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**Siobhan McNally**

## DIARY OF A SINGLE MUM

### I've been acting like a scrubber

Clearly a man wrote the jingle "hands that do dishes can feel as soft as your face", because after two weeks of washing-up, my hands feel as rough as a houseful of Celebrity Big Brother contestants.

I only have myself to blame because I failed to notice the new house did not have a dishwasher fitted until after we'd moved in, which speaks volumes about my domestic skills.

When I finally realised the gravity of the situation, I got straight on the phone to the letting agent, completely forgetting it was a Saturday morning.

"Emergency works department," a mobile-disembodied voice finally answered.

"Hello, hello. I moved in earlier this week, but I've just realised there isn't a dishwasher," I panicked down phone.

"I'm sorry but we only deal with out-of-hours emergencies," said the amused male voice.

"You don't understand - this IS an emergency. I can't live without a

dishwasher!" I pleaded.

There was a pause before the voice decided this was clearly a wind-up. "Sounds like you better get the rubber gloves on then," he chuckled.

"I haven't got time for sex games - this is serious," I told him.

"How soon can I get one plumbed in?"

"Is there space for a dishwasher at the property?" he asked.

"Yes," I said looking at a gap between the cupboards, "as long as it's 15cm wide."

"Ah... there you have your answer, I'm afraid," he said kindly but firmly, keen to get the unstable lady off the line without further incident.

I put the phone down and stood there helpless until my friend Angela came over with a washing-up bowl.

Searching around under the sink I found two yellow left-handed rubber gloves - the right hands clearly having eloped as the power couple - and started manually washing the dishes for the first time since I left home.

The student years don't count as we used to eat straight from tins.

So two weeks later, I'm still chained to the sink and having to ring my mum to ask things like how to get tea stains out of mugs without resorting to pouring in sulphuric acid.

But I have to admit, my kitchen does look a lot cleaner since I can't leave stacks of unwashed dishes on top of a machine, with the loose intention of filling it at some point in the future.

And it turns out that washing-up after myself and a seven year old doesn't take that long at all, especially if we use the same plates for a week.

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White ribbon tie blouse, £29.50, M&S. Blazer, £85, patent courts, £32, both Topshop. Gold buckle belt, £10, ASOS. Distressed jeans, £49.95, American Eagle Outfitters.

Camouflage jacket, £39.95, white blouse, £29, shell and bead necklace, £xx, all Zara. Oversized denim jacket, £45, grey skirt, £45, both Topshop

Blue striped shirt, £xx, Zara. Dark denim dungaree dress, £40, River Island. Black opaque tights, £2.99, New Look. Black shoes, £39.99, Zara

Ripped denim jacket, £32, ASOS. Print dress, £49, Laura Clement @ La Redoute. Wooden earrings, £14, Freedom @ Topshop

Denim shirt, £29.50, boyfriend jeans, £36, tan belt, £15.60, all M&S. Wooden earrings, £14, Freedom @ Topshop. Black lace-up shoes, £39, La Redoute

■ **Optrex Actimist Eye Spray, £15.99 (boots.com)** If the cold weather combined with air conditioned buildings leaves your eyes sensitive and sore then treat yourself to an eye spray to relieve the irritation.

■ **L'Occitane Shea Butter Hand Cream, £19 (johnlewis.com)** Hand creams don't get any better than this. With honey, almond and coconut oil - yum! - it quickly nourishes, moisturises and protects against the cold.



■ **John Frieda Frizz Ease Nourishing Oil Elixir, £9.99 (boots.com)** This argan-oil infused elixir is great for restoring your hair's natural shine and getting rid of winter frizz.

■ **L'Oreal Sublime Bronze Gradual Tan 24-hour Moisturising Lotion, £6.99 (boots.com)** It's time to put a little colour on your skin with a gradual tan. L'Oreal's offering will leave you silky soft and with a golden glow.



■ **Body Shop Peppermint Soothing Pumice Foot Scrub, £7 (bodyshop.co.uk)** Feet shouldn't be ignored just because they're not on show. And this moisturising scrub is just the thing to get rid of dry, hard skin.

■ **Sally Hansen Vitamin E Nail & Cuticle Oil, £6.95 (superdrug.com)** If your nails and cuticles are dry and brittle this oil will soothe and smooth.

