

Conserving Time and Energy

After the work schedule is in operation, the homemaker may turn her attention to reducing time and energy required for cleaning. Studies have disclosed that oftentimes cleaning is the most disliked household work, due probably to several causes. Cleaning is fatiguing. It often is done without adequate tools or the knowledge of better and easier methods. A job performed haphazardly is both tiring and uninteresting.

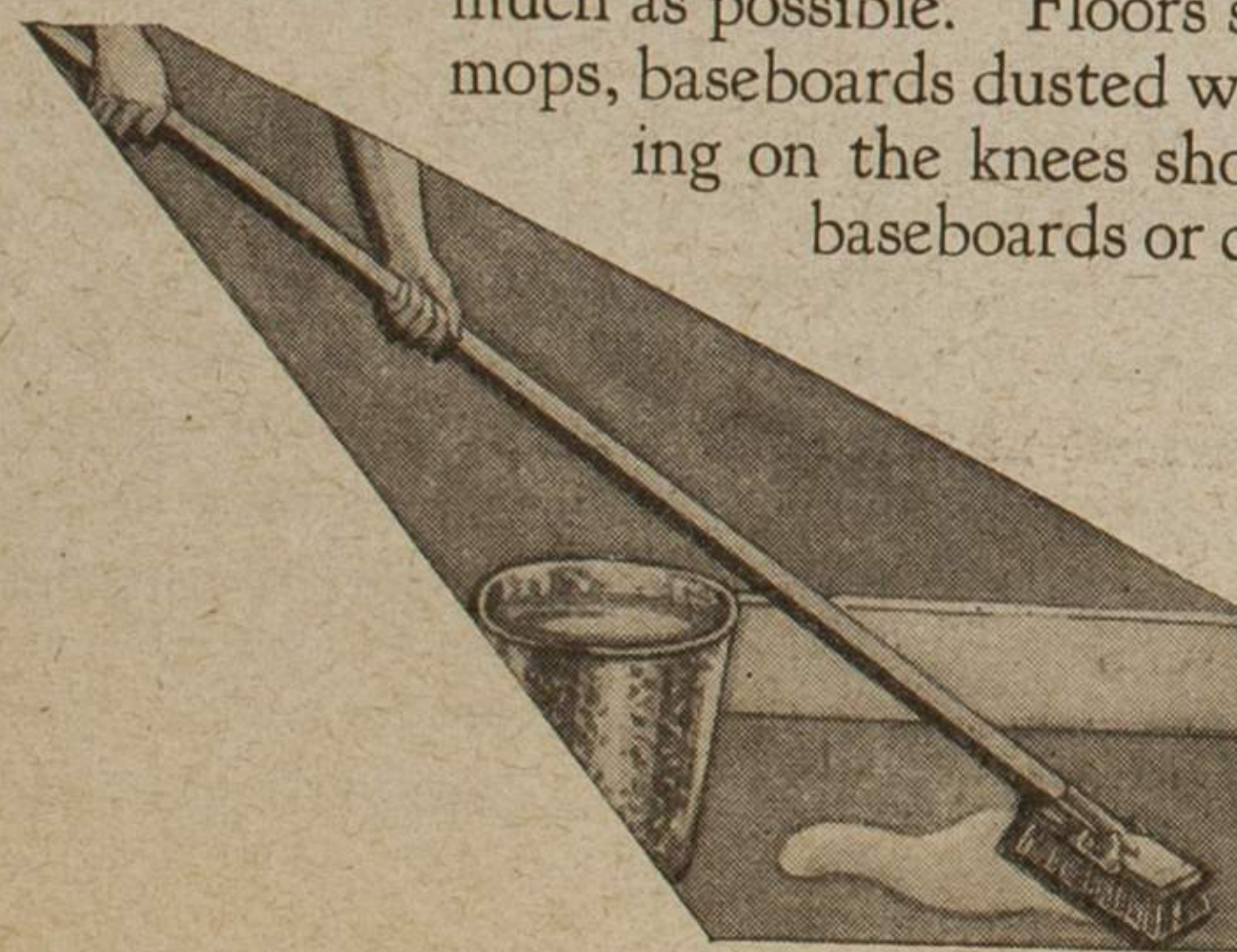
Modern equipment—systematic methods

Orderliness in the household and in working plans are fatigue-reducers in themselves. There is no need to worry about the many things that must be done when one knows that each will receive attention according to a systematic and flexible plan. With modern equipment and systematic methods, fatigue is reduced and there is greater satisfaction in the performance of cleaning tasks. Thoughtfully planned arrangements of storage places with articles located nearest the place of use makes house cleaning easier, quicker, and more orderly. If the children are trained to take care of their personal possessions and share in the responsibilities of the household, work, worry, and friction are lifted from the homemaker.

