

Do It Yourself RECIPES for ECO-FRIENDLY CLEANING

Most commercially produced cleaning products contain a range of artificial fragrances, solvents and preservatives which may harm human health, animals and the environment. Natural alternatives to chemical products are just as effective for cleaning your home and workplace, AND the basic ingredients needed will not clean out your bank account.

THE CLEANING CABINET ESSENTIAL 10

For basic cleaning, the following items are all you need.

1. Baking soda (sodium bicarbonate)

- ♦ Mineral made from soda ash. Baking soda is a miracle cleaner – it absorbs odors and is mildly abrasive. However, make sure it's fresh to ensure its cleaning powers. Test it by adding 1 tbsp to ¼ cup vinegar. If it fizzes, it's fresh.

2. White distilled vinegar

- ♦ An acid made from the fermentation of dilute alcoholic liquids. Excellent disinfectant, deodorizer and anti-fungal.

3. Borax (sodium borate)

- ♦ Alkaline mineral. Another miracle cleaner – however it is an eye irritant and toxic if swallowed. Keep out of the reach of children. (Caution: some borax has been found contaminated with arsenic from where it is mined. Use sparingly.)

4. Washing soda (sodium carbonate)

- ♦ Chemical relative of baking soda, but more strongly alkaline. A great solvent, but slightly caustic, so wear protective gloves. Don't use on wax floors, fiberglass or aluminum.

5. Hydrogen peroxide (household concentration 3%)

- ♦ Bleach substitute in place of chlorine.

6. Bon Ami (original)

- ♦ Founded in 1886, made from calcite and feldspar mineral abrasives. No chlorine, perfume or dye. Biodegradable. Excellent non-abrasive glass and appliance cleaner.

7. Liquid vegetable-based soap

- ♦ Vegetable-based soap sometimes referred to as castile soap.

8. Liquid vegetable-based detergent

- ♦ Detergents are chemically different from soaps in that they are made from synthetics. Look for products that are biodegradable and made from vegetable-based ingredients rather than petroleum-based.

9. Olive and essential oils

- ♦ Lavender, lemon, tea tree, and peppermint essential oils add natural fragrance and have antiseptic properties.

10. Grapefruit seed extract

- ♦ A powerful anti-bacterial.

Many of these ingredients can be found in your local grocery store or health foods stores. Please call ahead to ensure that they are in stock.

ANTIBACTERIALS AND DISINFECTANTS

Purpose	Ingredients	Directions	Uses	Notes
Vinegar as an anti-bacterial	Vinegar	Fill a spray bottle with straight 5% vinegar. Just spray on and wipe off, or allow to sit overnight.	Cleaning cutting boards, bathrooms, kitchens, and garbage pails. Removes mold.	Vinegar kills 99 percent of bacteria, 82 percent of mold, and 80 percent of germs. The smell of vinegar will dissipate in a few hours.
Basic Borax	½ cup borax 1 gallon water	Mix borax and water.	Use as a disinfectant	This disinfectant was tested in a California hospital for one year and met the state germicidal requirements.
Lightly Lavender Antibacterial Spray	1 cup water 20 drops pure essential oil of lavender	Pour the water into a spray bottle. Add the lavender essential oil and shake to blend. Spray on the surface and let set for at least 15 minutes, or don't rinse at all.		Makes: 1 cup spray. Shelf life: Indefinite
Antiseptic	Hydrogen Peroxide 3%	Use by itself.		

Grave Robber's Blend (an antiseptic tale)

During the time of the Black Plague a family of perfumers were known to rob the dead, yet themselves survived. As perfumers they knew well the antiseptic essential oils, and they infused them in vinegar and rubbed them on their bodies. Doing so they protected themselves from certain death. The doctors of the time used the same herbs and essential oils to protect themselves while tending to the many who were contagious. They wore big cloaks over their heads with a 10" long canoe-like shaped beak over their nose and mouth full of antiseptic herbs and essential oils. Here is the famous Vinegar of The Four Thieves recipe; it is sometimes called Grave Robber's Blend.

Place a small handful each of dried lavender, rosemary, sage, rue and mint in a large jar, and cover completely with organic apple cider vinegar. Cover tightly and set for six weeks. Strain into a spray bottle. Spray this powerful antiseptic recipe in areas of concern, such as on cutting boards and door knobs, always making sure to avoid your eyes.

