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Home Equipment

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Have you provided rest periods in your busy day? Have you definite times set aside for the recreation which all our health specialists tell us is so essential? Do you take time for those daily exercises which make "fat people thin or thin people fat?" Do you know enough about the program of the Child Welfare Commission for the State of Iowa to follow intelligently (and take a stand on) legislation that grows out of it? Have you read one or two of the late novels of the past year and do you read a book? If you plead guilty by answering "no"—either shamefacedly or—worse still—blandly, you will probably continue by admitting that you believe all of these are of great importance to the homemaking program but you probably will excuse yourself at once by saying, "I just can't find time for these things." "Yes," you continue, "but what am I going to do about it? I get up early, stay up as long as I comfortably can, I'm busy all of the time, but somehow or other I never get through the housework, alone find time for all of these things."

As soon as you come to this conclusion (even tho you admit it only to yourself), you take an inventory of that stock which every one of us has in exactly equal amounts—time—and figure out a scheme for using it to better advantage.

When all is "said and done" we find that on an average the "mere mechanics" of housekeeping claims an undue proportion of the homemaker's time. Since every one of us has exactly the same amount of time to use, the problem resolves itself into one of how do we choose to use our time.

Mrs. Sherman, the president of the National Federation of Women's Clubs summer session is up in a recent article in the following way:

"One thing that is the matter with the home, is its mere mechanics, which occupy so much time that there is none left to give to the soul of the home. We need more efficiency in our households. In the busy life of the present era, it is more necessary than ever before to have houses planned with convenience constantly in mind, all contrivances lessening household drudgery. Ninety-four percent of the home women of this country do not know how to use their own work. Doing hard work toward a noble end is a worthy thing, but wasteful hard work is sheer folly. There is no reason when one has a stone washboard to contemplate the small by carrying the burden of a heavy house upon her neck. Efficiency is just as important, perhaps more so, in the home. In the office or factory. In the latter instance it means a saving of time and money. In the home it means something more precious still—strength and inspiration.

The lack of efficiency in the home and the absence of labor saving devices are largely responsible for the soullessness of the home."

The Household Administration Course

This first article in our series on "Home Equipment" will give our readers an introduction to that important and interesting subject. Other articles will follow.

Called "Home Equipment" at Iowa State College is based upon a study of these problems of the "mere mechanics" of housekeeping. To analyze these problems and find an easy, quick, effective way to dispose of routine tasks with thoroly satisfactory results, so that time is left for other things is the purpose of the course.

Perhaps there never has been a time when demands upon the homemaker have been greater or her responsibility for taking active part in both social and political questions has complicated her problem to such an extent that the routine work in the home must be simplified. The value of recreation and relaxation is too great to be crowded out by house work. Tradition and hampering, we are so willing to do things over and over again in exactly the same way instead of experimenting to find a quicker, easier, better way to get results. Thus we must learn to reduce our tasks to their lowest terms in time and energy.

A few of the interesting facts brought to light by the careful thoughtful planning for the solution of some of these facts by Iowa State College students are the following:

One student, on analyzing one of her regular weekly tasks, the baking of a cake, found that, if she used a tray on which the cake was to be placed, she could rearrange some of the pieces of small equipment in her kitchen so she could reduce the time required for assembling materials, mixing and getting the cake into the oven from forty-five minutes to twenty-six minutes, thus affecting a saving of nine minutes.

Planning and carrying out a little simpler method for the weekly cleaning of a room meant a saving of twenty minutes each week for a student who found it difficult to arrange time for this on a busy Saturday morning.

Still another student, who is working her way through college, found she could reduce the total time per week she spent in dishwashing in a home from 230 minutes to 150 minutes by carefully thinking thru the process, rearranging some of her equipment and making all of her motions as effective as was consistent.

These are illustrations each for a single process, will indicate how significant such a study would be for a homemaker with so wide a variety of tasks demanding tasks upon her time continuously.

Selection, arrangement and proper use of equipment in the home as well as in the home office, plays an important role in such a study.

One of the big demands in our homes today is the demand for labor saving equipment. By labor saving equipment we mean all appliances which utilize and direct human labor more effectively. This may be a tool or an appliance as well as a power machine which enables human energy to direct other power.

