

Cleaning Without chemicals

Many homes today have a stockpile of products to help clean counters, floors, windows, ovens, refrigerators, and other surfaces and items. But, many products contain compounds that, if handled improperly, can harm our health or damage the environment.

We can help.

Follow the simple recipes on this fact sheet to make homemade cleaning solutions that can help protect you and the environment, as well as save money. And, you likely already have many of the ingredients in your home pantry.

CAUTION

- **ALWAYS** store cleaning solutions out of the reach of children.
- **NEVER** store cleaning products in food containers.
- **ALWAYS** label containers and their uses.
- **NEVER** mix hydrogen peroxide with vinegar, or bleach with vinegar or ammonia (creates toxic fumes).

What you need

- liquid soap (oil-based)
- naphtha soap
- white vinegar
- rubbing alcohol
- baking soda
- washing soda (sodium carbonate)
- borax (sodium borate)
- lemon or lime juice
- lemon essential oil
- tea tree oil
- linseed oil
- water
- salt (non-iodized)
- cornmeal
- spray bottles or bowls

All-purpose cleaners

Option 1

- 4 tablespoons baking soda
- 1 quart (4 cups) warm water

Dissolve the baking soda in the water. Apply with a sponge and wipe clean.

Option 2

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil-based liquid soap
- 1 teaspoon lemon/lime juice
- 1 quart (4 cups) warm water

Combine ingredients in a small bucket and apply with a sponge. Wipe clean.

Option 3

- 3 tablespoons white vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon washing soda
- 1/2 teaspoon liquid soap
- 2 cups hot water

Mix ingredients into a spray bottle or bucket. Apply and wipe clean.

Scrub mixes

Abrasive

- 1 cup baking soda
- 1/4 cup white vinegar

Mix ingredients in a bowl, and rub onto surface with a damp cloth or sponge. Let stand for a few minutes, and rinse well with clean water.

Non-abrasive

- 1/4 cup borax
- liquid soap
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon essential oil

Mix borax with soap into a creamy paste. Add lemon oil and blend well. Rub onto surface, and rinse well with clean water.

Cleaning Without (cont'd)

Oven cleaner

- 2 teaspoons liquid soap
- 2 tablespoons borax

Mix the ingredients together in a spray bottle. Fill the bottle with hot water and shake well. Spray into the oven cavity and let it set for 25 minutes. Scrub off.

Refrigerator cleaner

- 2 tablespoons baking soda
- 4 cups (1 quart) warm water

Dissolve the baking soda in the water. Use to wipe the interior of the refrigerator. For stubborn spots, rub with baking soda paste and rinse with a clean, wet cloth.

Drain cleaner

- 1/2 cup baking soda
- 1 cup white vinegar
- 1 cup boiling water

Pour baking soda into the drain. Let sit for 2-3 minutes. Add vinegar and hot water, and cover for 10-12 minutes. Flush with boiling water. If needed, repeat, with plunger.

Garbage can deodorizer

- 1 cup baking soda
- 1 teaspoon tea tree oil

Thoroughly mix ingredients together in a small bowl. Sprinkle mixture in the bottom of unlined trash can. Periodically rinse container with white vinegar and dry with paper towel (or, better, sunlight).

Toilet bowl cleaner

- 1 cup borax
- 1/2 cup white vinegar

Flush the toilet to wet the sides of the bowl. Sprinkle the borax around the toilet bowl, then spray with vinegar. Leave for several hours or overnight before scrubbing with a toilet brush.

Tub and tile cleaner

- white vinegar
- baking soda or non-iodized salt

Apply full-strength vinegar to a sponge or cloth and wipe onto surface. Next, use baking soda or salt as you would scouring powder. Rub with a damp sponge, and then rinse thoroughly with clean water.

Carpet deodorizer

- 1 cup borax
- 2 cups cornmeal
- or --
- baking soda

Sprinkle the carpet/rug with a mixture of borax and cornmeal OR baking soda. Let stand for an hour for borax OR 15 minutes (or more) for baking soda. Then, vacuum.

Wood cleaner

- 2 tablespoons boiled linseed oil
- 2 teaspoons white vinegar
- 1/4 cup lemon juice

Mix ingredients. Using a soft cloth, apply cleaner in the direction of the wood grain. Wipe with damp sponge to remove.

Laundry detergent

- 1 bar of naptha soap
- 1 cup washing soda
- 1/2 cup borax
- 4 cups of water
- 2 empty gallon containers
- clean bucket

Heat water in small saucepan, grate the naptha soap into pan, and melt soap. In bucket, add mixture to 2.5 gallons of hot water, with borax and washing soad, and top with water. Let thicken overnight. Stir, then transfer mix into gallon containers, as mix of half solution and half water. Shake before using.

* High-efficiency machines: 1/4 cup per load.

* Top-loading machines: 1/2 cup per load.

MORE WAYS TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

Never dump chemicals down the drain or storm sewers.

Dispose of hazardous chemicals, paints, varnishes, pesticides, and others at your county collection centers. Learn more at scgov.net/government/solid-waste/hazardous-waste.

To avoid improperly disposing of a hazardous household product, you can:

- Use it up.
- Give it to a neighbor or friend.
- Avoid purchasing the product in the future.

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