GENERAL ALL-PURPOSE CLEANSERS

Purpose	Ingredients	Directions	Notes
Non-abrasive cleanser	Baking Soda	Sprinkle on a damp sponge or cloth and use as a gentle nonabrasive cleanser. Use on kitchen countertops, sinks, bathtubs, ovens, fiberglass, etc.	Works well as an odor absorbent and mild abrasive.
All-purpose, all-kicking cleanser	1/2 teaspoon washing soda 2 teaspoons borax 1/2 teaspoon liquid soap or detergent 2 cups hot water	Combine the washing soda, borax, and soap in a spray bottle. Pour in the hot water to dissolve the minerals. Screw on the lid, and shake to completely blend and dissolve. Spray every 6 inches or so of surface once or twice, wiping off the cleanser with a rag as you go. For tough dirt, leave the cleanser on for a few minutes before wiping it off.	Shake the bottle each time before use. Two tablespoons vinegar can be added for even more kick. Shelf Life: Indefinite Storage: Leave in a labeled spray bottle out of reach of children.
Smell-nice soft scrubber	1/2 cup baking soda Enough liquid soap* or detergent to make a frosting-like consistency 5 drops antibacterial essential oil of your favorite scent, such as lavender, peppermint, or rosemary	Pour the baking soda in a bowl; slowly pour in the liquid soap or detergent, stirring all the while, until the consistency reaches that of frosting. Add the oil. Scoop the creamy mixture onto a sponge, wash the surface, and rinse.	If you have hard water, you will want to choose a liquid detergent instead of a liquid soap.
Surface Cleaners	1 quart hot water 1 teaspoon vegetable-oil based soap or detergent 1 teaspoon borax 2 Tablespoons vinegar	Mix and use in a mister.	For a general cleaner dissolve baking soda in hot water.
Rust Remover	Lemon juice Steel wool	Apply lemon juice to rusted area and scrub with steel wool, wipe clean.	

FLOOR CLEANERS

Purpose	Ingredients	Directions	Notes
Spring clean floor cleaner	1/8 cup liquid soap or detergent OR ¼ cup borax ¼ to ½ cup white distilled vinegar or lemon juice ½ cup fragrant herb tea (peppermint is great as it adds antibacterial qualities) 1 gallon hot water	Mix and apply. Good for use on no-wax and tile floors.	To remove scuff marks, sprinkle with baking soda and spray with equal parts vinegar and water. Wipe clean. This recipe is nice to rid the house of the stale smell of winter.
Wood floor polish	¼ cup olive oil ¼ cup white vinegar 10 drops of your favorite essential oil for fragrance (optional)	Mix and apply. Wipe clean.	
Carpet Fresh/Cleaner-STAINS	Borax Soapy water Vinegar	Rub borax into the dampened area, let dry then vacuum, or repeatedly blot with vinegar and soapy water.	
Carpet Fresh/Cleaner-ODORS	Dry cornstarch or baking soda Optional: borax	Sprinkle either cornstarch or baking soda and vacuum.	Or leave 2 parts cornstarch and 1 part borax on for an hour then vacuum.
Floor Cleaner	¼ cup of white vinegar 1 gallon of hot water	Mix and apply to vinyl, linoleum, and tile floors. Allow to dry.	

FURNITURE AND METAL POLISH

Purpose	Ingredients	Directions	Notes
Lemon Oil Duster	10 drops lemon oil 2 tablespoons lemon juice A few drops olive oil or jojoba oil	Dip a soft recycled cloth, such as one of flannel, in the lemon oil mixture, and wipe furniture.	Most commercial lemon oil is not all natural, but may contain petroleum distillates. Contact herbalists for pure sources of lemon oil. Traditionally, lemon oil has been used for furniture because it is so lubricating and antiseptic, and has a nice smell.
Basic Wood Cleaning	1/4 cup white distilled vinegar 1/4 cup water 1/2 teaspoon liquid soap or detergent A few drops jojoba or olive oil	Combine the ingredients in a bowl, saturate a sponge with the mixture, Squeeze out the excess, and wash surfaces.	This is a good formula for well-used furniture. The vinegar works wonderfully to pull dirt out of wood. The smell of vinegar will dissipate in a few hours. Shelf Life: Indefinite Storage: Labeled glass jar with a screw top POLISH
Brass Polish	Water Lemon juice or Worcestershire sauce	Use fresh or reconstituted lemon juice or Worcestershire sauce. Rinse with water after cleaning.	
Chrome Polish	Rubbing alcohol or white flour Baking soda paste	Use rubbing alcohol or white flour on a dry rag or rub with a baking soda paste.	
Wood Furniture Polish	1 tbs Carnauba wax 2 cups mineral oil OR 1 part lemon juice 2 parts olive oil	Combine and apply.	Also maybe used on wood floors.
Copper Polish	Lemon juice Salt Water	Rub with a mixture of lemon juice (reconstituted or fresh) and salt. Rinse with water after washing.	
Silver Polish	Tbs baking soda Tbs salt Hot water Small piece of aluminum foil Glass or porcelain pan	Combine, drop in silver and soak for 3 minutes. Rinse and polish with a soft cloth.	Alternative: clean with toothpaste and warm water; or rub with a baking soda paste; soak in sour milk overnight.

Tips:

- The best oils to use are those that have the longest shelf life. Olive oil works well. The best choice of all is the liquid wax jojoba, because it never goes rancid; but it is quite expensive.
- Boiled linseed oils found in hardware stores have synthetic drying chemicals in them and shouldn't be used. Food grade linseed oil is okay.
- Lemon juice can be substituted for the vinegar. Organic apple cider vinegar is the best choice of vinegar, but sometimes stains.
- Conventional furniture polishes may contain petroleum distillates. Instead of using them, try cleaning and polishing varnished wood with a mild vegetable or Castile oil soap. [Dr. Bronner's](#) has an outstanding product you can find at your local markets.
- For painted wood, mix 1 teaspoon of washing soda in a gallon of hot water and rinse with clear water. For unvarnished wood, try almond, walnut or olive oil. Work in and wipe off any excess.

GLASS AND WINDOW CLEANING

Purpose	Ingredients	Directions	Notes
Window Cleaner	½ cup vinegar 1 cup water 2 drops liquid soap	Mix in a spray bottle. Shake and apply. Wipe clean.	Shelf life: indefinite
Glass Cleaner	1 quart water 1 table spoon white vinegar	Fill a spray bottle, and use instead of ammonia products.	Wipe with newspaper.
Windshield washer solution	Water and a touch of liquid soap	Mix and add to reservoir.	Do not add vinegar as it may damage the windshield washer pump.

Tips:

- For a stronger cleaner add 1 tsp borax or washing soda
- Invest in a window squeegee. Makes the job so much easier and doesn't leave streaks.
- Use a razor blade for scraping off dirt, paint or glue before cleaning.
- Newspapers can release toxins from the ink. Use a lint-free cloth instead.

MOLD AND MILDEW

Purpose	Ingredients	Directions	Notes
Tea Tree Treasure	2 teaspoons tea tree oil 2 cups water	Combine in a spray bottle, shake to blend, and spray on problem areas. Do not rinse.	Nothing natural works for mold and mildew as well as this spray. Tea tree oil is expensive, but a little goes a very long way. The smell of tea tree oil is very strong, but it will dissipate in a few days. Makes: 2 cups Shelf Life: Indefinite
Grapefruit Seed Extract	20 drops grapefruit seed extract 2 cups water	Combine in a spray bottle, shake to blend, and spray on problem areas. Do not rinse.	The advantage of using grapefruit seed extract instead of tea tree oil for killing mold is that it is odorless. Makes: 2 cups Shelf Life: Indefinite
Mildew remover	Vinegar or lemon juice Salt	Make a paste of vinegar or lemon juice with salt. Apply to mildewed area, let sit, then rinse.	

Bathroom Cleaning

Purpose	Ingredients	Directions	Notes
Tile, tub and basin cleaning	12/3 cup baking soda ½ cup liquid soap ½ cup water 2 Tbs. vinegar Several drops essential oil (optional)	Mix soda and soap. Then add water and mix. Then add vinegar and mix. Apply. Rinse with sponge to avoid leaving residue. Store in a squirt top bottle and shake before using.	Shelf life: indefinite
Toilet bowl cleaner		Use above recipe with the addition of ½ cup borax or baking soda. You can also sprinkle borax or baking soda directly onto toilet brush and apply.	Washing soda will scratch fiberglass, so be sure to use baking soda. For serious stains or rust, empty water out of bowl and scrub with pumice stone. The stone will not scratch porcelain when wet.
Natural Bleach	1 Tbs. cream of tartar Small amount 3% hydrogen peroxide	Combine the cream of tartar and hydrogen peroxide to make a paste. Cover the stained area with the paste and leave for a few hours. Scrub and rinse.	
Tile grout cleaner	½ cup 3% hydrogen peroxide solution (from your local pharmacy) 1 cup water	Combine water and hydrogen peroxide in a spray bottle. Spray this on the grout where dirty or moldy and leave to dry for several hours. Scrub, rinse and DRY off.	

KITCHEN

Purpose	Ingredients	Directions	Notes
No fumes oven cleaner	Baking Soda Water	Cover the bottom of the oven with a ¼ inch layer of baking soda. Then, using a clean spray bottle, spray the baking soda with water until the baking soda is thoroughly damp but not flooded. Whenever convenient, dampen the baking soda again if it is drying out. Before going to bed, rewet. In the morning, the baking soda can effortlessly be scooped out of the oven with a sponge, bringing all the grime with it	
Easy-clean microwave	Lemon slices water	Place lemon slices in microwave safe cup with at least 8 ounces of water. Heat on high for 3 minutes. Let sit for 3 minutes without opening the microwave door. After 3 minutes, safely remove the cup and wipe down the inside of the microwave.	The steam and lemon should allow you to remove any baked-on food particles and leave your microwave smelling great. For a cleaning solution, mix lemon juice, vinegar, and water and apply.
Baking Soda Drain Cleaner	½ cup baking soda ½ cup vinegar	Pour ½ cup of baking soda down drain followed by vinegar. Let it bubble for 15 minutes, then pour down a teakettle full of boiling water. Repeat a few times until the drain is clear. For severe problems, use a plunger or plumbers snake.	If the drain still isn't clearing try pouring 1 cup of washing soda over the drain area and let it set for a while to work its way down to the clog. Once the clog is loosened, use the baking soda method again. Do NOT use washing soda if a commercial acid drain cleaner has recently been used in the drain. You also shouldn't overuse washing soda if you have PVC pipes, as the caustic nature of washing soda can slowly damage the plastic.
Degreaser		Use water-based detergents or citrus based degreasers.	

PAINT REMOVER

Purpose	Ingredients	Directions	Notes
Paint on brushes	Water White vinegar Soapy water	Boil brush in an old covered saucepan with white vinegar to cover the brush. Turn down heat and simmer for a few minutes. Remove brush and wash with soapy water.	Nylon brushes may melt.
Paint on hands	Baby oil or mineral oil	Apply to hands and then wash clean.	
Paint Remover	1 pound tri-sodium phosphate (TSP) Natural mineral based cleaning powder 1 gallon of Hot water Rubber gloves Scraper	Mix TSP, cleansing powder and water. While wearing rubber gloves, brush on the mixture. Let sit for 30 minutes then remove the softened paint with a scraper.	Natural mineral based cleaning powder is available at paint and hardware stores.

LAUNDRY

Purpose	Ingredients	Directions	Notes
Laundry soap		Use non-phosphate, vegetable oil based detergent.	
Removing the smell from new (or new to you) clothes	1 cup or small box baking soda	Place the clothes in the washing machine and cover with water. Sprinkle with baking soda and soak overnight. When convenient during the soaking, agitate the machine for a few minutes. Launder as usual.	Repeat the method until the clothes no longer smell.
Stain remover (also for Carpet and Upholstery)	¼ cup liquid detergent ¼ cup glycerin 1 ½ cups water	Mix and pour into a squirt bottle. Use sparingly.	For difficult stains: blot stain with club soda then scrub with a dab of dish detergent OR mix equal parts vinegar and water.
Wet cleaning wool and silk	Use a mild detergent with a pH below 7, such as Infinity Heavenly Horsetail, available in health food stores. If necessary, spot clean with vinegar or lemon juice, but test for dye color fastness first.	Hand wash in a sink by gently swirling the clothes in cool water; never twist or wring out. Gently press water from the fabric. Block wool--lay it flat on a towel and stretch it to the correct size and shape--before drying; it will dry to the blocked size. Wool is resilient and recovers quickly from wrinkling if hung.	It is the agitation of wool and silk that causes the shrinkage of the fabric, not just hot water. Even the agitation of the gentle cycle in a washing machine is too much agitation for these fabrics. Make sure to spot-test the fabric for colorfastness first.
Wet cleaning silk	Use a mild liquid castile soap such as Dr. Bronner's baby soap, since it won't strip the natural oils. Any harsh lye-based soap with a pH above 10 will destroy silk. If necessary, spot clean with vinegar or lemon juice, but test for dye color fastness first.	Hand wash in a sink by gently swirling the clothes in cool water; never twist or wring out. Gently press water from the fabric. Hang dry silk.	
Waterproofing boots and shoes	Anhydrous Lanolin (available in pharmacies)	Rub cream into leather. Use sparingly.	Lanolin is the oil in sheep's wool, and it is a natural water repellent that can be removed with no harm to the sheep.
Fabric Softener	1 cup of vinegar ¼ cup baking soda	Add 1 cup of vinegar and ¼ cup baking soda during the final rinse.	
Spray Starch	2 pints cold water 2 tbs cornstarch	Combine and fill spray bottle. Shake well.	For delicate fabrics, dissolve 1 package of unflavored gelatin or 2 tbs granulated sugar in 2 cups of hot water. If fabric is sticky when dry, add more water.

