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## ALL-NATURAL CLEANING

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MAY 2015

# ALL-PURPOSE CLEANERS

## 1 ESSENTIAL-OIL CLEANSER

**USE IT ON:** Quartz, marble, and granite counters. Also appliances, tables, bathroom sinks, baseboards, and window sills (but not glass).

- 3/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup rubbing alcohol
- 5 to 10 drops peppermint, lemon, or orange essential oil
- 1 squirt natural dish soap

**DIRECTIONS:** Pour all the ingredients into a 16-ounce spray bottle and shake well. Spray onto the surface and wipe with a microfiber cloth.

**WHY IT WORKS:** Rubbing alcohol helps kill bacteria and is fast-drying. Natural dish soap is gentle and effective at removing dirt and grease. The essential oil is antibacterial (and great-smelling).

RECIPE BY MELISSA MAKER, FOUNDER OF THE CLEAN MY SPACE CLEANING COMPANY, YOUTUBE CHANNEL, AND BLOG

This lemon cleanser lasts 6 months if kept in a cool, dark spot. (For general freshness guidelines, see the shelf-life information on page 155.)



## 2 FRESH LEMON DEGREASER

**USE IT ON:** Any hard surface except wood. (The baking soda can scratch a wood surface, and the solution can dull the finish if not wiped down thoroughly.)

- 2 cups water
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon Dr. Bronner's Castile soap
- 1 tablespoon baking soda

**DIRECTIONS:** Pour all the ingredients into a 24-ounce spray bottle and shake well. Spritz onto the surface and wipe with a microfiber cloth.

**WHY IT WORKS:** Lemon is a natural bleach, disinfectant, and degreaser. Baking soda, which is a gentle abrasive, also has deodorizing properties. Castile soap helps disperse the other ingredients once the solution is sprayed on a surface.

RECIPE BY LINDA COBB, CREATOR OF THE QUEEN OF CLEAN BOOK SERIES

## 3 VINEGAR-AND-VODKA DISINFECTANT

**USE IT ON:** Bathroom surfaces, countertops, tables, appliances, light switches, and doorknobs.

- 1/2 cup white vinegar
- 1/2 cup vodka
- 10 drops lavender essential oil
- 10 drops lemon essential oil
- 1 1/2 cups water

**DIRECTIONS:** Pour all the ingredients into a 24-ounce spray bottle and shake well. Spray all the surfaces and let sit for 10 minutes. Wipe clean with a microfiber cloth.

**WHY IT WORKS:** White vinegar and vodka inhibit the growth of germs. The lavender and lemon essential oils are antibacterial and antiseptic. (Bonus: The scent of the lavender helps relieve stress and boost mood.)

RECIPE BY BECKY RAPINCHUK, AUTHOR OF THE ORGANICALLY CLEAN HOME AND FOUNDER OF THE BLOG CLEANMAMA.NET



## 5 MORE NATURAL ELEMENTS WITH CLEANING CRED

**1. HANDLED PUMICE STONE**  
To get rid of a toilet-bowl ring, wet the pumice, then scrub. It won't scratch the porcelain.

**2. BEESWAX**  
Use it to polish and protect wood furniture.

**3. COFFEE**  
A bowl of dried grounds in the refrigerator combats spoiled-food odors.

**4. TEA**  
Soak rusty tools in a bucket of cooled black tea; wipe clean with a cloth.

**5. OATMEAL**  
Mix with water to scrub dirty hands.



**WHY DILUTE WITH WATER?**  
It helps the other ingredients blend together and keeps residue from being left behind.

# SPECIALTY CLEANERS

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## GLASS CLEANER



**USE IT ON:** Mirrors and windows.

- 2 cups water
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 2 tablespoons rubbing alcohol
- 5 drops peppermint essential oil

**DIRECTIONS:** Pour all the ingredients into a 24-ounce spray bottle and give it a little shake to combine. Spray onto a microfiber cloth and apply to the surface.

**WHY IT WORKS:** White vinegar cuts dirt and grime. Rubbing alcohol speeds the drying process, so you don't end up with streaks. Peppermint oil, which has antibacterial properties, is also aromatic, so it counteracts the vinegar's odor.

RECIPE BY BECKY RAPINCHUK

Spray the glass cleaner on a cloth, not directly on a mirrored surface. If not, you run the risk of saturating it, which can lead to discoloration.



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## CHROME CLEANER

**USE IT ON:** Faucets, small appliances, and other chrome objects.

- 2 cups water
- 1/2 teaspoon Dr. Bronner's Castile soap
- 3 tablespoons white vinegar

**DIRECTIONS:** Pour the ingredients into a 24-ounce spray bottle and shake well to combine. Spray onto the surface. Let sit for 10 minutes. Wipe with a damp cloth and buff with a dry cloth.

**WHY IT WORKS:** Cleaners with sulfates or harsh synthetic detergents can damage chrome and mirrors. **Castile soap is free of these. Instead, it's made with vegetable and hemp oils that gently remove dirt and residue.** White vinegar removes buildup, too.

RECIPE BY LINDA COBB

This chrome cleaner also works on mirrors. Spritz it on a microfiber cloth (not on the mirror directly). Wipe in an S-motion.



