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Efficiency in Food Preparation

Norma Dale

Iowa State College

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Efficiency in Food Preparation

THE Household Equipment Department at Iowa State has advanced another step toward reducing the homemaker’s task. In connection with canning experiments research on the efficiency of motion in peeling carrots has been conducted to simplify culinary operations.

The results of a series of studies at Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., were recently published concerning the simplified home preparation of potatoes. This vegetable was chosen because it requires the most preparation time. Emphasis in the study is on efficient working conditions which can decrease time cost more than expensive equipment.

Scrubbing, the first process in the preparation of potatoes, is accomplished most successfully if the worker stands while doing the job. For the homemaker whose time is at a premium, the larger sized potatoes will conserve both time and energy. Using both hands simultaneously enables the worker to achieve consistency, precision, a rhythmic motion and speed. The greatest efficiency is secured if the height of the table is suitable for the worker, and the pan placed on the left. Potatoes should be cleaned in a running stream of water with a wire twisted brush, preferably one of bassine fiber. Another way to increase scrubbing efficiency is to route the potatoes from right to left using the shortest travel line for hands and only wrist and lower arm motions.

In the paring procedure the organization of the work center and simplification of the work are more significant in controlling time and motion than is the type of knife used. One method of organization is achieved when the worker holds the cleaned potatoes in a shallow basin in her lap and places a cooking pan for the pared potatoes at her left on a high stool or table. If the cooking water in the pan is hot, it will decrease the boiling time. A slot type knife with double-edged floating blades, set as an extension of the handle, is preferred for competent paring. The worker should hold the knife with her thumb and fingers encircling the handle so as to build up a time-saving rhythm. In order to save time and nutrients it is advisable to eliminate eying.

To shorten the mashing process the potatoes should be cut in eighths and boiled in a pan with sloping sides and just enough water to prevent scorching. After the cooking water has evaporated, the fat and milk can be added and the potatoes set over a low fire for ten minutes. Prior to serving, they should be mashed with a looped wire masher.—Norma Dale

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