



Cleaning Products



Chemicals aren't all bad

Chemicals are all around us. They occur in nature and in all activities that people undertake. The danger with chemicals in the home is the concentration and combination of both synthetic and natural chemicals we choose to use.

Being a savvy consumer who reads labels before using a product is also helpful. Homemade cleaning products that are made from ingredients you already have in your kitchen often rival those you can buy in stores. Not only can making your own home cleaning products save you money, they can help save the environment.

If you plan to use alternative cleaning products or make your own, take into consideration the three basic functions of household cleaners: to cut grease, to scour (be abrasive), to disinfect. The alternative cleaning products that work best for cutting grease are an acidic solution or a strong base, like vinegar. For scouring jobs, an abrasive product such as salt or baking soda does a good job. To sanitize or sterilize, a type of chemical that has antiseptic properties is needed, such as chlorine bleach or isopropyl alcohol--not lemon juice.

Proper Storage Required for Cleaning Products

No matter what type of cleaning product is used consumers need to know the proper ways to store and use cleaning products in the home:

- **Close cleaning product caps securely.**
Child-resistant packaging doesn't work if the container isn't closed.
- **Lock products up.**
Store them in a location that's away from children, pets and food.
- **Keep cleaning products in their original containers.**
If an accident occurs, the label provides information concerning immediate first-aid to perform.
- **Carefully dispose of empty cleaning containers.**
Replace the caps and then discard in a SAFE, sealed recycling bin.

Making a Cleanser

If you would like to make a cleaner for your home, you can probably save money and control the chemicals in your home. There are certain problems related to homemade products, including:

- **They may take longer to clean effectively. You may need to let the product "sit" on the surface for longer than usual, or you may have to go over a surface several times.**
- **More elbow grease may be required and the product may not clean as well if a harsh cleaner was used repeatedly on the surface.**

While the ingredients in homemade cleaners are safer, they are not all non-toxic. Remember these guidelines:

- Be careful mixing chemicals. Some chemicals, such as chlorine bleach and ammonia, produce a toxic gas when mixed together.
- Do not mix more than a month's supply at a time. The chemicals may lose their effectiveness.
- Mix solutions in a well-ventilated area. Store all cleaning solutions out of reach of children.
- Store solutions in unused, store-bought containers. Use permanent storage containers that will be put in a permanent location. **Never put them in old food containers.** Chemicals may interact with residue from the original contents or the container may be mistaken for a food or beverage.

http://ohioline.osu.edu/enviro/sp98/enviro_2.html

So, what works the best for household cleaning and is safe for the environment?

Here are a few recipes shown to be effective:

Oven Cleaner: Pour vinegar over burned-on areas; shut the door and leave to soak. After two hours, wipe off the vinegar, rinsing the sponge or cleaning cloth frequently with warm water.

Degreaser and Scum Remover: Pour vinegar directly on the area and wipe with a damp, soft cloth. For lime and mineral deposits, soak a paper towel in vinegar. Apply the paper towel to the lime deposits on the faucets. Let stand one hour. The deposits will soften and can be removed easily with a soft toothbrush. Do not use on marble surfaces.

All-Purpose Cleaner: Dissolve 4 tablespoons of baking soda in 1 quart of warm water. Put into a labeled spray bottle.

Glass Cleaner: Mix 2 tablespoons of vinegar into 1 quart of water. Put into a labeled spray bottle.

Furniture Cleaner and Polish: Mix 3 cups of olive oil and 1 cup of vinegar until well blended. Keep in a labeled container. Use several drops of polish on a soft, dry cloth and apply to furniture. Do not apply to marble surfaces.

