

## “Practical”ly Pesach

By: Dr. Leah Adams

As soon as Purim is over, the Pesach Panic sets in. We become totally overwhelmed with de-junking our homes and wading through mess on our never ending quest for the hidden chametz. This year, do yourself a favor. Improve the conditions in your home in a way that lasts after Pesach. Make it truly a season of Cheirus and free yourself from the Avdus of clutter. First of all, relax and take a deep breath (we psychologists always throw that in.) While some of the following pointers may seem more difficult than others, (I'll warn you that the upcoming paragraph sounds almost cruel), in the long run, any effort put into re-organizing and de-cluttering your home now is well worth it for the year to come.

You know those plastic food storage containers? The ones that need a shidduch between the container and the cover? The ones that don't even have a cover anymore? Toss them! I know what you're thinking, forget it, you're not going to magically find the match. While you're at it, check the sock drawers. Match them all up. Lost the matches? Toss them. If you want, set aside the non-matched socks in a bag for one week. By then you will have washed all of the laundry in the house and if you haven't found the match by then. You know what to do.

While we're on the topic of socks, here's a great time saver. I always buy the same black socks for my youngest son. Since all of his socks are the same, we never have to pair them! What a mechaya! For my youngest daughter we have separate containers for weekday socks and Shabbos socks. This definitely saves time on school days. Small plastic bins, shoebox size, also help with undergarments, yarmulkas, small toys, markers, etc. Shoe bags with clear plastic pockets suspended on the inside of closet doors are another great way to sort and store socks. They're also a good way to sort and store hair accessories (including the ever disappearing hairbrush).

Are your towels all over the floor of the bathroom or on the counter in the kitchen? Sew a loop on each one. While the kids can't manage to fold a towel

and hang it straight, hooking a loop on a hook in the bathroom or on a knob of a cabinet door isn't too hard. We installed hooks in our bathroom for each kid. You can even put a label above each hook to avoid confusion. Jazz things up by putting different colored ribbon loops on different towels.

Toys. Need I say more? Put mid-sized bins in your toy closet for small games such as card games. This not only makes them easier to locate, but if the box or bag they're in happens to open, it's easier to find the pieces in the bin than all over the floor of the closet. Stack boxed games according to shape and size of box. This helps the closet look neater. Toys for younger kids should be put near the bottom so that they can entertain themselves easily (and won't be tempted to climb on shelves to reach things). Putting their toys within reach also allows for them to participate in clean up.

Another great clean up technique is chesed! Often times our toy collections surpass our kids' interests. It's wasteful (and painful for the kids) to throw out toys and games. Kids like to make other kids happy. Help them sort through their things and select out a few items to give to a local charity. Don't weed out too much at once because then the kids will feel the loss of the items and view the activity in a negative light. Praise their generosity and their ability to do chesed. In a few months, armed with this sense of accomplishment, you'll be able to get them to do it again. Go through your clothes closets as well. Whatever you or your kids haven't worn in a few years, pass on to someone that will get use out of it.

The linen closet can sometimes be overwhelming. First of all, fold and stack individual linen sets and place each one in the pillow case that matches the set. I read that in a magazine years ago and it helps to keep the closet neat. When you want to make a bed, just take out the pillow case-it's already filled with the full set that you need. Here, too, plastic bins or shoe boxes can be helpful. Label the containers with easy to read titles so that anyone looking for toiletries etc. can find them easily without trashing the shelves to find things. Having organized shelves also saves money. If you can find the extra shampoo or toothpaste easily then you'll be less likely to purchase items that you don't really need.

Cleaning can be overwhelming but fun. See what novel techniques you come up with in your own home. Share these ideas with friends and ask them about their helpful household hints. I'd love to hear about them as well. Happy cleaning!

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