



5 Tips for People Who Are Both Clean and Messy

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When you think of a “messy” person, you probably think of a disgusting slob. However, this notion is inaccurate.

Many people associate the idea of being “clean” with being “neat”. They might use the terms interchangeably. However, as an avid germaphobe, I can tell you that “clean” and “neat” are two totally different concepts. “Clean” is pertaining to the sanitation and absence of impure substances, such as dirt, stains or germs. “Neat” refers to the organization and orderly arrangement of items. The two concepts complement each other, but they are not the same thing. It’s possible for a person to be “messy, but clean”. Similarly, it’s possible for a person to be “neat, but dirty”.

I’m a very clean person. However, I struggle with organization. If you can relate, read on for five of my own personal tips on how to maintain both a clean *and* organized living space.

1. Your floor is clean, but there is always clutter on it

In college, I usually vacuumed my room once a week, on Sunday evenings. However, afterwards, I would start my homework and in about 30 minutes, papers and textbooks would be scattered over the floor. My floor was “clean”, but “cluttered”.

Tip: Try to keep your items stacked while you work. This one is extremely hard for me. I get busy with my work, and I don't even notice that my papers have stretched across the floor. When you notice the items getting out of control, take a break and stack them back up. You might have to do this “check-in” several times throughout the day to stay on top of clutter, but it will make your space look neater.

2. Your clothes are clean, but never folded or hung up

I love clean clothes. I like my clothes to feel fresh and smell good. Wearing clean clothes makes *me* feel clean. As such, I wash my clothes regularly. However, one of my biggest downfalls is washing my clothes, and then just throwing them into a basket. When I do this, it takes way longer to find a garment. Sometimes I don't find it, and I have to wear another piece of clothing just because I couldn't find the garment I actually wanted. As you can probably imagine, this proves to be a very annoying problem.

Tip: Plan a designated “laundry time” routine. In college, Monday evenings were my designated “laundry time”. After I washed my clothes, I put them on my bed. In this way, I couldn't go to bed until I folded and hung them up. I basically *forced* myself to do this chore before bedtime. It was annoying, but it did help me stay organized and I was glad I did it when I woke up each morning. I was able to just scan my closet and find the pair of pants that I wanted to wear for the day. It also proved to be very beneficial when I had an 8 AM class. Rather than rummaging for my favorite shirt deep down in a basket at 7:39 AM, I was able to just “grab and go”!

3. Your desk is clean, but there is always clutter on it

In college, I would wipe down my desk with Clorox or Lysol wipes. However, afterwards, I would throw my items right back on top of it. Folders, books, and papers would be strewn over my desk.

Tip: Don't leave items on your desk. If you have a drawer inside your desk, store them there. Keep them there until you need them. For example, only pull out your math textbook when it's time to do homework or go to class. When you're done, put the book back in the drawer rather than throwing it on your desk. Your desk space will look much better without all the random clutter scattered on top of it.

4. Your bed linens are clean, but you never make up your bed

I love clean bed linens, and I regularly wash them. However, I absolutely detest making up my bed. For whatever reason, it just annoys me.

Tip: As soon as you wake up in the morning, make up your bed. As soon as you step out of your bed, turn around, and make it up. Don't do anything else until it's done. While it's tempting to procrastinate and say you'll make up the bed later, it's easier to do this chore first thing in the morning.

5. Your kitchen is clean, but isn't organized

My "kitchen" in college usually consisted of a personal refrigerator, microwave, and trash can. I didn't have an actual kitchen for the majority of my college years, so I furnished my own items that the dorm allowed. Since I didn't have an actual "food pantry", I usually just put my food on top of the microwave. I took my trash out regularly.

Tip: Try to have an organizational method. For example, you might store cereals with other cereals, or breads with other breads. In this way, you can look in the same spot for similar foods, rather than scanning the entire pantry for an item.

References

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