

Make Your Home Cleaners the Natural Way

Replace Cleaning Agents with Natural Products”



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Natural Cleaning Products

The History

What happens to the household cleaners that you wash down your drain or throw away? You probably know the answer already. They contaminate our groundwater, our soil, and our food sources.

They affect our health and the health of our children too. In fact, the statistics are staggering. So staggering that scientists and physicians have come to the conclusion that the rise in asthma and allergies in our society is a direct result of household cleaners and the toxins in our environment.

Fortunately, the effects are reversible. In fact, they very easily can be reversed. We can renew our environment and improve our health with one simple commitment. The bonus is that the solution is also cost effective—you'll save money.

The solution is homemade natural household cleaners.

Whether you want to make a significant personal contribution to the environment, or you want to ensure the health and safety of your family and pets, or you simply want to save money, natural household cleaners are the absolute best way to go.

The Challenge

The challenge to homemade cleaners is:

1. Deciding what you want to make/clean.
2. Finding a tried-and-true recipe.
3. Organizing the process

For each recipe, choose a storage solution that fits the need. If you're making an abrasive, then use a container that has a sprinkle top (a top with holes in it) so that you can best utilize the cleaner. For a spray cleaner, you can purchase a spray bottle at your local grocer for about 50 cents. A label maker or a black Sharpie® marker works well to keep all cleaners identified and safe.

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To make the entire process easier, we're going to break the cleaners down into categories, provide a few trusted recipes, and offer suggestions for how to store and utilize each cleaner.

Let's begin.

Air Fresheners

The biggest problem with commercial air fresheners, besides the fact that they are potentially toxic, is that they simply don't work. Commercial air fresheners merely cover up the offending odor with a stronger odor, or they numb your olfactory senses so that you simply don't smell anything.

The following are some simple air-freshener recipes:

- *Soak a cotton ball in real vanilla extract, not imitation, and place the cotton ball on a plate in the middle of your table or near the offending area like a kitty litter box. A fun spin on the vanilla-soaked cotton ball is to soak a cotton ball in your favorite essential oil like eucalyptus or lavender.*
- *Another warm and wonderful air freshener is to steep cinnamon and cloves on the stovetop for an hour or two. Your home will fill with the wonderful aroma and offending odors will dissipate.*
- *One of the most pungent areas of a household is the kitchen sink and garbage disposal. A quick and lasting remedy is to place a wedge of lemon or orange into the garbage disposal. Grind it up while you run cold water for 60-90 seconds. The citrus acid serves to both disinfect and deodorize your drain and surrounding plumbing.*
- *Baking soda, as the box says, works wonders as a refrigerator deodorizer and if you find that your water bottles, coffee mugs, or Thermos® bottles have stains, place ¼ tsp of baking soda and warm water in each and let them soak overnight. The smells will have vanished in the morning.*

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One last suggestion to keep your home smelling fresh and clean is to open your windows every day. A few minutes of ventilation will help clean the toxins out of your home and replace the stale air with freshness.

All-Purpose Cleaners

All-purpose cleaners are the ideal solution. They clean bathroom surfaces, kitchen surfaces, laundry-room surfaces and anything else that you can think of. In addition to cleaning and disinfecting, they also deodorize thanks in large part to the baking soda ingredient in most household cleaners. When stored properly they can last for several weeks.

- *Basic cleaner*
1/8 cup baking soda
1/2 cup ammonia
1/4 cup white vinegar
1/2 gallon warm water

Mix ingredients and store in tightly capped container. A large empty milk jug works well for storage.

- Basic abrasive cleaner (works well for coffee stains on countertops)
1/2 cup vinegar and 1/2 cup kosher salt
Mix together in a small bowl or storage container
- Basic scrubbing cleaner and deodorizer for bathroom or kitchen surfaces
Dissolve 4 tablespoons baking soda in 1 quart warm water

Furniture Polish

Furniture polish is generally one of the cleaners used only occasionally. Commercial cleaners tend to be aerosols that are full of ozone-damaging ingredients as well as harmful inhalants. This quick and easy furniture polish smells just as great as the store-bought versions, better actually, and stores well when tightly sealed and kept in a dark pantry or cupboard.

