

Cleaning Green

Environmentally Friendly Ways to Reduce Household Chemicals

- Buy chemicals only in the amount you expect to use, and apply only as directed. Use them up or give them to friends rather than throwing the chemicals away.
- Take unwanted household chemicals to waste collection centers. Do not pour them down the drain. Pouring chemicals down the drain can disrupt the septic system or contaminate treatment plant sludge.
- Never pour unwanted chemicals on the ground. Soil cannot purify most chemicals. The chemicals may eventually contaminate runoff.
- Use low-phosphate or phosphate-free detergents.
- Use water-based products whenever possible.
- Use less toxic chemicals or non-toxic substitutes whenever possible. Most household cleaning challenges can be met with baking soda, borax, lemon juice, vinegar, water and a little elbow grease.

What Can Common Household Products Do for You?

Baking Soda

Neutralize acid, scrub shiny materials without scratching, deodorize, extinguish grease fires, clean and polish aluminum, chrome and stainless steel, soften fabric, and remove stains.

Borax

Deodorize, inhibit mold and mildew growth, boost the cleaning power of soaps, and remove stains.

Lemon Juice

Deodorize, clean glass, and remove stains from aluminum, porcelain, and clothing.

Vinegar

Dissolve grease, soap, mildew and wax buildup, deodorize, polish metals, clean brick and stone, and shine glass.



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Environmentally Friendly Alternatives to Household Chemicals



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What Does it Mean to “Clean Green”?

Cleaning green is the use of cleaning products and methods that keep our environment healthy. There are many degrees to which homes can achieve this. For some homes, cleaning green means that they use only substances like baking soda, vinegar, water, lemon juice and borax to clean home surfaces. Other homes may purchase products that avoid phosphates, chlorine, artificial fragrances and artificial colors.

There is a wide variety of environmentally friendly cleaning choices for those interested in cleaning green.

Following are a variety of suggestions on how to use common household products to clean your home surfaces.

Air Fresheners and Deodorizers

- **Garbage cans:** sprinkle baking soda at the bottom of the can.
- **Garbage disposal:** grind used lemon peels or pour baking soda into the drain.
- **Litter box:** sprinkle baking soda on the bottom of the litter pan before adding litter.
- Leave open boxes of baking soda in the refrigerator, freezer, closets, and bathrooms.
- Saturate a cotton ball with vanilla and place in an open container in a room or car.



Cleaners

- **Coffee pots:** clean with a white vinegar and water solution.
- **Automatic dishwasher:** for detergent, mix 1.5 tablespoons baking soda and 2 tablespoons borax. Add 1 cup white vinegar to the rinse compartment for streak free dishes.
- **Grout:** combine three cups baking soda with one cup warm water to form a paste.
- **Mildew cleaners:** scrub mildew spots with baking soda or borax.
- **Floor cleaner:** mix 1/2 cup vinegar with one gallon of water.
- **Scouring powder:** use baking soda or salt.
- **Toilet bowl cleaner:** sprinkle baking soda into the bowl, squirt with vinegar, and scrub with toilet brush.
- **Glass:** mix 2 ounces of vinegar and one quart of water in a spray bottle. Dry with newspaper.



Laundry Products

- To **whiten clothes:** use a washing soda or non-chlorine bleach.
- To **remove spots and brighten colors:** use 1/2 cup borax in each load.
- **Detergents:** use synthetic detergent without adding fabric softeners or bleach.
- To **freshen and soften clothes:** add one cup of vinegar or 1/4 cup baking soda during the final rinse cycle.

Drain Openers

To unclog a drain without the use of chemicals, follow this recipe:

1. Pour 1/4 cup baking soda down the drain.
2. Pour 1/2 cup vinegar down the drain.
3. Let sit for 5 minutes.
4. Pour a pan of boiling water down the drain to flush.



Polishes

- **Brass and copper:** use a paste of lemon juice and salt.
- **Silver:** rub with toothpaste or baking soda and a soft cloth. Rinse and polish with a dry, clean cloth.
- **Chrome:** wipe with apple cider vinegar and rinse, or use baby oil and a soft cloth.
- **Wood:** use a mixture of vegetable oil and a little lemon juice.



Miscellaneous Cleaners

- **Carpet stains:** soak stain with club soda and blot until gone.
- To **remove gummed labels:** saturate a cloth with vinegar and rub onto label.
- **Wallpaper cleaner:** roll up a piece of white bread and use it to “erase” marks.
- **Concrete grease spots:** sprinkle dry cement over grease. Allow it to absorb and sweep up.