

Getting Started with the S.H.E. System!

Keep in mind that this system can be as flexible as you need it to be. It was not created with homeschoolers in mind, so make it work for YOUR family! Be sure to purchase your own copy of the book, *Sidetracked Home Executives: From Pigpen to Paradise* by Pam Young and Peggy Jones because it's the best way to understand the system, commiserate with the authors, and enjoy their great humor!

The first steps to getting started can be remembered by ABC: Activity List(s), Basic Week Plan and Card File!

Supplies You'll Need for S.H.E.

- 3x5 file box
- 25 yellow index cards
- 25 blue index cards
- 25 pink index cards
- 100 white index cards (*Note: you may use any size or color cards/file that suit you!)
- 31 file dividers for days of the month
- 4+ blank file dividers
- 12 file dividers, Jan. - Dec.
- 26 file dividers, A - Z
- Small, year-at-a-glance calendar that can be taped inside file box lid

A. Activity Lists

Create an Activity List for every room in your house

1. List the work/activities needed to clean each room (e.g. See FlyLady for a good start: http://www.flylady.net/images/Detailed_Cleaning_Lists.pdf)
2. Decide the frequency of each job:
 - D - Daily
 - EOD - Every Other Day
 - 2/W - Twice a Week
 - EOW - Every Other Week
 - M - Monthly
 - EOM - Every Other Month

S - Seasonally

2/Y - Twice a Year

Y - Yearly

Any others you can think of, such as Q - Quarterly OR you may label your jobs with specific days of the week

***You do NOT have to use ALL of the frequency categories! Daily, Weekly and Monthly/Seasonal may be enough for you. 😊**

Put how often you WANT to do these chores, NOT how often you are doing them NOW!!

3. Put a time estimate for each job on your Activity List
4. Designate 10-minute or less jobs as "Mini Jobs"
5. Decide if each job can/will be delegated to others; husband or children or outside help (Ha! ;o)
6. Mark the color card that applies to each chore:

Y - Yellow (Daily or Every Other Day)

B - Blue (Weekly or Every Other Week)

W - White (Monthly or Every Other Month)

P - Pink (Personal or Outside the Home)

B. Basic Week Plan

Organize your weekly housekeeping responsibilities by day:

1 Day will be a Free Day

At least 1 moderate cleaning day (roughly 2-4 hours spent on housework)

1 Heavy Cleaning Day

1 Quiet Day (For "quiet", sit-down type chores like doing bills, writing notes, clipping coupons, etc.)

1 Grocery Shopping Day

1 Family Day

Sunday is a NO Cleaning Day

***Obviously this is very subject to your family's habits! You may not need to assign a family day. You may skip "Quiet Day" and have another moderate cleaning day if that applies. The examples given in S.H.E. are varied, just as families are! You MUST have Sunday off and at least 1 cleaning day that includes more than just your daily routine. One example gave a "Free Half Day" where you would take the entire morning or afternoon off from chores and use the other half of the day for something else. (Daily chore items are a given for every day but Free Day/Sunday.)**

The Basic Week Plan is for a "typical" week and you may have a back-up or modified BWP for occasional busy times, etc.

Create Your Menu Plan

This falls under the Basic Week Plan section because you will want to coordinate meals with the workload you plan and with days you will be outside the home. For example, on Grocery Day or Heavy Cleaning Day you may want to plan for casseroles or crock pot meals. Free Day could be leftovers, or if cooking is something you enjoy in your free time, use that day for new recipes.

Put your Menu Plan on a yellow card. *Obviously, if you plan your meals by the month, I think it's fine to have 4 weekly Menu Plan cards to rotate. Work it!

C. Card File

*The moment you've been waiting for!! Remember to FILE TO THE FRONT!
Current jobs go in front of current dates.*

1. Transfer your jobs to the appropriate 3x5 cards:

Daily - Yellow

Weekly - Blue

Monthly/Seasonal - White

Personal/Outside the Home - Pink

(*Feel free to use other colors if you like)

On EACH card:

Upper Left - Write Daily, Weekly or Monthly (whatever you've chosen)

Top Middle - Write "Mini" if it's a 10-minute or less "Mini Job"

Upper Right - Write your time estimate for that job from 10 minutes for a "Mini" and up

Middle of Card - Write the name or title of the chore and beneath it a description of how to DO the job, including cleaning supplies and any special instructions

Under the Title - Write "Children" or "Delegate" if you are not the one who usually does this chore

2. Label and file your dividers in this order:

1. Day dividers, 1-31 with the CURRENT day forward (You'll be rotating these daily)
2. 4 blank dividers, labeled: Storage, Christmas, Family, and Special Projects (add others only if you need to)
3. January to December dividers
4. A to Z dividers; these will be your "address book"
5. extra cards in the back
6. *Be sure your year-at-a-glance calendar is taped inside your lid and keep your Menu Plan in the card file (I could not find in the book where they say to keep it! LOL)

3. FILE YOUR CARDS! Remember: File to the Front!

Make 4 piles of cards, separated by colors.