Drain Cleaner: * 1/2 cup baking soda, 1/2 cup white vinegar, Boiling water
Pour baking soda down the drain. Add white vinegar and cover the drain, if possible. Let set for 5 minutes. Then pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain. (The vinegar and baking soda break down fatty acids into soap and glycerin, allowing the clog to wash down the drain.)***Do not use this method if you have just used a commercial drain opener and it may still be present in the drain.**



VINEGAR

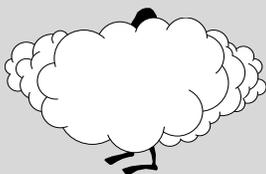
Vinegar is simplicity itself. Its origin was the discovery that a cask of wine gone past its time had turned to a wonderful new product. Through the centuries the principle remains unchanged - fermentation of natural sugars to alcohol and then secondary fermentation to vinegar.

For cleaning purposes it is best to use distilled vinegar or "white vinegar." Cider or "brown vinegar" could cause some porous surfaces to stain. Vinegar can be used full strength or diluted with water - Use two parts water to one part vinegar or less strong with three or four parts of water to one part vinegar. Keep a **labeled** spray bottle in your kitchen and bath for quick clean-ups. You may want to add one-half teaspoon of liquid detergent to the mixture also. You can make a scouring cleanser by combining one-fourth cup of baking soda with one tablespoon of liquid detergent. Add enough vinegar to give it a thick, but creamy texture.

Vinegar naturally cleans like an all-purpose cleaner. Mix a solution of 1 part water to 1 part vinegar in a new store bought spray bottle and you have a solution that will clean most areas of your home. Vinegar is a great natural cleaning product as well as a disinfectant and deodorizer.

Always test on an inconspicuous area. It is safe to use on most surfaces and has the added bonus of being incredibly cheap. Improperly diluted vinegar is acidic and can eat away at tile grout. Never use vinegar on marble surfaces. Don't worry about your home smelling like vinegar. The smell disappears when it dries.

- **Never mix vinegar and hydrogen peroxide together.** This combination creates a chemical called Peracetic Acid, which is a strong corrosive and oxidizing agent and can be very harmful.



- For a more complete listing of the uses for vinegar around the home and office go the Vinegar Institute website. www.versatilevinegar.org.

Here are some uses for vinegar in the rooms of your house

Getting Rid of Fruit Flies/Gnats in Your Kitchen: Place a bowl filled with ½ quart water, 2 T. sugar, 2 T. apple cider vinegar and a couple of drops of dish soap to attract fruit flies. Always eliminate the source of attraction, i.e., ripened produce.

Cleaning Stainless Steel Appliances: Apply vinegar with a soft cloth to remove streaks from stainless steel appliances. Try in an inconspicuous place first.

Cleaner Dishes and Glasses: Pour 1 ½ cup to 2 cups white distilled vinegar in the bottom of dishwasher, along with regular dishwasher soap. Wash full cycle.

Remove Refrigerator Smells: Place 1 cup apple cider vinegar in a glass and set in refrigerator. Smell is gone within 2 days!

Shower doors: Rub down shower doors with a sponge soaked in white distilled vinegar to remove soap residue.

Toilet bowl cleaner: Stubborn stains can be removed by spraying with white distilled vinegar and brushing vigorously. The bowl may be deodorized by adding 3 cups of white distilled vinegar. Allow it to remain for a half hour, then flush.

Unclog the showerhead: Corrosion may be removed from showerheads or faucets by soaking them in white distilled vinegar overnight. This may be accomplished by saturating a terry cloth towel in vinegar and wrapping it around fixture.

Freshen baby clothes: The addition of 1 cup of white distilled vinegar to each load of baby clothes during the rinse cycle.

Clothes washing magic: Clothes will rinse better if 1 cup of white distilled vinegar is added to the last rinse water. The acid in vinegar is too mild to harm fabrics, but strong enough to dissolve the alkalis in soaps and detergents.

Deodorant stains: Deodorant and antiperspirant stains may be removed from clothing by lightly rubbing with white distilled vinegar and laundering as usual.

Hole removal: After a hem or seam is removed, there are often unsightly holes left in the fabric. These holes can be removed by placing a cloth, moistened with white distilled vinegar, under the fabric and ironing.

