

# NEGOTIATING AT HOME

## DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES WORKSHEET

Domestic responsibilities are often divided by default by people who live together. Someone may perform a task because they are available to do so, because they know how, because they are the first one to notice the need for the task to be performed, or because they have done it in the past. This default division rarely leads to a fair outcome, and an unfair division of responsibilities can lead to frustration.

This worksheet is intended to guide partners' conversations about how housework and other domestic responsibilities are divided, so couples can purposefully choose a division that works for them. If you do not have a partner or roommate, you may still find the worksheet helpful for tracking your own use of time.

Please note: not all of the tasks on the reverse side of the sheet will apply to you. Obviously, some people don't have pets, kids, or outdoor space. Some people don't hire others to help with childcare or gardening. Please focus on the tasks you find applicable.

### Consider the following questions:

- How many hours do you spend on each task per month? Try tracking your time every day for a month. Or try tracking your time every day for a week and then multiply by four. Note that you may engage in more than one task at a time (e.g. taking care of kids and doing the laundry), so don't be surprised if your time seems to add up to more than 100%. Estimate activities (e.g. shoveling snow) that aren't applicable during this season.
- How many hours does your partner or roommate spend on each task per month? Are there other people – like adult children – who share these tasks with you? Ask them to keep track too.
- Which tasks do you like doing? Why? Try ranking your favorites. Are there some tasks you would like to spend more time on?
- Which tasks do you hate doing? Why? Try ranking your least favorites.
- Which tasks do you dislike but make sense for you to do anyway? Why?
- Are there tasks that make sense to pay someone else to do? Which ones?
- Are there tasks that you are paying someone else to do that you could save money by doing yourselves? Which ones?
- Are there tasks that you would like to take on but don't know how to do? How could you learn how to those tasks?
- What would a fair division of tasks look like? Consider the following options:
  - Aiming for a roughly equal number of hours per month spent on domestic responsibilities
  - Dividing tasks based on which tasks each person prefers doing
  - Ensuring that each person has a roughly equal amount of leisure time each week
  - Seeking to equalize the amount of time each person spends on professional plus domestic responsibilities
  - Other standards?

It's crucial to revisit the division as circumstances change and time elapses. Consider planning ahead for the next conversations in three, six, or twelve months by scheduling them now.

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## DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES CHECKLIST

### Childcare

Solo childcare\_\_  
Shared childcare\_\_  
Scheduling kid activities: camp, lessons, school\_\_  
Taking kids to activities\_\_  
Helping with homework\_\_  
Parent-teacher conferences\_\_  
Scheduling childcare\_\_  
Being the school's primary contact\_\_  
Volunteering at school\_\_

### Cleaning

Tidying and putting things away\_\_  
Organizing toys/clothes/etc.\_\_  
Washing dishes\_\_  
Loading and unloading the dishwasher\_\_  
Washing own clothes\_\_  
Washing kids' clothes\_\_  
Washing partner's clothes\_\_  
Washing sheets & towels\_\_  
Cleaning the kitchen\_\_  
Cleaning bathrooms\_\_  
Vacuuming\_\_  
Sweeping & mopping floors\_\_  
Dusting\_\_  
Ironing\_\_  
Washing windows\_\_  
Taking out the trash & recycling\_\_  
Cleaning out the fridge and freezer\_\_  
Hiring and managing a housecleaner\_\_

### Medical

Paying bills & filing insurance claims\_\_  
Scheduling doctor and dentist appointments\_\_

### Emotional Labor

Buying gifts\_\_  
Writing thank-you notes\_\_  
Helping sick family members\_\_  
Planning holidays\_\_  
Planning birthday parties\_\_  
Preparing for entertaining\_\_

### Other Home Management

Maintaining and upgrading electronics\_\_  
Carpentry: hanging pictures, shelves, etc.\_\_  
Hiring and managing skilled labor: plumbers, electricians, carpenters, etc.\_\_  
Contacting landlord\_\_  
Car maintenance: oil changes, registration, repairs, cleaning\_\_  
Home maintenance: fill humidifiers, replace lightbulbs, replace filters, etc.\_\_  
Shoveling snow and de-icing\_\_  
Managing the household budget\_\_

### Food

Cooking breakfast, lunch, & dinner\_\_  
Packing school & work lunches\_\_  
Meal planning\_\_  
Buying groceries\_\_

### Purchasing

Buying replenishable items: toilet paper, soap, shampoo, paper, tissues, etc.\_\_  
Replacing replenishables: filling soap dispensers, toilet paper holders, etc.\_\_  
Purchasing kids' clothes, sports equipment, & toys\_\_

### Pet Care

Feeding pet(s)\_\_  
Walking dog(s)\_\_  
Taking animal(s) to the vet\_\_  
Purchasing and maintaining pet products: dog bed, leashes, chew toys, etc.\_\_

### Plants and Outdoors

Planting and maintaining outdoor plants\_\_  
Watering and maintaining indoor plants\_\_  
Maintaining outdoor furniture\_\_  
Maintaining pool/hot tub/playset\_\_  
Scheduling a gardener\_\_  
Mowing the lawn\_\_  
Raking leaves\_\_

### Other: