



## THE HOME IS YOUR GYMNASIUM

*Housework provides a natural form of exercise that equals gymnasium work. Let us see how it works.*

EVERY woman who does her own housework is getting the equivalent of a full gymnasium course,—and it does not cost her a cent! She does not have to set apart a time for her exercise as does the teacher, the writer, the doctor; her work is her exercise. Her gymnasium is her home, her apparatus is right at hand, and her reward is—or should be—a well-exercised body, a well-balanced mind, good digestion, and sound sleep.

In a regular gymnasium course the work is divided into three general groups:—(1) Exercises that develop the trunk. (2) Exercises that develop the limbs. (3) Exercises that develop the mind, that is, those which require skill, daring, quick co-ordination, etc.

For exercising the muscles of the trunk nothing is better than sweeping and dusting. The swinging stroke of the broom, the backward and forward motions of the carpet-sweeper, the stooping positions used in dusting the lower parts of the furniture, etc., bring the trunk muscles into full play. Tending the furnace is another splendid chance for trunk development. You can just feel the muscles swell and broaden about your waist as you toss the heavy shovelful of coal into the fire. Shake the grate vigorously and see how the back muscles respond! Washing windows is good exercise too, especially if one sits on the sill to clean the outside of the window. Clean the pantry; lift down all the dishes from the high shelves, and see if you do not consider that good exercise for the muscles of the trunk. In fact, there is hardly any form of active housework which does not in some way bring the trunk muscles into action.

Kneading bread is one of the best exercises for the muscles of the arms and shoulders. No so-called "beauty course" could recommend anything more valuable for rounding out the arms, filling in the hollows of the neck, and making shapely hands. It is splendid exercise for the back muscles too. Washing and wringing clothes are good forms of arm exercise; one incidentally gets a Russian bath too from the steaming suds. Ironing is less valuable as an exercise as it develops one arm at the expense of the other and tires the feet by long standing.

WALKING is the best exercise for the leg muscles and most housekeepers get plenty of it while doing their day's work. Mounting the stairs is another good exercise; it develops the leg muscles and reduces weight about the hips. The motion of the feet upon the machine treadle is good exercise for the ankle and leg muscles, but it is too monotonous to be recommended.

The woman with a sluggish liver should make the best of every opportunity her work affords to stimulate that organ into action. Right side bending motions are best for this, such as picking up pins, weeding the garden, dusting the mopboards, etc.

For the exercises that require skill and daring, the house-keeper's program gives endless opportunities. Notice the deftness which saves a precious bit of china from destruction; the quick hand which prevents the door from slamming; the alert eye which rescues the toast just at the right moment.

For all round exercise, nothing is better than gardening. It exercises all the muscles, it keeps one out of doors, and it freshens and invigorates the mind by bringing it in contact with living, growing things. A little patch of ground ten feet square can furnish exercise for the woman of sedentary occupation as well as rest for the over-

By  
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exercised housewife. A lawn well sprinkled with dandelion plants is a splendid gymnasium for a dyspeptic. Let her dig one hundred plants up before each meal and see what happens to her box of pepsin tablets before a week is out!

Mowing the lawn is an exercise vigorous enough to take the kinks out of a pessimist, and yet not too laborious to come well within the scope of the physical powers of an able-bodied woman. Mow the lawn on a summer morning an hour or so after sunrise while the dew is still on the grass, and see if you do not have a first class appetite for breakfast, and a sense of well-being suffused throughout the day.

Snow-shovelling is another form of playful work that is well calculated to stir the blood. Many a woman who is courageous enough to go out for a walk on a wintry day comes back looking pinched and blue. But let her wrap up well, and, snow-shovel in hand, clear a path to the front gate, and then see her eyes sparkle, see her cheeks glow!

Any form of exercise loses half its merit as an exercise if it seems to one mere drudgery. A woman who goes at her work as if she loved it will get more real development out of it than the one who does one duty after another in a listless, dispirited fashion. A gymnasium class must have music if they would go through their exercises with snap and vim, and a housekeeper must have a song in her heart and a smile on her lips if she would get joy out of her daily work.

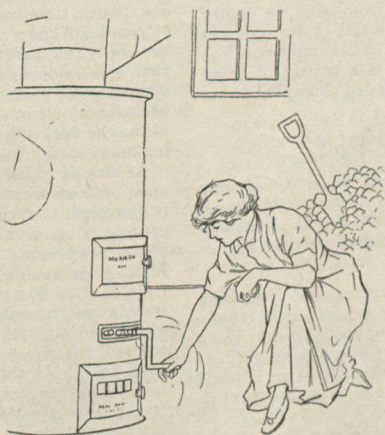
If a woman does not find joy in her work it is quite likely that her program either is too strenuous or it does not include some needful element. The thing which most housekeepers lack is out of door air, and it is within their power to remedy the lack in a large measure. At least, eight months of the year a part of the housework, such as preparing vegetables, sprinkling and folding clothes, cleaning the silver, mending, etc., may be done in the open air. The neighbors may stare, but perhaps common sense may teach them a lesson.

Rest is another thing which every wise woman should include in her daily program. Gymnasium periods are seldom more than thirty minutes in length, then the instructor gives his class a complete rest or a change from active exercise to some quiet recreation. A housekeeper should try to do the same. An hour's work should be followed by a ten minute rest period; spend it flat on the back in the hammock out of doors if possible, or at least seated in a comfortable chair in a quiet room, where the mind and body can relax.

After a vigorous morning, a woman should take an afternoon nap of at least twenty minutes; it is time well spent. And after the nap it is a good plan to change the clothes and go away from the house for an hour's relaxation.

HERE are a few items for the housekeeper's daily program:—

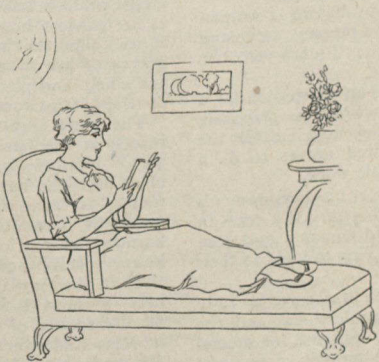
1. Have a definite plan for each day's work and try to carry it out.
2. Spend at least twenty minutes daily in the open air.
3. Take a daily bath.
4. Work but do not worry.
5. Read one chapter from some good book every day.
6. Drink plenty of water.
7. Eat regular meals at the table; do not hurry.
8. Get eight hours of sleep.
9. Cultivate a hobby, or have daily intercourse with some friend who is not a housekeeper.



*Tending the furnace is another splendid chance for trunk development.*



*Eat regular meals at the table; do not hurry.*



*Rest is another thing which every wise woman should include in her daily program.*

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S.H.B.

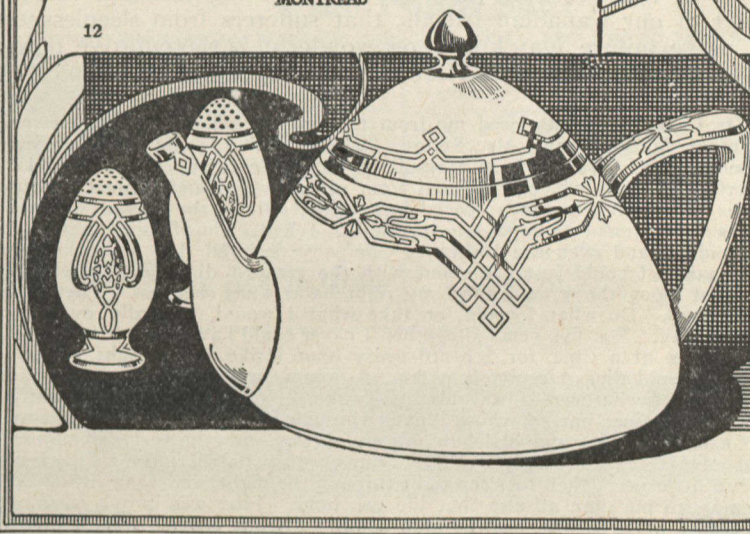
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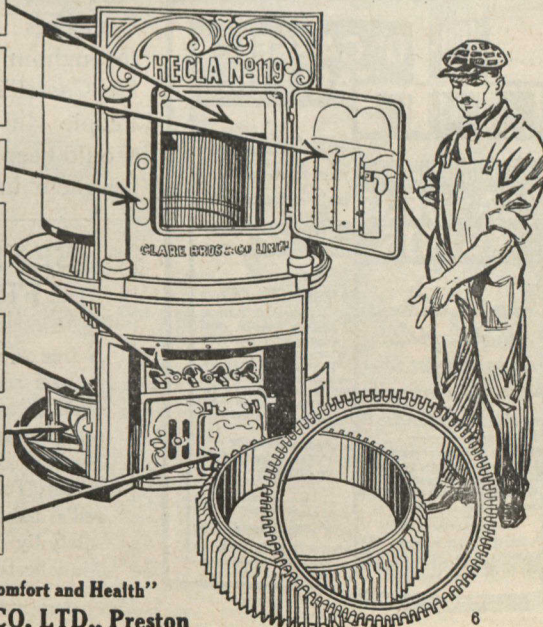
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