Keeping colors fast: To hold colors in fabrics, which tend to run, soak them for a few minutes in white distilled vinegar before washing.

Scorch marks: Lightly rub white distilled vinegar on fabric that has been slightly scorched. Wipe with a clean cloth.

Unclog steam iron: Pour equal amounts of white distilled vinegar and water into the iron's water chamber. Turn to steam and leave the iron on for 5 minutes in an upright position. Then unplug and allow cooling. Any loose particles should come out when you empty the water.

Clean a scorched iron plate: Heat equal parts white distilled vinegar and salt in a small pan. Rub solution on the cooled iron surface to remove dark or burned stains.

Relieve sunburn: Lightly rub white distilled or cider vinegar on skin. Reapply as needed.

Streak free windows: Simply wash with a mixture of equal parts of white distilled vinegar and warm water. Dry with a soft cloth. This solution will make your windows gleam and will not leave the usual film or streaks on the glass. **Note: There are times you should not spray liquid glass cleaner directly on glass surfaces.** This applies to mirrors with frames, pictures with frames, TV's and computer screens. For these surfaces spray the solution onto your cleaning cloth or towel and wipe the glass surface. If the liquid goes under the frame it can cause damage.

Baking Soda

Baking soda is mildly abrasive, yet won't scratch most surfaces, and its natural deodorizing properties make it a perfect choice in both the kitchen and bath.

- Sprinkle baking soda on a damp sponge and use it to clean the tub or sink. The paste will also remove scuffs and marks on painted or wallpapered walls. For stubborn stains make a paste of baking soda and water and let it sit for 15 minutes before scrubbing.
- A one-to-one ratio of baking soda with cider vinegar can blast drains clean. Pour the mixture down a slow-moving drain and follow with hot water. **Do not do this if you have already tried commercial drain cleaner – you could cause a dangerous chemical reaction .**



Ammonia

Ammonia is versatile and inexpensive. It makes a great home-made cleaning product for windows, chrome, mirrors and tile when combined with rubbing alcohol and water.

- Make a spray with one cup of rubbing alcohol, one cup of water and one tablespoon of clear ammonia. If you are using it to clean windows, make sure they are not in direct sunlight, or the heat will cause streaks no matter how quickly you wipe.
- A good oven cleaner can be made with a simple bowl of straight ammonia set in a dirty oven with the door closed. Let it stand overnight and you should be able to wipe most of the grunge away. If there are any lingering problems, you can use steel wool to scrub the interior.
- **Never combine bleach and ammonia – this mixture can release chloramines that can cause respiratory problems and even death.**

Lemon Juice

Uses: Lemon juice is another natural substance that can be used to clean your home. Lemon juice can be used to dissolve soap scum and hard water deposits. Lemon is a great substance to clean and shine lacquer-free brass and copper. Lemon juice can be mixed with vinegar and or baking soda to make cleaning pastes.

Cut a lemon in half and sprinkle baking soda on the cut section. Use the lemon to scrub dishes, surfaces, and stains. Mix 1 cup olive oil with ½ cup lemon juice and you have a furniture polish for your hardwood furniture.

Peel from citrus or the entire fruit can be put through the garbage disposal. The citrus freshens the drain and the kitchen.



Be sure to properly label all bottles of cleaning solution that you mix at

- **When you are choosing cleaning products for the home, think about what is going down the drain as you are putting it on your counter. Many commercial cleaning products are not only expensive, but they are not great for the environment.**

How to clean practically anything:

www.howtocleananything.com

Michigan State Home maintenance and repair

data base: <http://msue.msu.edu/hmr>



Reusing allows us to take responsibility for the waste we create. Using your imagination to create what you want from what you have is self-empowering and rewarding. You can feel good about saving money and resources.

If our Depression-era mothers and grandmothers made do with less, so can we!

Re-purposing involves a little more thought and effort than whipping out the credit card, but it is a greener alternative to consumption and a thrifty choice for anyone on a budget. Just remember to reduce, reuse...and reuse... and reuse! Then Recycle!