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## SINK SCRUB

**USE IT ON:** Sinks, tubs, and grout.

- 2 cups baking soda
- 10 drops lemon essential oil
- 10 drops clove essential oil
- 1 squirt Dr. Bronner's Castile soap
- A few drops of water

**DIRECTIONS:** Mix the baking soda with the essential oils using a butter knife. Store in an airtight container. Sprinkle the mixture over the sink surface, then add a squirt of soap and a few drops of water. Scrub with a nylon-bristle brush. Rinse thoroughly.

**WHY IT WORKS:** Baking soda degrades without scratching. When combined with the antiseptic essential oils and the cleansing soap, it forms a paste that whisks away dirt.

RECIPE BY BECKY RAPINCHUK

## DUAL-PURPOSE POTION

Have leftover sink scrub? You can use the baking-soda blend as a kitchen air freshener if you store it in a pizzeria-style cheese shaker with a perforated top.

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## HEAVY-DUTY KITCHEN SCRUB

**USE IT ON:** Kitchen sinks, pots and pans, cooktops, tile, tubs, and bathroom sinks.

- 1/4 cup natural dish soap
- 1/4 cup baking soda
- 5 drops clove essential oil
- About 3 drops of water

**DIRECTIONS:** Mix all the ingredients in a bowl. Apply to the surface using the gritty side of a double-sided kitchen sponge; scrub. Wipe up with a wet cloth.

**WHY IT WORKS:** Dish soap cuts grease and lifts dirt. Baking soda, which doubles as a deodorizer, is mildly abrasive, so it digs out tough stains and scum. **Clove oil is antibacterial.** (The invigorating aroma is a bonus.)

RECIPE BY MELISSA MAKER



PREFER A LIGHTER SCENT IN THE KITCHEN? SWAP OUT THE CLOVE OIL FOR ORANGE OR ROSEMARY OIL.

# SPECIALTY CLEANERS

**WHAT'S THE SHELF LIFE?** Most DIY natural cleaning solutions can last up to a month. But some ingredients (like hydrogen peroxide) lose their potency more quickly. Your best bet is to mix enough for only a onetime use.

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## SHOWER CLEANER

**USE IT ON:** Ceramic tile, porcelain, and fiberglass (but not natural stone).

1/4 cup white vinegar  
1 cup water

**DIRECTIONS:** Mix the ingredients in a microwave-safe bowl and heat for 30 to 60 seconds. Pour into a 24-ounce spray bottle. Spritz onto the shower surfaces and let sit for 3 to 5 minutes. Wipe clean with a microfiber cloth.

**WHY IT WORKS:** The warm liquid softens grime, making it easier to wipe away.

RECIPE BY DEBRA JOHNSON, MANAGER OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM AT MERRY MAIDS, A NATIONAL CLEANING COMPANY



A 24-HOUR WAITING PERIOD ALLOWS THE TEA-TREE OIL TO PENETRATE MOLD AND MILDEW SPORES.

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## MOLD AND MILDEW REMOVER

**USE IT ON:** Tubs, showers, shower curtains, and grout.

2 cups water  
2 teaspoons tea-tree oil  
1/4 cup baking soda

**DIRECTIONS:** Pour the water and tea-tree oil into a 24-ounce spray bottle and shake well. Heavily spray moldy areas with the solution and let sit for 24 hours. Once the time is up, pour 1/4 cup baking soda into a small bowl and gradually spritz it with the solution until a glue-like paste forms. Apply to the moldy surface using a clean toothbrush and scrub. Rinse.

**WHY IT WORKS:** Tea-tree oil is antibacterial and antifungal, so it wipes out mold and mildew. The baking-soda paste removes any discoloration left behind.

RECIPE BY LINDA COBB

Be careful not to oversaturate the carpet with club soda—too much liquid could damage the padding underneath.



MEASURE CAREFULLY. THE ACID IN THE VINEGAR CAN DULL A FLOOR'S FINISH IF YOU DON'T STICK TO THE RECOMMENDED RATIO OF VINEGAR TO WATER.

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## HARDWOOD-FLOOR CLEANER

**USE IT ON:** Hardwood floors.

1/2 cup white vinegar  
1 gallon warm water  
2 to 3 drops lemon essential oil

**DIRECTIONS:** Mix all the ingredients in a 2-gallon bucket. Dip the mop head in the bucket and wring it out well so that it's barely damp. Apply to floors and repeat.

**WHY IT WORKS:** Vinegar cuts through dirt and grime. Water thins out the solution so that it isn't harsh on the wood. Lemon essential oil helps mask the vinegar's sour scent.

RECIPE BY BECKY RAPINCHUK

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## CARPET CLEANER

**USE IT ON:** Natural and synthetic carpets.

1 cup club soda or seltzer  
1/2 cup table salt

**DIRECTIONS:** Blot to remove any excess liquid from the stain. Saturate the area with club soda and blot again to remove the excess. Next, sprinkle on salt to cover the spot (add more if needed). Let sit 12 hours or until dry. Vacuum to remove the salt.

**WHY IT WORKS:** The club soda's carbonation lifts the stain, and the salt absorbs it.

RECIPE BY MATT MOBERG, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE CLEANING MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

