

South Dakota State University
**Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional
Repository and Information Exchange**

Cooperative Extension Circulars: 1917-1950

SDSU Extension

5-1944

Streamlining Housekeeping

K. Lorette Nelson

Follow this and additional works at: http://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_circ

Recommended Citation

Nelson, K. Lorette, "Streamlining Housekeeping" (1944). *Cooperative Extension Circulars: 1917-1950*. Paper 408.
http://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_circ/408

This Circular is brought to you for free and open access by the SDSU Extension at Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Cooperative Extension Circulars: 1917-1950 by an authorized administrator of Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. For more information, please contact michael.biondo@sdstate.edu.

Circular 410

May, 1944

Streamlining HOUSEKEEPING



*Agricultural Extension Service South Dakota State College
U. S. Department of Agriculture*

Streamlining Housekeeping

Compiled by K. LORETTE NELSON*

With so many jobs to do and so few hours in which to do them, homemakers are asking themselves, "What can we do to streamline our jobs?"

Now that we are at war there is a revival of interest in work simplification. It is estimated that 25 to 50 per cent of the manual work done in shops, offices, factories, and homes is unnecessary—that the work might be done in a much better way with less energy. The factory worker has studied his motions and improved them, and greater production has resulted. In the same way homemakers are looking at their jobs, their way of doing a task. Homemakers who have studied their motions have found that they have been able to do more work in less time and do it more easily.

It is the wise homemaker who will study her jobs and try to do those jobs more easily and quickly. *Every motion counts—it is important to make them count for you.*

PRINCIPLES OF TIME AND MOTION

Thirty-two home economists from 24 states worked on motion and time study as applied to homemaking at Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana, in August, 1943. These are some of the principles of time and motion which this committee found applied effectively to homemaking jobs. These principles will help you to do the job more

easily and in less time; they show you how to handle things, how to save steps, and how to arrange your work centers.

LEAVE OUT ANY PART OF THE TASK YOU CAN. For example: In dish-washing scald the dishes with boiling hot water and leave in rack to dry. When you do not have running hot water, have a pan of boiling water into which the dishes are placed after being washed in the soapsuds, then remove them with tongs to the drying rack. Use sheets without ironing; use recipes which require less time and fewer utensils.

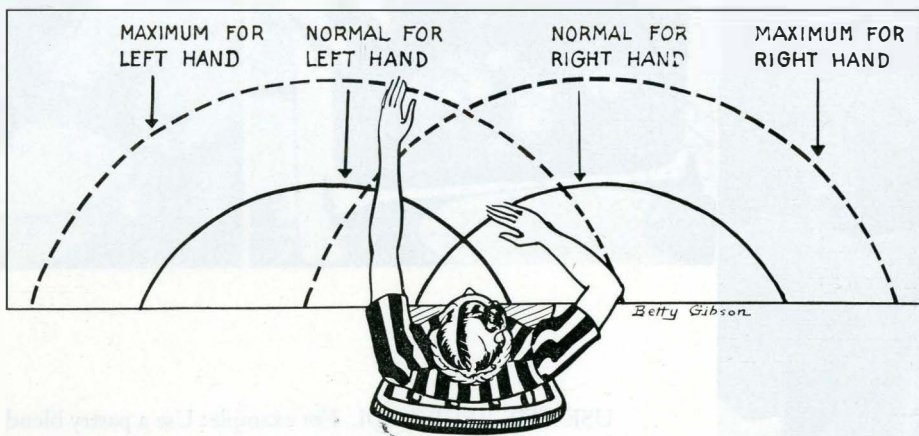
Some cake recipes require much more time and more utensils than others. Compare the number of utensils required for two different recipes as shown below.

KEEP EVERYTHING WITHIN EASY REACH. Wasted steps mean wasted energy. For example: All supplies used at the mixing center should be kept there. Keep coffee pot, coffee and measuring spoon or cup at the place the coffee is made; group ironing equipment, such as table, basket, iron, clothes rack, hangers and hooks, as near board as possible.

Time and steps can be saved if all equipment and supplies are brought to the center where they are to be used. They should be arranged so they can be reached easily, and, if possible, in the order of use. These articles

* Home Management Specialist





should be grouped in a circular position before you within the normal working area.

To find the normal working area, sit at a table, hold your arms comfortably at your sides, bend your elbows, and draw an imaginary semicircle on the table, using both hands. This gives the most comfortable work space for both hands. Notice the area where circles overlap. In this area work can be done most comfortably when both hands are working together. (See figure above.)