1. **PINK** - File all of your personal and outside-the-home cards in front of their appropriate dates.

2. **YELLOW** (daily) - File all of your daily cards in front of today's date. If you've done some of the tasks, file them under tomorrow. *Be in the HABIT of checking on tomorrow's tasks TODAY!

3. **YELLOW** (every other day) - File these under *tomorrow's date*. You may not have EOD cards and that's OK.

Divide your BLUE cards into appropriate piles: Weekly Mini Jobs, Weekly Jobs, Every Other Week Mini Jobs and Every Other Week Jobs. You do NOT have to have all of these categories, but will most likely have the first 2.

4. **BLUE** (weekly mini jobs) - Weekly Mini Jobs can be done on ANY day of the week, even Free Day because they take so little time. Put these anywhere you feel appropriate for the next 7 days

5. **BLUE** (weekly) - Weekly Jobs should correlate to the days of your moderate or heavy cleaning days on your BWP

*Make sure your jobs FIT the appropriate day if you can! A "quiet" job like doing bookkeeping/bill paying should go on the Quiet Day for this week, if you have one.

*Every Other Week Mini Jobs can go anywhere in the next 2 weeks (14 days). Every Other Week Jobs go in appropriate days in the next 2 weeks (as you did with Weekly Jobs).

Divide your WHITE cards into appropriate piles: Monthly Mini Jobs, Monthly Jobs, Seasonal (or any yearly, seasonal, quarterly type jobs)

6. **WHITE** (monthly mini jobs) - File these anywhere in the month you need them

7. **WHITE** (monthly jobs) - Spread these out over the next month under your moderate or heavy cleaning days

8. **WHITE** (seasonal or other) - Put these in front of the appropriate month divider (Cleaning gutters, fertilizing lawn, refilling propane tank, etc.)

9. **WHITE** - Take 12 white cards, head each one with a month of the year. Transfer all birthdays, anniversaries and other special days to the appropriate month card. ONE card per month if you can.

*Seasonal and Monthly "Dates to Remember" cards will STAY in front of the appropriate month.

***Write one-time events future events and appointments on either scrap 3x5 card or on a *different* color card from all your other cards. These are temporary one-time cards that replace (or duplicate if you really wish) what would go on a day planner type of thing.**

10. Write CHECK DATES to REMEMBER on a WHITE card and put it under day 25 *permanently* as a reminder to check next month's cards and file them into the daily 1-31 cards as appropriate.

☺ DOES YOUR HEAD HURT YET?? LOL Remember, in the book Pam and Peggy say that if you need to DECLUTTER your home before starting the system, the steps above should STILL be accomplished first! Also, they admit that it took them **3 MONTHS** to work their way around the main areas of their house and they **ONLY** did daily chores that would pile up if left undone during the decluttering process!

Here is FlyLady's Declutter Plan, based on S.H.E.:

http://www.flylady.net/pages/FlyingLessons_Declutter.asp

It is just this humble mom's opinion, but I don't believe that you must do EVERY card category suggested AND you can add any that will really fit your life. Try the basic system and after 21 days (which is how long it takes to make a habit!) if you need to adjust, feel free!

While you are starting this process (and forever after!), keep in mind these

Sidetracker HABITS!

***Pray daily for guidance and God's help in showing you what you need to work on RIGHT NOW.**

(Not in S.H.E., but crucial and I think Pam & Peggy would agree!)

***Put things where they belong when you are through with them.**

***Set the standard for orderliness yourself.**

***Never leave the room before closing closets, cupboard doors, and drawers.**

***Pick it up, don't pass it up--then put it away!**

***When you fix something to eat, put away everything you used *before* you sit down to eat.**

***Dress, hair, and makeup before ANYTHING!**

***Never leave the house before you've done all the everyday duties in the card file.**

***Refile your cards AS you complete them!**

***Check the next day's card the night before.**

***FINISH WHAT YOU START!**

***Stay positive and expect your system to WORK! ☺**