- *2 parts vegetable oil and 1 part lemon juice*
Apply polish with a soft cloth and buff to a shine
Label and store in a Mason jar

Laundry

There are a variety of natural laundry cleaners that can help to make your laundry fresh and clean. Additionally, the starch recipe is great and will save you money at the dry cleaners.

- Fabric softener and deodorizer
1/4 to 1/2 cup baking soda per wash load
- Starch
Mix together 1 tablespoon cornstarch in 1 pint cold water
Dissolve cornstarch
Place in a spray bottle
Shake before using

Stain Removers

Stains plague us every day. There's no way around them but rather than worry about it, they can be removed quickly and naturally.

- Chocolate
Soak stain with club soda before washing
- Cola
Apply undiluted vinegar directly to the stain within 24 hours and wash as usual
- Perspiration stains
Sponge stains with a solution of 1 cup warm water, 1 tbsp of white vinegar or lemon juice

- Grease on suede

Dab grease stain with a white cloth dipped in vinegar

Air dry

Restore suede texture with a suede brush

Metal Cleaners and Polishes

Tableware and pots and pans tend to tarnish and become dull. Depending on the type of material there is a natural cleaning solution for almost every metal.

- Aluminum

Fill cookware with hot water and add 2 tablespoons cream of tartar to 1 quart of water

Bring solution to a boil

Simmer 10 minutes

Wash as usual and dry

- Brass

Mix a paste of lemon juice and salt in a glass or ceramic bowl

Rub with a soft cloth

Rinse and dry

- Bronze, pewter, and copper

Dissolve 1 teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of white vinegar

Add enough flour to make a paste

Apply paste to bronze and let sit for 30-45 minutes

Rinse with warm water and dry/buff with clean towel

- Silver

Mix together a paste of ¼ cup water and enough baking soda to make a paste

Wearing cotton gloves apply paste using a soft cloth

To remove tarnish from silverware, sprinkle baking soda on a damp cloth and rub it on the silverware until tarnish is gone

Rinse and then dry

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- Stainless steel

Dampen a cloth with undiluted white or cider vinegar

Polish silverware with damp cloth

Wipe clean

- Oven cleaners

Dampen a steel wool pad with water

Sprinkle baking soda onto pad or oven bottom

Rub gently

Wipe off scum with dry paper towels or a sponge

Rinse well

Carpet Cleaners

- Cleaner and deodorizer

Sprinkle baking soda liberally over dry carpet

Wait at least 30-45 minutes (you can leave overnight)

Vacuum

Carpet Stains

- Blood stains

Sponge stain immediately with cold water or club soda and dry with a towel

Repeat until stain has disappeared

- Ink stains

Place a teaspoon of cream of tartar on the ink stain

Blend with a few drops of ice water

Rub the cream of tartar and water into the stain (do not saturate)

Brush with a clean toothbrush and sponge immediately with warm water

Repeat if necessary

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- Toilet bowl cleaner/deodorizer
Sprinkle ¼ cup of baking soda into your toilet bowl
Pour in approximately ¼ cup of white or cider vinegar
Scour with a toilet brush
- Bathtub cleaner and tile and grout cleaner
Use baking soda as a scouring powder
Using a damp sponge and a little elbow grease, rub powder into tile and tub surfaces
Rinse thoroughly
- Glass and window cleaner
1/2 cup white vinegar
1 gallon warm water
Mix in a large bucket, or for ease of use you can place into a spray bottle
Use paper towels or clean lint-free towel to clean
Avoid newspaper as most have a water-based ink now and ink will smear

Floor Cleaners

- Hardwood floor cleaner/deodorizer
Mix a 1:1 ratio of oil and vinegar into a solution
Apply a thin coat with a mop or small towel (depending on the size of your floor)
Rub in well
Repeat once a week
- To remove grease spots
Pour kosher salt on the grease spot to absorb grease and prevent staining
- To eliminate hardwood floor scratches
Mix equal parts of lemon juice and vegetable oil
Rub into scratches with a soft cloth
Repeat until scratches disappear

Pet Stains

Pet stains can be a particular nuisance and we are often tempted to run to the store for the best commercial cleaner that we can find. The trouble is that many times these cleaners don't work and worse, they can exacerbate the situation. Some cleaners actually contain chemicals that can make a family pet ill, which can add to their bathroom issues. Additionally, pets can be attracted to the scent of some pet stain cleaners and cause animals to return to the scene of the crime.