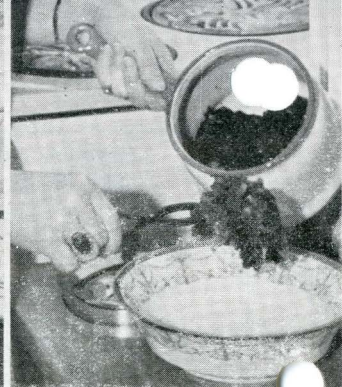
Extend arms in front of you at the shoulders and swing them in a semi-circle. This is the maximum working area. When standing find your easy reaching distance by ex-

tending arms above your head and swinging them to shoulder height. These suggestions are excellent for determining dimensions of kitchen cabinets and various closet spaces.

MAKE BOTH HANDS WORK. Most of the work is done by the right hand only, when both hands could be used. You could learn to use both hands to put away dishes; to set the table; to use two dustcloths or dust-mitts for dusting. (See below.)

It will probably require practice to get both hands accustomed to working at the same time.





USE THE BEST TOOL. For example: Use a pastry blender to save time and motions; use tongs for removing jars and glasses from hot rinse water; use a long handled dustpan to prevent stooping and to save motion. However, the organization of the work center and simplifying the work method are more important than the tool used.

Tongs are inexpensive and save time and effort. Among other uses, they are good for serving greens and shredded vegetables; for taking baked potatoes from the oven; for removing jars in canning.

SIT TO WORK WHENEVER YOU CAN. Some pieces of ironing can be done while sitting. A lap table has many uses such as preparing vegetables for canning or for meals.

This South Dakota homemaker planned for a lapboard in her kitchen. It pulls out

like a breadboard and makes a good height surface for sitting to work. Notice the two heights of work surface in the same homemaker's kitchen. The area at the left is a baking area and the work surface is lower than the work surface at the right of the sink, which is used for stacking dishes.



MAKE ONE TASK OUT OF TWO OR MORE.

Use these baking dishes in which food may be served (this saves dishing up and washing of one dish); serve one dish meals (this saves using several dishes); fold pillowcases as you iron them.

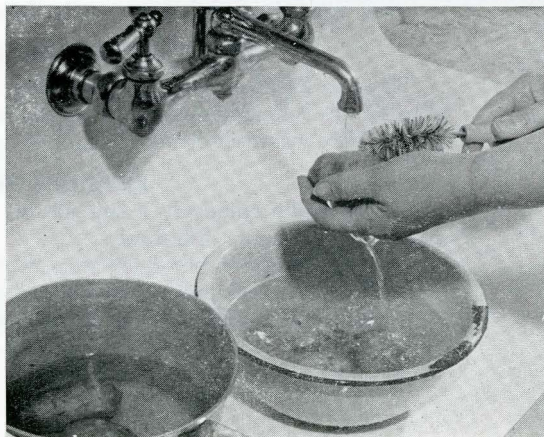
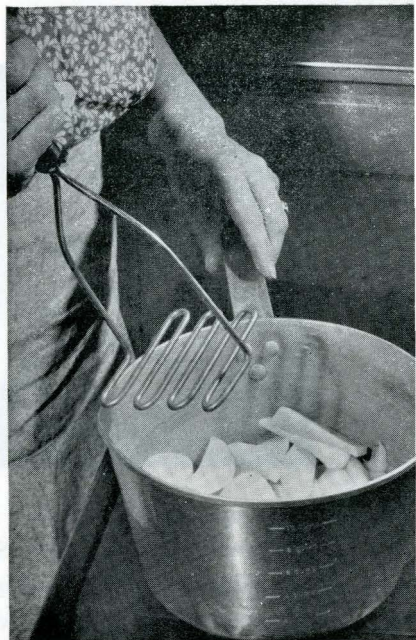
You can save time and energy in mashing potatoes, if you pare the potatoes and cut them into eighths. This would be a good time to use the smaller potatoes (six to the pound). Cutting potatoes into smaller pieces will save both cooking and mashing time. Use a sloping-sided saucepan because it will take less time than a straight-sided kettle. Boil with only enough water to prevent scorching. Allow the cooking water to evaporate. (This eliminates the need for a second kettle). For each 2 pounds of potatoes add 3 tablespoons of fat and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup room-temperature milk. Set over low heat for about 10 minutes; if longer, add another $\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk before mashing. Mash with a looped-wire masher just before the meal is served. This can be done in approximately 2 minutes. Using the wire masher consumes less time than using either the round wooden potato masher or the electric mixer, which requires time for cleanup and reassembling.