LAUNDRY: To Treat specific stains

Purpose	Ingredients	Directions	Notes
Berries	Vinegar Milk	Soak until stain recedes.	
Blood	Club soda Hydrogen peroxide Cold water Cornstarch	Rinse with club soda or pour hydrogen peroxide directly on the stain and rinse in cold water. For stubborn stains mix cornstarch with water and rub into the stain. Allow to dry and brush away.	
Chewing Gum	Ice	Rub with ice until gum flakes off.	
Chocolate	Vegetable oil or butter OR Washing soda Water	Rub with vegetable oil or butter or a paste of washing soda and water right away. Let stand for 15 minutes or so. Wash.	
Coffee/Tea	Vinegar Seltzer	Soak in strong vinegar solution or rinse with seltzer.	
Grass	Vinegar Rubbing alcohol Water	Soak in vinegar, or use a solution of rubbing alcohol and water.	
Grease	Salt Bread Dry soap	Rub stain with salt, bread or dry soap and wipe off.	
Ink	Milk Lemon juice Hydrogen peroxide Rubbing alcohol	Soak in milk or lemon juice. Rubbing with hydrogen peroxide or rubbing alcohol also works.	
Lipstick	Cold cream or shortening Washing soda Warm water	Rub with cold cream or shortening to dissolve color then rinse in solution of washing soda and warm water to remove grease.	
Perspiration	Vinegar Lemon juice Water	Rub with solution of vinegar or lemon juice in water.	
Paint	Milk Hot vinegar Washing soda Water	Soak in milk, hot vinegar, or a mixture of washing soda/water.	
Oil	White chalk	Rub immediately with white chalk.	
Red Wine	Paper towel Club soda, rubbing alcohol, borax, or white wine	Blot with paper towels. Then apply either club soda, rubbing alcohol, borax or white wine to blot out the stain.	
Bleach (alternative)	½ cup borax Lemon juice	Substitute borax in wash load to whiten whites or brighten colors. Or soak in lemon juice and dry in direct sunlight.	If needed, occasionally use powdered oxygen based bleach.

Tip:

- Never use warm or hot water on any stains containing sugar.
- Borax is something of a miracle worker when it comes to doing the laundry. Use it as a pre-soak or add ½ cup borax to the wash cycle to clean heavily soiled clothes.
- To neutralize odors and soften clothes add ½ cup baking soda OR 1-2 cups vinegar to the rinse cycle.

AIR FRESHENERS

Often indoor air is often more polluted than outdoor air, and cleaning products, aerosols, air fresheners, paints, and disinfectants are some of the main problems. Children and adults in the U.S. spend 90% of their time indoors, which means improving indoor air quality should be a priority. A great way to combat this problem is to cleanse your air with indoor plants. All plants convert carbon dioxide to oxygen, but some actually remove chemicals like benzene and formaldehyde from the air. The following is a list of plants that are known to function as efficient air detoxifiers and remove toxins from air (as well as producing essential oxygen, of course). We chose these because of their high efficiency and low maintenance, although points were also awarded to plants with low light requirements or were aesthetically pleasing.

Good choices include:

Peace Lily
Chinese Evergreen
Golden Pothos (Devil's Ivy)
Snake Plant
Daisies
Chrysanthemums
Spider Plants
Australian Umbrella Tree
Dracaena
Ficus
Philodendrons
Aloe Vera
English Ivy
Boston fern

Remember that plants need to breathe, too - dust them gently with a damp cloth - moisten the cloth with milk to add some extra shine. Keep their soil or root area clear - some of the air-cleaning action occurs there.

Purpose	Ingredients	Directions	Notes
Air Freshener and Deodorizer	Water Cinnamon Cloves Other sweet herbs (thyme, sage, rosemary, and others)	Simmer cinnamon, cloves, and sweet herbs on a stove and spray the "tea" water with a mister.	