve it almost indefinitely. The types of kitchen floor covering in the order of their choice, are as follows:

1. The soft or hard wood floor oiled and waxed. It is moderate in cost, wears well, is easily kept clean and is easy of tread.
2. The inlaid linoleum is satisfactory. The first cost is high, is easily kept clean, is most durable and can be purchased in attractive shades and patterns.
3. The printed linoleums carefully laid are not so high in the original cost, are easily cleaned, may lose their attractiveness when the surface design wears off, but fills the need of the average household when carefully cared for, waxed and cleaned.
4. The old soft-wood kitchen floor may be painted with two or three coats of hard, deck paint, dried and waxed and made to serve much better than the unfinished wood.
5. Varnish and shellac on the kitchen floor are unsatisfactory because they scratch easily, are difficult to walk upon, costly and must be often renewed.

The day of unfinished floors, which must be scrubbed, has surely passed for there is work far more important than scrubbing of floors for the American housewife.

Summary

When the Nebraska housewife sees herself at the head of the most important business in the world rather than a drudge condemned to a life of hard work, then will she come to fully realize that her own health and happiness must be preserved and translated into better, happier lives for others. The more she can save her own time, strength, and vigor, the more she will be able to give to her family of the richest gifts; moral direction, inspiration, and love. This will be possible for a homemaker only by wise choices, thoughtful planning, and careful management in her household.

Better Practices for the Housewife in Her Workshop

1. Remember Homemaking is the great profession.
2. Stand tall.
3. Bend, don't stoop.
4. Sit erect.
5. Go upstairs on "low".
6. Set the body timer.
7. A rest period some time in every day.
8. Be a relaxation artist.
9. Not a hurry but to think.
10. Plan your work, then work your plan.
11. Look your best for those who love you most.
12. Make yours "the prettiest little workshop that ever you did see".
14. Let "homemaking" not "housekeeping" be the aim.

(Prepared by Mariel L. Smith. Approved by the Department of Home Economics)