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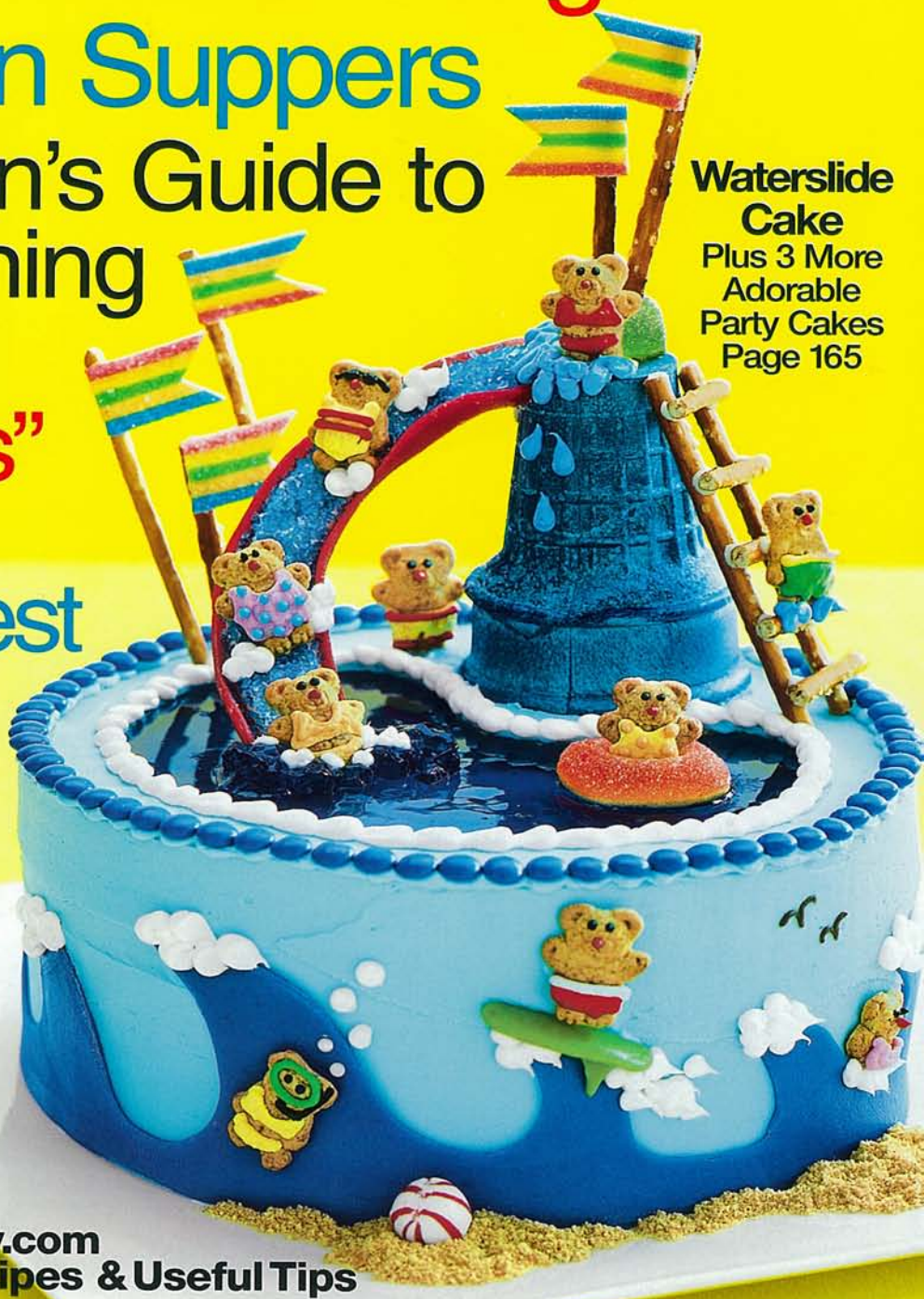
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Page 165



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the lazy person's guide to housekeeping



Save time and money

by Teri Cettina

When friends visit, they often tease my husband and me about being compulsive housecleaners. While it's true that we like having a tidy home, we probably spend less time cleaning than most of our pals.

Our secret? We're a little lazy. We're just not interested in spending hours dusting, vacuuming, mopping and putting things away. Over time we've collected tips on how to keep a house looking good in practically no time.

clean only what you have to

Most of us don't have time for the elaborate deep-cleanings our grandmothers used to do. Fortunately, you don't need to work that hard to keep your house clean if you tackle the job strategically.

Be your own boss "If it isn't dirty, don't clean it!" says Don Aslett, author of *No Time to Clean!* Clean according to your own standards. For instance, if your standard is "I clean windows when they have lots of visible fingerprints," then you'll only have to clean windows when they

get to that point. That could be once a week or once a year, depending on your household.

Don't fuss over furniture You don't need to vacuum upholstery too often to keep crumbs off your couch and chairs. Instead, remove crumbs and dust regularly with a plastic handheld whisk broom and a dustpan, says Jeff Campbell, author of *Speed Cleaning*. "It's faster than vacuuming and does a great job."

Dust on the horizontal Flat surfaces are where dust falls and spills occur, says Campbell, so focus your efforts there. That means dusting tabletops but not legs, window ledges but not walls.

Spot-clean cabinets For routine cleaning, wipe cabinet doors and entry doors just around the knobs and handles, where dirt collects. Spot-clean marks, spills or dirt. You need only wipe down the entire door or cabinet once a month.

zap your hot zones

Most houses have one or two "hot spots" in every room, says organizing and cleaning expert Marla Cilley, a.k.a. "The FlyLady" and author of *Sink Reflections*. These are places like the chair next to your bed, your treadmill or the table near the front door that seem to naturally collect clutter.

Use the five-minute rule Once you've identified your family's hot spots, Cilley suggests you spend five minutes each morning and evening tidying them. Your home will automatically look neater.

Return order Many hot spots are covered with items that need to be returned. Is your dining room table overflowing with overdue library books and videos? Store them in your hall closet in a designated bag. An assigned kitchen drawer can also serve as a temporary

Please turn to 136