This Home Equipment course is further needed to give the student training for the selection, utilization, manipulation, and care of household equipment. The subject matter of this course includes a study of the equipment now on the market which might be used to solve those household processes which require either an undue amount of the housewife's time and energy, or else require little or no thought in their solution.

The study of all the equipment used in the home is the backbone of labor saving equipment under conditions which approximate as nearly as possible home conditions. Results are interpreted thru the course and the student is taught the right of good administration in the home.

The keen interest in equipment developed in the students would seem to indicate that the belief why the average homemaker has so little power equipment in her home is because she does not know how to use it. The value of this equipment really is. The consciousness of this value will be one big step toward justifying investment in the equipment. Every home cannot afford power equipment, but far more of them can afford it than have it at the present time.

After acquainting the student with the mechanical means for solving heavy physical tasks, she may decide for herself what equipment she can afford under existing conditions, which may be anticipated in a long time equipment plan, and which may be avoided as undesirable or unnecessary. A distinction between "labor saving," "labor complicating," and "labor exchanging" equipment may be expected from a discriminating and trained student.

The average home gets pitifully little of the rich increments of civilization. The average man may, in his office and home, command the mightiest of the twentieth century power for the most ordinary of commercial purposes. A whole army of labor saving devices is always at his beck and call, yet, when the day's work is done, he, in the quiet of his home, turns Robinson Crusoe, while his wife wastes the best years of her life in a round of mechanical drudgery. In short, the average man works in the twentieth century, he lives in the fifteenth. Great failure here consists on the part of the home to appropriate for its own use the mechanical applications which the outside world has found so useful in diminishing the sum total of wasteful labor. The distinct incapacity of the average woman to handle machinery, or her disinclination toward it is not excusable.

Less of the drudgery of hand labor is one of the first effects of the introduction of machinery into the home. Better organization of tasks, a reduction in the number of tasks, a reduction in the number of motions, a reduction in extreme fatigue, a more interesting and inspiring occupation, a saving of time, and a saving of money are among the results of the use of machinery.
HOMEMAKER AS CITIZEN

Is the Superior Child Getting a Fair Chance?

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and the use of the modern automobile and motor truck, (5) a study of some of the more general features of local geology, including fossils and glaciation.

The small city of Appleton, Wisconsin, provides for gifted pupils who display special interests or aptitudes, to be grouped in clubs for the study of some phase of activity not directly or not fully undertaken in the regular school program, such as a Forestry club, a Photography club, and a Teaching club.

Norsworthy and Whitley in their book on "Psychology of Childhood" bring out these points as to the training for gifted children—"Probably a faster than normal pace of study is wise, with attention to intricate, abstract thinking, the stimulation of creative imagination, opportunities for extensive association-farming. Probably, too, such children should be under the guidance of exceptionally gifted instructors from a very early age. Obviously any special aptitude needs to be given full chance for development."

Home Equipment

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in part by transferring outside the home whatever processes may be removed without destroying the home as the center of family life, or by bringing into the home the mechanical means for taking care of that irreducible minimum of work which will remain there for a time at least for personal, traditional, or economic reasons.

The whole modern period in which we live is an age of machinery. The effect of this is felt in too limited a way in our twentieth century home. A desire for equipment is based upon an appreciation of what equipment in the home really means. An investment in equipment must be justified by the proved usefulness of any piece of equipment. The satisfactory accumulation of equipment will come from developing a discriminating judgment based upon facts gained through study and analysis.

The modern progressive home must be well-equipped. The well-equipped home must be "manned" by a "Household Engineer." It is to train this Household Engineer for her job that this course is planned. Sound training here should furnish a good working basis for reducing to a minimum the amount of valuable time the homemaker spends on the "mere mechanics" of housekeeping and provide time for developing the real "art of living."

Conquering an Ogre

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edly, realize how easy it is to "get into a rut" but few of us make any effort to get out.

Besides the actual time released, there is the joy of knowing that one is being scientific in her actions, that she is actually accomplishing something worthwhile, a feeling that frequently motivates a disagreeable task to a high degree.

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