

Easy "Green" Cleaning Recipes You Can Make at Home:

Using natural ingredients to clean your home is a great way to go green this spring and create a healthy indoor environment for your family. Your home will smell open and natural, like a healthy home should! Vinegar, baking soda, and lemons all have natural cleaning powers. They are easy and safe to use and can often clean for much less money than other cleaning products on the market. So make your own! Even the biggest messes and toughest stains can be attacked effectively with natural cleaners.

Kitchen:

The room where food is prepared, stored and often enjoyed requires constant vigilance. Splatters, spills and errant crumbs can build up and collect out of sight, encouraging harmful bacteria.



Oven: Make a paste of **3 parts baking soda, 1 part water**. Spray the oven with diluted soap and water spray, apply the paste to all surfaces and let it sit overnight. In the morning, scrape away the paste using a putty knife, wipe with soap and water, and spritz with a mixture of half vinegar and half water. If hard spots remain, scrape them away using a **wet pumice stone**.

Floors: Remove scuffs with a sprinkling of **baking soda** and a little elbow grease. **Vinegar** and water removes film on floors and cut grease.

Refrigerator: Remove everything from the refrigerator and wipe down with **vinegar** and water spray to clean and deodorize. Scrub tough stains with a mixture of **salt** and water. Leave an open box of baking soda in the back to absorb food odors.

Microwave: Place vinegar and water in a small bowl and microwave for 1 - 2 minutes. The steam from the vinegar solution will release grime from the walls of your microwave, allowing you to easily wipe it away.

Countertops: Get rid of stains on your countertops by tarnishing with lemon juice, then wipe with warm water and vinegar or by letting lemon juice soak on them for a few minutes, then scrub the area with baking soda and wipe with a damp cloth.

Stainless Steel: Scrub down stainless steel materials such as sinks, fixtures, teapots and appliances with **baking soda**, then rinse with **vinegar**. **Club soda** is also excellent for shining up stainless steel.

Garbage Can: Wipe down with vinegar. Add a few drops of your favorite essential oil if desired.

Vase: If you have a vase or glass that is too narrow to clean by hand, throw in some rice and white vinegar, cover the top with your hand and shake.

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



Bathroom:

Mold & Mildew: If you need a little extra cleaning power for an area that has gotten moldy or mildewed, spray it generously with undiluted vinegar. Allow the vinegar to work for a few hours (overnight for bad cases) and then wipe the area dry. Use a fan to completely dry it. Follow up by determining why the area was damp enough to allow the problem to develop in the first place, and fix leaks and/or improve ventilation to prevent a repeat.

Shower Head: Remove buildup inside your shower head by soaking it in a bowl of vinegar. If removing your shower head is not an option, simply fill a plastic bag with vinegar and hang it from the shower head. Allow the shower head to soak for several hours, ideally overnight, before rinsing it out. The vinegar will eat away build up and allow your shower to work like new again.



Windows and Mirrors:

Instead of using harsh-smelling sprays, try one of the following 3 highly effective but simple solutions for windows and mirrors:



1. White Vinegar, Water and Newspaper:

Mix 2 tablespoons of white vinegar with a gallon of water, and dispense into a spray bottle. Squirt on, and 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.

2. Vinegar Window Wash

This natural solution can be used to clean windows, screens, mirrors, and glass shower doors.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup Vinegar
- 3 cups Warm Water
- 3 drops Citrus [Essential Oil](#) ([Lemon](#), [Lime](#), or [Grapefruit](#) work quite well.)

Instructions:

Use this solution with a lint free cloth such as a microfiber towel to ensure clean, clear, streak free windows.

OR

To clean your glass shower door, apply pure lemon juice onto the glass, spray it with warm water and wipe it with a clean cloth

Wood Floors:

Hardwood floors are beautiful, hygienic, long lasting and add value to your home. How do you restore their natural glow without roughing them up?

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



Carpet and Rugs:

Keeping carpets clean is less daunting than you might think, even after a season of tracked-in dirt and salt.

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 up the gunk.

Spot Cleaner: Make your own by mixing: 1/4 cup liquid soap or detergent with 1/3 cup of water in a blender. Mix until foamy. Spray on, and then rinse with vinegar.

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

Washing Machine:

Clean out your washing machine by running an empty load on the hottest setting and adding 2 - 3 cups of vinegar. This will help to disinfect the washing machine while removing buildup and residue.

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.



Clogged Drains:

A stopped up sink or tub is a real hassle, but pouring toxic chemicals isn't so wise. Not only will that pollute our waterways, but the products can cause chemical burns and are highly dangerous if ingested.

Baking Soda & Boiling Water: Pour 1/2 cup of baking soda into the problem drain, followed by 2 cups of boiling water. If that isn't doing it for you, chase the baking soda with a 1/2 cup of vinegar and cover tightly, allowing the vigorous fizzing of the chemical reaction to break up the gunk. Then flush that with one gallon of boiling water.



*Remember to check the manufacturer recommendations for cleaning any household products before trying one of the "green" cleaning methods. Avoid using any of the above methods and/or ingredients if the manufacturer recommendations state certain textures and/or products may damage the item.