Habits of work are not always easy to change, but if a homemaker really wishes to make her work lighter, she will find compensation in a gradual readjustment to better methods. Experience has shown that the best method for doing a job not only produces the best results but also is most economical of time and energy. Hence she may find it fruitful to ask herself, "How do I do this task?" Then she may observe the motions she goes through in doing a particular job and experiment with ways to reduce their number; watch the number of steps she takes and avoid retracing them as much as possible; combine parts of a job, such as rearranging furniture while dusting it; select and arrange her equipment with the thought of saving time and energy through its use. The savings may be only in minutes on a specific task, but the total may provide a rest period during the day or more leisure for enjoyment of the family and personal activities.

It takes less time and energy to continue one cleaning process as long as possible, such as dusting the rooms on one floor, then cleaning the rugs. Dropping one tool frequently to pick up another causes some nervous readjustment. For this reason, too, it is best to complete one job and put the tools away before taking up another household task. Where there are very young children it often is difficult to avoid interruptions and distractions, but careful planning helps to relieve even this problem.

Stooping and bending are tiring. Hence long-handled tools should be used as much as possible. Floors should be wiped with long-handled mops, baseboards dusted with a long-handled brush, and working on the knees should be only a last resort to wash baseboards or clean a dirty corner.



A long-handled scrub brush saves the knees.

Selection and Care of Cleaning Equipment

In general, well-selected, good-quality tools pay for their extra cost in their efficiency and in the time and energy they save. They are more economical in the end because they do not have to be replaced so often. It is equally true that moderately good tools well cared for will give longer service than the best that are carelessly handled.

With such a wide variety of cleaning equipment on the market, there may be a temptation to buy more than is actually needed. It is well to consider not only the cost of a tool in relation to how durable and useful it is, but also whether it is adaptable to several kinds of work. The problem of storage is simplified, and cleaning is less burdensome, if only a few pieces of equipment must be carried from room to room.

Before buying equipment, and especially before selecting expensive tools, it is well to answer such questions as: Will this be used enough to justify the cost? Will it really save time and energy? How many kinds of jobs will it do? How much care in cleaning and storing will it require?

Brooms come in various weights and sizes, and are made of fibers that differ also in kind and quantity. A broom that suits the purpose does a better cleaning job.

Fiber brooms cost more than those of broomcorn, but last several times as long and are more satisfactory to use. They do not flip up the dust during sweeping, and they wear down more evenly. Water preserves them, while it deteriorates broomcorn. They have been found especially useful on farms in scrubbing dairies and other buildings.

Chinese palm is one of the best, cheapest, and most durable of the fibers used for brooms. It is grown in water and therefore water helps to preserve it. The fibers in brooms of this type are always set in a metal jacket, which is attached to the handle. The metal binder or rows of stitching below the jacket may be removed as the broom wears down and so lengthen its period of usefulness. Some fiber brooms have a rubber or leather jacket over the metal jacket; these protect furniture but make the broom somewhat heavier to handle. Fiber brooms come in several weights and fiber lengths, the lighter weight being the most satisfactory for housework; the longer fibers make the longest-wearing brooms. The better brooms have maple handles, shellacked, varnished, or enameled. Pine is satisfactory on the cheaper ones, but birch handles are to be avoided because they break more easily.

Dipping fiber brooms in water once a week and hanging them up immediately keeps them in good condition and increases their durability. They should never be stored resting on the fiber end. Either hang them or rest them on the end of the handle.

Broomcorn brooms of satisfactory quality have a mixture of curly and rough fibers. Curly broomcorn curls even more when wet, and the ends of broomcorn fibers are often split. A good broom has comparatively few split ends and these splits should be short. The stitching cannot be removed as the broom wears down because the fibers will flare. Handles should be smooth finished, and the broom should be sturdy but light in weight. When stored these brooms like others should be hung or rested on the end of the handle.

Tampico fiber brooms have about 4 inches of these tough vegetable fibers extending from a hardwood block. They are more efficient and durable than the broomcorn type, but more expensive than either palm fiber or broomcorn.