



T9: Safely Re-Entering Your House

Why is this Important?

While many people are under Stay-At-Home orders during the Coronavirus pandemic, there is still the need to purchase groceries, pick up prescription medications, fuel your vehicle, exercise, walk the dog, or go to work. This tool addresses how to return home after these activities and take steps to prevent the introduction of Coronavirus into your household.

This tool does not apply to individuals returning home from a health-care employment setting.

This tool does not apply to infected individuals. This tool assumes infected individuals will follow the advice of their doctor or medical professional in regards to isolation and quarantine.

Disclaimer

The use of information on this site is at reader's own risk and no party involved in the information production can be held responsible for its use. By using the content found on this website, you further acknowledge that it is not intended to be a substitute for public health agency guidance, professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. Never disregard public health agency or professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read here.

What You Need

- **Best:** A separate room or garage to place your items, shoes and outdoor clothes. Hand sanitizer, a mask, reusable shopping bags, and handwashing upon return.
- **Good:** Leaving items in a designated space before unpacking.
- **Adequate:** Handwashing upon return to household.
- **Inadequate:** No handwashing or sanitizing. No designated space for shoes, clothing and items brought into the household.

[T7-Preparing to Leave the House]

[T8-Travel Safety]



Before you come inside

- If possible, avoid hand-contact with door-handles/doorknobs. Use your arm, elbow or leg to push/pull the door open. Alternatively, use a paper tissue or hand wipe and dispose of it afterwards. If you live in a shared building, such as an apartment block, and there is an elevator or lift in your building, it should be frequently disinfected. Rugs or mats that are placed in communal areas should be cleaned as well.
- Leave your shoes outside or, if not possible, as close to the door as possible. Once you have your house shoes on, you can clean the floor under the shoes and where the shopping or other bag was placed with a cloth or mop and an adequate detergent. If you touch the shoes, wash your hands afterwards.

Source: [NIH](#), [NEJM](#)

- When you get home, ideally before you enter, take off your outdoor clothes / shoes and leave them in a designated area

Source: [North Country Now](#)

Inside your home

- Delay unpacking any non-perishable items for a few hours if you can. When you bring objects into your home from outside (e.g. work bags if you are an essential worker, shopping bags, items from the super-market)
 - **Do not** put them on any surface such as a chair or table near where you prepare food
 - **Do** put them down at the entrance outside or, if not possible, inside your household in an area separate from where you normally prepare food.

Source: [Femme Actuelle](#), [ANSES](#)

- Wash your hands



THE BEST WAY TO WASH YOUR HANDS

1. Wet your hands with water.



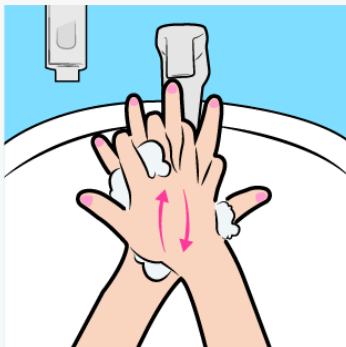
2. Grab enough soap to cover all surfaces of your hands.



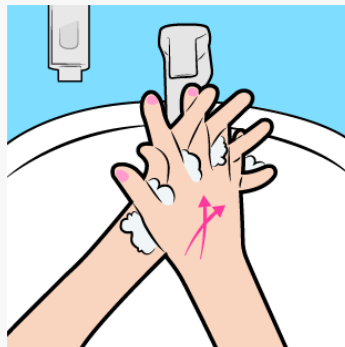
3. Rub your hands palm-to-palm.



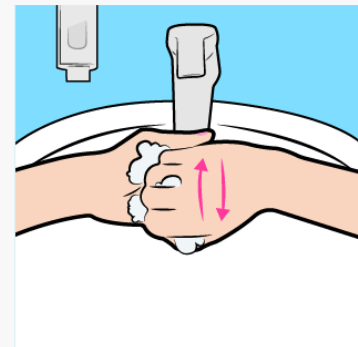
4. Rub your right palm over the back of your left hand, interlacing fingers, and vice versa.



5. Rub your hands palm-to-palm with interlaced fingers.



6. Rub the backs of your fingers against the opposite palm so that your hands are interlocked.



7. Rub your left thumb in your right palm, and vice versa.



8. Rub your right-hand finger tips against your left palm, and vice versa.



9. Rinse, dry, and you're done!



SOURCE: World Health Organization

BUSINESS INSIDER



- Take the items from the shopping bag and clean the packaging. Detailed precautions for unpacking shopping bags are described in **Groceries and Other Items Brought Inside the House** below.

Source: [NIH](#), [NEJM](#), [ANSES](#)



- Discard waste packaging in a designated area.
 - Recycle normally
 - Leave reusable shopping bags in a designated area
- If possible, remove your other clothes and leave them in a designated area
 - minimize contact with your face as you take off the clothes e.g. when taking off a shirt
- If possible, have a shower or bath.

Source: [North Country Now](#)

- Disinfect your door handle, house and car keys, as well as other frequently touched surfaces.

Source: [NIH](#), [NEJM](#), [CDC](#)

- Wash your clothes with warm water as recommended by CDC. Cold water can be used too. **8, 9** (*CDC and WHO recommend warm water. However, some specialists have said that the temperature of the water, providing good soap or detergent is used, is less important*).

Source: [CDC](#), [ANSES](#), [Newsweek](#)



Groceries and Other Items Brought Inside the House

- **Packaging** may have been contaminated by dirty hands. Even though the virus causing the disease cannot survive in the open air for more than three hours, you can take additional precautions by cleaning the packaging using a clean damp cloth or single use paper towel. It is not necessary to use bleach.
- **Dispose of any non-essential packaging** and wipe those that you cannot remove, such as yoghurt containers, with a damp cloth or single-use paper towel. Hands should be washed thoroughly before and after removing the packaging. Thoroughly wash food items such as fruit and vegetables.
 - General hygiene rules should be followed
- **Fruit and vegetables** should be washed thoroughly after purchase and before cooking and eating them. Clean water is sufficient. It is not necessary to use disinfectant or bleach as they can be toxic if not rinsed away properly. Nor is it necessary to use white wine vinegar. After washing with clean water, wipe with a single use paper towel to remove any remaining viral particles. This is especially important where fruit or vegetables are to be eaten raw.
- **Cooking vegetables** at a temperature of 63 degrees centigrade / 145 degrees fahrenheit, medium heat, is enough to destroy any virus that might be present. There is no need to overcook food. Fruit or vegetables that are to be eaten raw should be washed in clean water should be sufficient to reduce transmission of the virus by cross contamination i.e. the risk of the virus being spread through contact with hands.

Source: [Femme Actuelle](#), [ANSES](#), [EFSA](#)

Returning from Walking Dogs or Other Animals

Dogs or other household pets that need to be walked should be taken outside with the intention of social distancing (maintaining at least 6 feet of distance between yourself and others). Pets should not interact or play with those from other households at this time, as they may transmit Coronavirus to their owners from other sources.

If you have been walking your dog, on your return consider cleaning its paws with water and soap.



Source: [College of Veterinary Medicine, IL](#), [CDC](#), [mira](#)