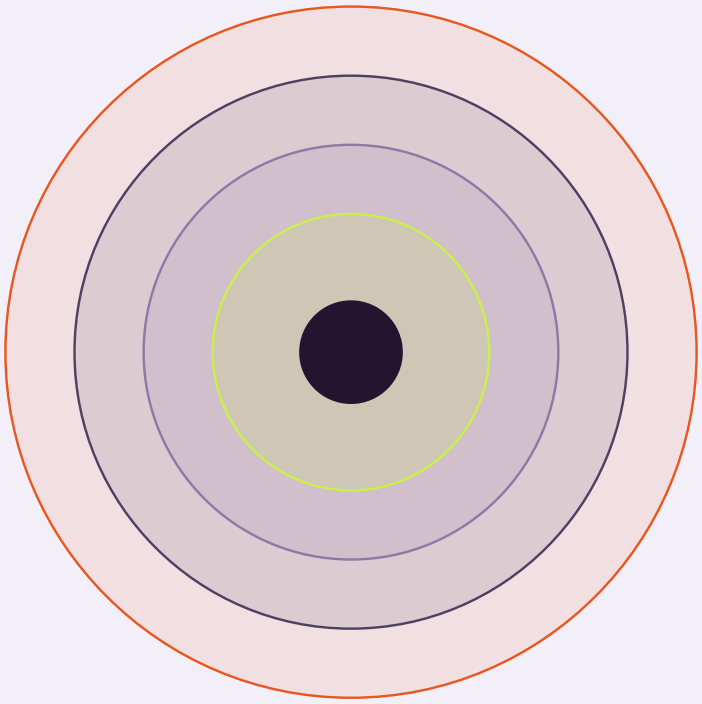


Martha Stewart's Homekeeping Handbook: The Essential Guide to Caring for Every-

thing in Your Home

A reading of the book by Martha Stewart (2006)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of Martha Stewart's Homekeeping Handbook: The Essential Guide to Caring for Everything in Your Home, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

Martha Stewart built a career and a media business around cooking, entertaining and the running of a home. This handbook, published by Clarkson Potter in 2006, is her large reference on keeping a house clean, safe and in good repair. It argues that a well-run home comes from steady routines and a working knowledge of what your things are made of, not from occasional heroic cleaning. The book is split into four parts: Room by Room, Throughout the House, Comfort and Safety, and an A-to-Z guide to materials. It works through each space from the entryway to the attic, with charts, illustrated techniques and sidebars, and covers jobs as varied as stain removal, sewing repairs, polishing silver, sealing countertops and clearing vents.

Below are the 9 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

A home stays clean by rhythm, not by rescue.

The handbook treats housekeeping as a set of routines that repeat: some jobs every day, some every week, some every month, some once a season. Done on that rhythm, no single job grows into a weekend. The big clean you dread is mostly the small jobs you skipped.

2

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Clean the room in front of you, not the whole house in your head.

The first part of the book goes room by room, from the entryway to the attic. Each space gets its own surfaces, tools and tasks. Thinking one room at a time turns a vague, endless chore into a short list you can finish.

3

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Know what a thing is made of before you clean it.

The book closes with an A-to-Z guide to materials, because the right method depends on the surface. Marble, wood, cast iron, silver and wool each want different care. A cleaner that suits one can dull, scratch or stain another.

4

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Maintenance is the cheap version of repair.

A whole part of the book, Comfort and Safety, is about keeping a house running: clearing vents, changing filters, fixing a dripping faucet, keeping pests out. These are dull jobs that cost minutes. Skipping them tends to cost a tradesperson later.

5

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Some jobs belong to the season, not the week.

Turning mattresses, washing windows, swapping heavy bedding and checking the gutters do not need doing often. They do need a fixed time, or they never happen. Tying them to the change of season gives them a home in the calendar.

6

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Treat laundry as a system, from sorting to the shelf.

The handbook gives the laundry room its own space, with stain removal and fabric care alongside washing and drying. Sorting, treating, washing, drying, folding and putting away are steps in one process. A break anywhere in it is where the pile starts.

7

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Caring for things is how you get to keep them.

The book spends time on objects people mean to keep for decades: silver, linens, wooden furniture, heirlooms. Regular, gentle care is what stops them wearing out early. A table that is wiped, waxed and kept out of the sun can outlast its owner.

8

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Good tools, kept in one place, make every job shorter.

For each room the book covers the appliances and tools found there, not only the surfaces. A kit you can pick up and carry means you start the job instead of hunting for a cloth. Fewer, better tools also mean less clutter under the sink.

9

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Safety is part of keeping house.

The handbook puts home safety next to cleaning, because both are about looking after the people who live there. Testing alarms, storing cleaners safely and knowing where the shut-offs are belong on the same list as dusting. They take little time and matter most on the day you need them.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] List your rooms
- [ ] Pack one cleaning caddy
- [ ] Write a materials card
- [ ] Build your four-column schedule
- [ ] Put the seasonal jobs in your calendar

KEEP UP DAILY

- [ ] Do a ten-minute evening reset
- [ ] Give each room its day
- [ ] Treat stains the same day

30 days · Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

- [ ] SETUP 1

List your rooms

Walk through your home with a notebook and write down every space, including the hall, the laundry corner and the cupboard under the stairs.

This is the map the rest of your routine hangs on.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 2

Pack one cleaning caddy

Put a cloth, a mild all-purpose cleaner, a scrub brush, a duster and a pair of gloves in one carrier you can lift with one hand.

Keep it where you'll see it, not at the back of a cupboard.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 3

Write a materials card

Note what your counters, floors, sink and main furniture are made of.

Check the maker's care advice for each and write one line per surface, so you never have to guess which cleaner is safe.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 4

Build your four-column schedule

Make four columns: daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal.

Put each room's jobs in the right column, keeping the daily list short enough to finish in about fifteen minutes. The builder on this page will draft it for you.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 5

Put the seasonal jobs in your calendar

Add four repeating dates, one at the start of each season.

Under each, list the jobs that come round then, such as changing filters, testing alarms and washing windows.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Do a ten-minute evening reset

Each night, clear and wipe the kitchen counters, put things back in their rooms and start the dishwasher or wash up.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Give each room its day

Pick one room or zone for each day of the week and do its weekly jobs then.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Treat stains the same day

Blot a spill straight away and treat the stain before the item goes in the laundry basket.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
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December 2026

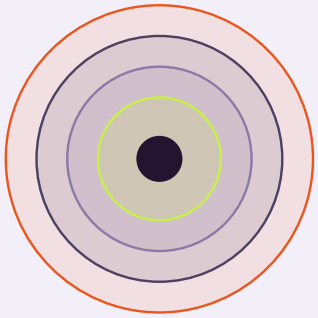
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



A home stays kept by small jobs done on time, each in its own room and its own season.

HOURLIFE NOTE AFTER MARTHA STEWART

Read it online, and vote on the takeaways: hourlife.com/books/martha-stewarts-homekeeping-handbook

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