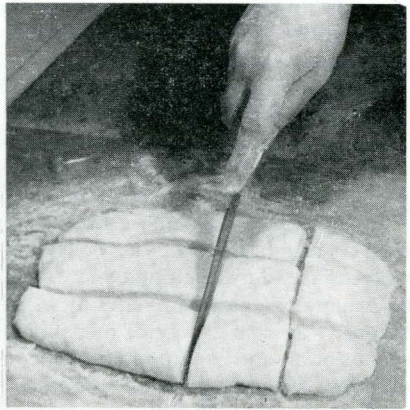
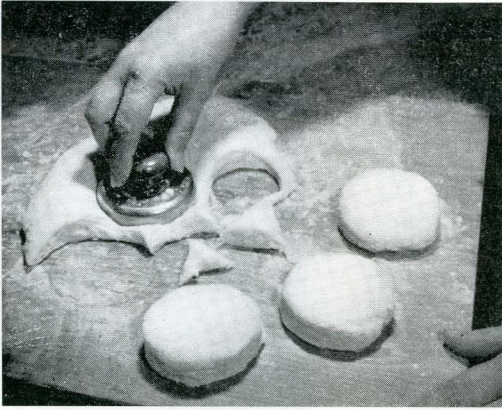
USE YOUR EQUIPMENT TO BEST POSSIBLE ADVANTAGE. An alarm clock to time baking; trays to carry dishes and food; sewing machine to mend.

You can save time paring potatoes if you select the larger potatoes, (three or four to the pound), wash them and put in a shallow basin. Sit at the task with the basin of potatoes to be pared on a lapboard or in your lap and the cooking pan at the left on a knee-high stool. Use 2 cups of water for each pound of potatoes. Hot starting water decreases the time for boiling. Use a slot-type knife and hold it so that thumb and fingers encircle it. Two pounds of potatoes will require approximately 3 minutes.

SUBSTITUTE A BETTER WAY WHEN ADVISABLE. You can save time scrubbing potatoes if you select large size potatoes, stand to do the scrubbing, and use a wire-twisted brush. Potato and brush should be dipped in the pan of water at the same time. Place the pan for the scrubbed potatoes at the left if you are right-handed, and close to the scrub pan to have the shortest possible travel lines.

It requires less than 2 minutes to prepare 2 pounds. Small potatoes require approximately 100 per cent more time to prepare than the large potatoes.





Cut square biscuits with a knife rather than using a round cutter. Some people save additional time by making drop biscuits. It is advisable to route dish-washing from right to left if you are right-handed.

That is, stack the soiled dishes at the right of the dishpan, in the order in which they are to be washed; have the dish-drain or rinsing pan at the left of the dishpan, and if possible store the clean dishes at the left and above.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR METHODS

- (1) Study one job at a time. Choose any one of the hundreds of jobs you do each day, such as making coffee, clearing the table, washing dishes, and feeding the chickens.
- (2) Break it down into parts by listing everything you do. (Let someone help you by writing what you do as you do it).
- (3) Question every step as you study the list of things you do:
 - a. Can I leave out any part of this job?
 - b. Can I keep all of my supplies within easy reach?
 - c. Can I make both hands work?
 - d. Am I using the best tool for the job and is it in good condition?
 - e. Can I sit to do the work?
 - f. Can I make one task out of two or more?
 - g. Am I using my equipment to best possible advantage?
 - h. Could I substitute a better way?
- (4) Write down your improvements. (Ask your family to help you.)
- (5) Try the new method. Practice until it becomes a habit. You will need patience in learning to do things the new way, as it is not easy to break habits. Keep working with the new methods until they seem to be the natural way for you to work.

CHECK THESE STREAMLINING PRACTICES

There are 82 streamlining practices listed here. Many of these are shortcuts recommended by South Dakota homemakers. Check the ones you are already using. Why not try the others? Check yourself occasionally to see if you have improved.

FEEDING YOUR FAMILY

- 1. Plan meals tentatively 3 days ahead.
- 2. Serve more one dish meals.
- 3. Give family members a job at meal time.
- 4. When practical, prepare food ahead while doing other work.
- 5. Study and improve the placing of small equipment in your kitchen to save steps and motions.

- 6. Keep knives sharpened.
- 7. Assemble all supplies and utensils before starting to cook.
- 8. Make a large quantity of same foods at a time, if there is a good way of keeping them.
- 9. Prepare foods in the simplest way, such as serving fruit raw or as a sauce.
- 10. Make fewer trips to market by planning ahead and using a shopping list.
- 11. Use a table on wheels or tray for setting and clearing the table.
- 12. Store several days' supply of canned goods in the kitchen.
- 13. Have a clock in the kitchen.
- 14. Work on newspapers when preparing fruits and vegetables, then whisk into garbage can to simplify cleaning up process.
- 15. Eat some meals in the kitchen to save steps.
- 16. Put cooking utensils to soak immediately after use.
- 17. Make clearing the table a cooperative affair. Have each person take his dishes to the kitchen, scrape, and stack them.
- 18. Wash dishes from right to left.
- 19. Scald dishes with boiling hot water and leave in rack to dry without wiping.