- New carpet stains

New carpet stains are fresh, wet stains. It is important to absorb as much of the urine as possible before treating the stain. Place newspaper or paper towels on the stain and press or stand on the paper to absorb as much moisture as possible. If it is an option, place newspaper under the stain as well since the urine may have soaked through to any carpet padding.

Once the paper is soaked, change it out and start again. Repeat process until the stain is barely damp. Once the stain is as dry as possible, rinse it with cool clean water. Repeat the paper process again until stain is almost dry.

You can be done at this point, but if you would like to ensure that all scent is gone, I recommend treating the stain with our odor remover and cleaner, found on page 30, or a commercial enzyme cleaner. Enzyme cleaners contain natural organisms that actually eat away the odor-causing bacteria in the stain, removing stains and odors from your carpet and the padding below.

- Old carpet stains

Old carpet stains are stains that have already set. They can be a problem to clean, but your persistence will pay off. Your cat or dog's sense of smell is so developed that they can smell the difference between a gallon of water with a teaspoon of salt in it and plain water. Imagine how strong urine smells to them.

If you have previously used cleaners or chemicals on the area, then you will need to remove them for the enzymatic cleaners to work properly. The best method to remove the cleaners is to use an industrial carpet-cleaning machine that is easily rented at your local

hardware or grocery store. Use the machine with clean water only. No detergents as they'll interfere with the enzymatic cleaner's ability to target the stain directly.

You may want to use a cleaning machine as your first step even if you haven't previously used chemicals on the area. They do the best job of extracting dirt and will leave less work for the enzymatic cleaners.

- Machine-washable Items: upholstery, bedding and clothes

For machine-washable items that have been stained by a pet, toss a one-pound box of baking soda into the wash along with your detergent. Air drying the items is recommended. If you can still see or smell the urine after washing, wash the items again using an enzymatic cleaner and follow the directions on the label.

- Upholstery

If it is not an option for you to remove the cover of your couch cushions and launder them, then dab the stain with a cloth or paper towel. Dampen stain with cold water or club soda and blot again. Mix 1 tablespoon of vinegar and 2 cups of warm water and apply to stain. Repeat process until stain has been removed. If odor persists, apply an enzymatic odor remover to ensure that odor has been eliminated. Make sure to test for color fastness and follow the directions on the label.

- Microfiber upholstery

Blot the urine with cold water or club soda and a towel. White is recommended so that you can see the transference of the yellow stain. Cover the stain with baking soda, let it sit for an hour or until dry and then vacuum.

- Hardwood floors

Your pet's urine can harm your hardwood floor and cause it to rot; however, there are a few options.

If you catch the soil while it is still fresh, blot the area immediately with paper towels. Wash the area thoroughly with undiluted white vinegar and rinse completely with warm water.

Blot dry immediately with paper towels. Apply an enzymatic odor remover following the manufacturer's directions.

If the stain remains, you can buff the stain with a fine-grained steel wool and floor wax. Buff in the direction of the grain until the stain begins to blend with the finish and the wood is restored. If the stain persists, you can make a paste of pumice powder and vegetable oil and rub into the spot with a soft absorbent cloth. Rub in the direction of the grain until the stain is removed.

If the stain is old, you may try to sand out the stain if it doesn't go too deep. After sanding, apply a polyurethane sealer. Several coats may be needed to seal in the odor.

Hydrogen peroxide can often remove the black discoloration of your wood left by old urine stains; however, this method will bleach your wood. If you choose to apply hydrogen peroxide directly to the stain you will have to sand, restain, and seal your flooring.

Rosemary spot remover

Use this to remove and sanitize urine spots on rugs or fabrics. The scent may deter your cat or dog from using the same area again.

- *1 bar of grated Castile soap*
 - *1 oz of rosemary oil*
 - *1 oz of rubbing alcohol*
1. *Melt the soap in the double boiler.*
 2. *Add rosemary oil and alcohol and blend well.*
 3. *Pour the mixture into a large bowl and let it set.*
 4. *Use as you would any soap or cleaner.*

As you can see from the abundance of natural cleaning recipes, it is an easy and effective way to both deodorize and clean your home while keeping your family and the planet safe from harm. This small contribution will make a huge difference. You'll feel great about your contribution to the environment and your family will receive noticeable health benefits and you will have saved money. At the same time, your home will be clean and smell fresh!

It's a win-win solution.

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