

The Creative Homemaking Guide to

Make-It-Yourself Household Cleaning Products



by Rachel Paxton

Copyright © 1999
Published by:

Creative Homemaking
P.O. Box 4340
W. Richland, WA 99353
<http://www.creativehomemaking.com>

All rights reserved. No part of this booklet may be used or reproduced in any manner without written permission from Creative Homemaking. Graphics compliments of <http://www.countryclipart.com>.

Introduction

Have you ever wondered what people used to clean their house before so many different kinds of cleaning products were so readily available on the market? Many of these ideas are not new and have been around for a long time.

I have made every attempt to only include instructions that include easy-to-find, relatively inexpensive ingredients. Please use a little caution and a lot of common sense when trying out these preparations.

In the Kitchen

- Baking soda will help control odors in your garbage disposal. Pour 2 tablespoons in garbage disposal every week.
- Baking soda will remove the coffee and tea stains from your favorite mugs.
- Microwaves can be freshened by wiping the interior with a solution of four tablespoons of baking soda to one quart warm water. NEVER use a commercial oven cleaner.
- If you have a problem with sugar ants, a mixture of half vinegar half water sprayed on the ants will kill them instantly.
- Instead of buying expensive antibacterial sprays for the kitchen, just put about 1 tablespoon of household bleach in a spray bottle filled with water and use it to disinfect around the sink and counters, especially when you've been handling or packaging meat.
- For quick cleaning, keep a spray bottle equal parts water and ammonia handy.
- To unclog a plugged drain, try pouring 1/2 cup baking soda 1/2 cup vinegar into the clogged drain and cover tightly. After a minute or so, rinse the drain out with two quarts of boiling water. Cleaning the drain in this manner from time to time will help keep debris from building up.
- When your drain is clogged with grease, try pouring a cup of salt and a cup of baking soda down the drain followed by a generous amount of boiling water. This will usually dissolve the grease and clear the drain.
- To clean your oven, use a mixture of ammonia and water. The solution may be stored in a spray bottle. For tough stains, apply a mixture of baking soda and water directly to the stains, and let the mixture stand for several minutes before wiping the oven surface clean.
- To rid your cutting board from that smell of onions and garlic it tends to accumulate, rub it with half a lemon or lime.

- Use a cloth moistened with rubbing alcohol, club soda, or white vinegar to give your stainless steel a brilliant shine.

Carpets

Note: Test your carpet for colorfastness before applying any kind of cleaning agents to it.

- Club soda makes a good instant spot remover. Pour a little on the stain, let it set for a second or two, and blot with a damp sponge.
- Salt has been known to do wonders to brighten up lifeless, faded carpets. Sprinkle salt generously over carpet and let set for an hour before vacuuming.
- Got gum stuck in your carpet? Hold an ice cube next to it until the gum hardens so you can break it off.
- You can remove glue from a carpet by rubbing it with a cloth soaked in vinegar.
- Crayon marks can be removed from carpets by rubbing with baking soda sprinkled on a damp sponge.
- A mixture of 1/2 cup mild dishwashing liquid and 2 cups boiling water also makes a great spot remover for carpets. Apply with a damp sponge.

Floors

- Crayon marks can be removed from vinyl or linoleum floors with silver polish.
- Black marks left on your floors from the heels of your shoes can be removed with a pencil eraser.
- Cold tea can be used to clean varnished wood floors.

- Vinyl floors can be cleaned with a mixture of 1 tablespoon dishwashing liquid, 2 tablespoons ammonia, and 1 gallon warm water. Use a mop to apply.

Furniture

- To remove furniture polish build-up on your furniture, mix 1/2 cup water and 1/2 cup vinegar. Moisten a soft cloth with the mixture and wipe furniture clean.
- Furniture polish: 3 parts olive oil, 1 part vinegar.
- Candle wax can be removed from wood furniture by softening it with a hair dryer. Wipe the affected area with a solution of vinegar and water.
- Shoe polish can be used to fill in small scratches on wood furniture. Test the color of the shoe polish on a section of wood that is not very noticeable.
- If you have wood furniture that has a clear coat of varnish on it, car wax can be used to give it a brilliant shine. Again, test on a piece that is not very noticeable.
- Water rings or spots can be removed from wood furniture with a mixture of toothpaste and baking soda applied with a damp cloth.
- An ordinary shoe buffer is great for polishing wood furniture that has lots of curves and molding.
- Furniture polish: 1 part lemon juice, 2 parts olive or vegetable oil
- Baking soda can be used to remove crayon marks from walls and painted furniture. Sprinkle on a damp sponge and scrub gently so you don't damage the paint or wallpaper.
- To clean all types of wood work, make a mixture of 2 tablespoons olive oil, 4 tablespoons white vinegar, and 1 quart warm water. Apply with a soft cloth and dry with a separate, clean cloth.

All-Purpose Cleaners

- For an all-purpose household cleaner, try using a mixture of 1/2 cup ammonia, 1/3 cup vinegar, 2 tablespoons baking soda, and 1 gallon water.
- To remove permanent marker from hard plastic, spray it with hair-spray and it wipes right off!
- Window and glass cleaner: Mix 1 tablespoon lemon juice or vinegar with 1 quart water, 2 tablespoons cornstarch, 1/2 cup white vinegar, and 1 gallon water.
- Window cleaner: 1 tsp. dish soap, 1/2 c. ammonia, 1 c. rubbing alcohol. Place mixture in gallon jug and fill with water.
- Get that yucky residue out of your flower vases! Clean your vases by mixing 1/3 cup salt and 2 tablespoons vinegar to form a paste. Coat the inside of the vase (preparing more of the salt mixture if necessary). Let vase stand for 20 minutes and then scrub thoroughly. Rinse and dry the vase.
- Toothpaste will often remove small scratches from glass.
- A mixture of equal parts white vinegar and water will give a brilliant shine to the surface of all of your kitchen and bathroom appliances.

Bathroom

Note: Don't forget to put on your rubber gloves when using bleach and ammonia!

- To clean ceramic tile, mix 1/4 cup vinegar, 1/3 cup ammonia, 1/2 cup baking soda, and 7 cups warm water. Store solution in a spray bottle for easy bathroom cleaning.
- A mixture of 3/4 cup bleach and 3 cups water cleans your bathroom tiles while also preventing mildew. Apply with a spray bottle or dampened sponge and wipe off.

- To make your vinyl shower curtain last longer, occasionally wash it in the washing machine on gentle with a little bleach. This helps control mildew.
- To clean the stubborn stains in your bathtub, make a paste of hydrogen peroxide and cream of tartar. Use a toothbrush to rub it into the stains and rinse thoroughly.
- A mixture of 4 teaspoons salt and 1/2 cup white vinegar helps remove buildup from your bathroom fixtures. Apply with a sponge and polish with a dry cloth.
- Light stains can often be removed from your tub or sink by rubbing them with a lemon that has been cut in half.
- To give your shower doors a quick shine, wipe them with a sponge dampened with white vinegar.