

“Green” Cleaning Recipes

From Women’s Voices for the Earth (www.womenandenvironment.org)

All-Purpose Cleaner

suggested uses: hard surfaces like countertops and kitchen floors, windows and mirrors

2 cups white distilled vinegar

2 cups water

20-30 or more drops of essential oil (optional)

Tip: Warming in microwave until barely hot will boost cleaning power for tough jobs. Only microwave in a glass container.

Creamy Soft Scrub

suggested uses: kitchen counters, stoves, bathroom sinks, etc.

2 cups baking soda

½ cup liquid castile soap*

4 teaspoons vegetable glycerin (acts as a preservative)

5 drops antibacterial essential oil such as lavender, tea tree, rosemary or any scent you prefer

Mix together and store in a sealed glass jar, shelf life of 2 years.

Tips: For exceptionally tough jobs spray with vinegar first—full strength or diluted, scented—let sit and follow with scrub.

Dry soft scrubs can be made with baking soda or salt (or combination of both) with 10-15 drops essential oil to scent

*WVE recommends using a liquid castile soap that does not contain sodium lauryl (laureth) sulfate (SLS) or Diethanolamine (DEA), which may have harmful side effects.

Furniture Polish

¼ cup olive oil

¼ cup white distilled vinegar

20-30 drops lemon essential oil

Shake well before using

(2 teaspoons lemon juice may be substituted for lemon oil but then must be stored in refrigerator)

Dip a clean, dry cloth into the polish and rub wood in the direction of the grain. Use a soft brush to work the polish into corners or tight places.

Tips: To remove water spots rub well with toothpaste. To remove scratches use 1 part lemon juice and 1 part oil, rub with soft cloth.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Option 1: Sprinkle toilet bowl with baking soda, drizzle with vinegar, let soak for at least 30 minutes and scrub with toilet brush.

Option 2: Put ¼ cup borax in toilet bowl and let sit for at least 30 minutes. Swish with a toilet brush and then scrub. A few drops of pine oil can be added for increased disinfecting. (Note: some people are allergic to pine oil.)

Tip: Let ingredients soak for a while to make for easy scrubbing, especially on persistent stains like toilet bowl rings

Drain Opener

½ cup baking soda

½ cup vinegar

Pour baking soda down the drain and follow with vinegar. Cover and let sit for at least 30 minutes. Flush with boiling water.

Tip: Prevent your shower from clogging by using a drain trap to catch hairs.

Laundry Detergent

1 cup soap flakes

½ cup washing soda

½ cup Borax

Soap flakes can be made by grating your favorite pure vegetable soap with a cheese grater. Mix ingredients together and store in a glass container. Use 1 tablespoon per load (2 for heavily soiled laundry), wash in warm or cold water.

This standard recipe can be adjusted for soft water by using 1 cup soap flakes, ¼ cup washing soda and ½ cup borax. For hard water, use 1 cup soap flakes, 1 cup washing soda, and 1 cup borax.

Note: Borax should not be ingested.

Tips: Add ½ cup white distilled vinegar to rinse as a fabric softener. For a whitener, use hydrogen peroxide rather than bleach. Soak your dingy white clothes for 30 minutes in the washer with ½ cup 20% peroxide. Launder as usual.

From The Daily Green: The Consumer's Guide to the Green Revolution (www.thedailygreen.com)

Porcelain Cleaner:

Baking Soda and Water: Dust surfaces with baking soda, then scrub with a moist sponge or cloth. If you have tougher grime, sprinkle on some kosher salt, and work up some elbow grease.

Lemon Juice or Vinegar: Got stains, mildew or grease streaks? Spray or douse with lemon juice or vinegar. Let sit a few minutes, then scrub with a stiff brush.

Disinfectant: Instead of bleach, make your own disinfectant by mixing 2 cups of water, 3 tablespoons of liquid soap and 20 to 30 drops of tea tree oil.

Kitchen Counters:

Baking Soda and Water: Reclaim counters by sprinkling with baking soda, then scrubbing with a damp cloth or sponge. If you have stains, knead the baking soda and water into a paste and let set for a while before you remove. This method also works great for stainless steel sinks, cutting boards, containers, refrigerators, oven tops and more.

Kosher Salt and Water: If you need a tougher abrasive sprinkle on kosher salt, and scrub with a wet cloth or sponge.

Natural Disinfectant: To knock out germs without strong products, mix 2 cups of water, 3 tablespoons of liquid soap and 20 to 30 drops of tea tree oil. Spray or rub on countertops and other kitchen surfaces.

Glass Cleaner:

White Vinegar, Water and Newspaper: Mix 2 tablespoons of white vinegar with a gallon of water, and dispense into a used spray bottle. Squirt on, then scrub with newspaper, not paper towels, which cause streaking.

If you're out of vinegar or don't like its smell, you can substitute undiluted **lemon juice or club soda**.

Rug and Carpet Cleaner:

Beat Those Rugs: Take any removable rugs outside and beat the dust and hair out with a broom.

Club Soda: You've probably heard the old adage that club soda works well on carpet stains. But you have to attack the mess right away. Lift off any solids, then liberally pour on club soda. Blot with an old rag. The soda's carbonation brings the spill to the surface, and the salts in the soda thwart staining.

Cornmeal: For big spills, dump cornmeal on the mess, wait 5 to 15 minutes, and vacuum.

Spot Cleaner: Make your own by mixing: $\frac{1}{4}$ cup liquid soap or detergent in a blender, with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water. Mix until foamy. Spray on, then rinse with vinegar.

To Deodorize: Sprinkle baking soda or cornstarch on the carpet or rug, using about 1 cup per medium-sized room. Vacuum after 30 minutes.

Wood Floors:

Vinegar: Whip up a solution of $\frac{1}{4}$ cup white vinegar and 30 ounces of warm water. Put in a recycled spray bottle, then spray on a cotton rag or towel until lightly damp. Then mop your floors, scrubbing away any grime.

Oven Cleaner:

Baking Soda and Water: Coat the inside of your dirty appliance with a paste made from water and baking soda. Let stand overnight. Then, don gloves and scour off that grime. Make spotless with a moist cloth.