

# REAL SIMPLE

life/home/body/soul

## The ultimate cleaning system: an easy top-to-bottom guide

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## way up high

**REGULAR:** Dust loves the lofty surfaces you can't see, like the tops of bookcases and ceiling-fan blades. Use a vacuum with the brush attachment to dust moldings, including baseboards (it's infinitely easier than stretching and bending while armed with only a dust cloth). You can attack the ceiling fan with the duster from Casabella (see Cleaning Solutions, right) or with a stepladder and a microfiber cloth.

**WHEN NEEDED:** "Cooking grease aerosols through your house and coats surfaces," says Mendelson. Every month or so, use a stepladder and wipe down kitchen cabinets with a solution of liquid dish detergent and water. Then go over them with a clean cloth that you've dipped in water and wrung out well.

## at eye level

**REGULAR:** Surfaces at the same height as a table, such as sideboards, bookshelves, windowsills, and dining and occasional tables, are highly visible. Dust them once a week with a dry microfiber cloth or a slightly damp cotton one.

**WHEN NEEDED:** For serious dust on upholstered furniture and rustic wood furniture that would snag a cloth, use a vacuum cleaner. Add the brush attachment to dust window screens, blinds (close them first), and lampshades.

## on the desk/entertainment center

**REGULAR:** The dust-collecting matte surfaces, knobs, and crags of your TV, computer, DVD player, and stereo components call for microfiber cloths, which will pick up the dust—as well as fingerprints—without leaving any linty residue. For deeper grime, moisten a cloth slightly to remove fingerprints on everything but the keyboard.

**WHEN NEEDED:** Before dusting the computer monitor, use Dust-Off (\$4.60, [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com) for store locations) on the keyboard. It kicks up all the crud and crumbs between the keys with a blast of air. Spray a little all-purpose cleanser (such as Mr. Clean Antibacterial Multi-Purpose Cleaner) on a microfiber cloth (or use a premoistened disposable cleansing cloth) and rub down the desktop and the phone receiver. (A 2001 study done by a University of Arizona professor found that a typical desktop—especially the phone receiver—hosts about 400 times more bacteria than the average toilet seat.)

## way down low

**REGULAR:** The StarMop (\$17, [www.starfibers.com](http://www.starfibers.com)), with its microfiber cleaning pad, attracts dirt without leaving a dusty trail. And provided your vacuum hasn't been around since the Bay of Pigs, vacuuming with the floor or brush attachment is an effective alternative.

**WHEN NEEDED:** A dry mop does have its limitations. To rid any floor of a dirty film, use the StarMop with Earth Friendly Products Floor Cleaner or Murphy Oil Soap.



## Cleaning Solutions

■ **Casabella**  
Fantastic Ceiling Fan Duster (\$16, [www.casabella.com](http://www.casabella.com)). A ceiling fan may spin, but dust somehow finds a way to hold on tight. This orb-shaped duster gives you 360-degree coverage. You can keep your feet on the ground and aim for the blades.



■ **Don Aslett Lambswool Extension Duster** (\$8.50, [www.donaslett.com](http://www.donaslett.com)). This telescoping tool adds almost four feet to your reach, so you can tackle cobwebs lurking in corners high and low.