TO HELP YOU PLAN

- 1. Arrange kitchen equipment and supplies in step-saving order.
- 2. Use bulletin board for reminders to family members.
- 3. Keep a list to remind you of jobs to be done.
- 4. Store sacks, wrapping paper, string, etc. in a convenient place.
- 5. Have a place for orderly storing of business papers.
- 6. Add shelves and partitions to make best use of storage space you now have.
- 7. Keep household repair tools in handy place.
- 8. Have good light on each work place.
- 9. Have convenient files for sales slips, bills, cleaning hints, garden records, labels with cleaning and care instructions.
- 10. Have a business center which will invite you to plan.
- 11. Keep a basket for things to be taken from upstairs or to the basement.
- 12. Use long-handled mops and dustpans to prevent stooping.
- 13. Have a safe stepladder convenient for reaching high shelves.
- 14. Have the ironing board at such height that you do not tire easily.
- 15. Arrange ironing equipment to save motions. Group basket, table, clothes rack, hangers, and hooks as near board as possible.
- 16. Keep a pad and pencil handy at the phone, in the kitchen and living room.

CARING FOR CHILDREN

- 1. Provide play pens for young children.
- 2. Have safe toys which the child likes.
- 3. Have safe play equipment for outdoors.
- 4. Provide low hooks for clothing.
- 5. Provide clothes which child can put on himself.
- 6. Have a place that is easy for the child to wash his hands; towels on a low rack.
- 7. Have a low shelf or box for toys and games.
- 8. Have a well-lighted space for play table and chairs.
- 9. Let child help with home chores he can do.

KEEPING YOUR HOUSE CLEAN

- 1. Store unnecessary things such as extra vases or pictures.
- 2. Get all cleaning supplies together before starting to clean.
- 3. Keep small cleaning supplies in basket or box to carry from room to room.
- 4. Have extra cleaning supplies for upstairs.
- 5. Place scrapers or mats at outside doors.

- 6. Have place near the door for boots, rubbers, and galoshes.
- 7. Keep dirt out of house by keeping walks and porches clean.
- 8. Provide wash place outside kitchen for outdoor workers.
- 9. Cover often used shelves with oilcloth or smooth paint.
- 10. Use paper towels when practical.
- 11. Use screens that are in good condition for doors and windows.
- 12. Get rid of things no longer useful.
- 13. Put living room in order at night before retiring, all hands helping.
- 14. Do some cleaning every day or once a week to cut down seasonal cleaning.
- 15. Label containers and boxes when storing articles.

CHECK YOUR LAUNDRY

- 1. When practical, do family washing less often than once a week.
- 2. Mend before laundering, when practical.
- 3. If space permits, sort laundry on a table to prevent stooping.
- 4. Soften hard water for washing and rinsing, if it must be used for laundry.
- 5. Use play wagon or cart to hold clothes basket when working at clothesline.
- 6. As you take clothes off the line, fold those which are not to be ironed.
- 7. Iron nothing that can be used without ironing.
- 8. Avoid letting articles get very soiled.
- 9. Provide bags or hampers in bedrooms, bathroom, and kitchen for soiled clothes.

CLOTHING YOUR FAMILY

- 1. Use cotton crepes and knitted garments to save ironing.
 - 2. Equip mending kit with all needed supplies and keep in a place convenient for use.
 - 3. Arrange sewing and pressing equipment conveniently.
 - 4. Use sewing machine for mending when practical.
 - 5. Mend small rips, tears, and worn places immediately.
 - 6. Know sizes and measurements before going to store.
 - 7. Buy styles and fabrics easy to care for (laundering quality, wrinkle resistant, pleats.)
 - 8. Use garments easy to put on and take off.
 - 9. Buy preshrunk garments or allow for shrinkage.
 - 10. Use papers on floor to catch ravelings when sewing.
 - 11. Cover garments not in daily use.
 - 12. Have assembled and conveniently located the tools for care of clothing—clothes-brush, shoe polish, pressing cloth, etc.
 - 13. Protect garments with aprons, smocks.
 - 14. Keep in your purse a list of clothing sizes for different members of the family.
- Acknowledgement:

Helpful suggestions were received from the following: MARY ROKAHR, *Extension Economist*, Home Management USDA; MARY L. COLLINGS, *Home Economist*, Extension Service USDA. Home Management Committee on Work Simplification, National Work Simplification Project, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana. MARY KOLL HEINER, Cornell University, (Potato Preparation)

Published and distributed under Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914, by the Agricultural Extension Service of the South Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, Brookings, John V. Hepler, director, U. S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.