

Back to Basics: Recipes for Cleaning Without Chemicals

With just a few basic and inexpensive ingredients, you have the means to make a myriad of household cleaners that work as well as or better than the chemical-laden commercial products we have all come to rely on. Detoxify your home with these simple recipes for chemical-free cleaning.



These recipes and ideas are provided as a courtesy by the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute (EOHSI). EOHSI makes no claims as to the effectiveness of these methods and can not be held responsible for any consequences arising from their use or misuse.



Homemade Laundry Soap

from Matt Jabs at *DIY Natural* - <http://www.diynatural.com/homemade-laundry-detergent-soap>



Ingredients:

- 1 bar (4-1/2 or 5 ounces) of plain soap (Dr Bronner's Pure Castile is vegan; Ivory and Fels-Naptha are not)
- 1 cup of borax
- 1 cup of washing soda

Grate the bar soap with a cheese grater. Thoroughly stir together for 5 minutes with the other two ingredients. Store in an airtight jar (a one-quart mason jar is perfect).

Each batch yields approximately 32 ounces (between 32-64 loads based on how many Tbsp used per load).

Use 1 Tbsp per load (or 2 Tbsp for heavily soiled loads).

If anyone in your family has sensitive skin (eczema, for example), using borax might be a problem. Not to worry – you can find an alternative recipe that does not contain borax, compliments of Karen Lee at EcoKaren - <http://www.ecokaren.com/2012/06/borax-free-laundry-detergent>

Alternative to Dryer Sheets – Felted Wool Dryer Balls

from Betsy Jabs at *DIY Natural* - <http://www.diynatural.com/how-to-make-wool-dryer-balls>

Ingredients:

- Skeins of 100% wool yarn (or unravel an old wool sweater)
- Pantyhose
- blunt-tipped needle or crochet hook
- string or cotton/acrylic yarn (to secure the wool ball in the pantyhose)

Roll the yarn into several tight balls, about the size of a tennis ball. Use the blunt needle or crochet hook to tuck the loose end into the ball to secure it.

Cut the leg off an old pair of pantyhose. Put balls into the toe of the pantyhose, tying tightly in between each one with string, or cotton/acrylic yarn. (Just don't use wool yarn or it will felt around the pantyhose.) Tie off the end.

Throw the entire yarn caterpillar into the wash. Wash in a hot wash cycle with a cold water rinse cycle. Dry your yarn caterpillar with your laundry using the hottest dryer setting. Remove balls from pantyhose and check for felting (when you can gently scrape your fingernail over the ball and strands do not separate, felting is complete). The wash and dry process may need to be repeated a few times.

You can toss 4-6 balls in the dryer with your regular load of washing. They absorb moisture, thus decreasing drying time and saving energy, as well as fluff your clothes to reduce wrinkles, and help to reduce static.



Other laundry ideas: For fabric softening, add a splash of white vinegar to the washer's rinse cycle. For reducing dryer static, put a few safety pins in a piece of cotton fabric and toss it in the dryer with your wash load (it really works). Try air-drying your synthetics – they create the most static.

All-Purpose Household Spray Cleaner

from Lisa Bronner at *Going Green With a Bronner Mom* - <http://lisa.drbronner.com/?p=37>



Ingredients:

- Water
- Dr. Bronner's Pure Castile liquid soap
- Eucalyptus or Tea Tree essential oil
- Spray bottle

Fill a 16 oz. spray bottle nearly to the top with water. Add 3 tablespoons of your favorite Dr. Bronner's castile soap and 20-30 drops of tea tree or eucalyptus oil. Shake it well and spray it on bathroom or kitchen surfaces and floors. Wipe off with a damp cloth. Completely non-toxic and, although the US government doesn't yet recognize it as such, tea tree oil is a naturally occurring antibacterial agent.

Vinegar Spray Cleaner for Laminate Floors

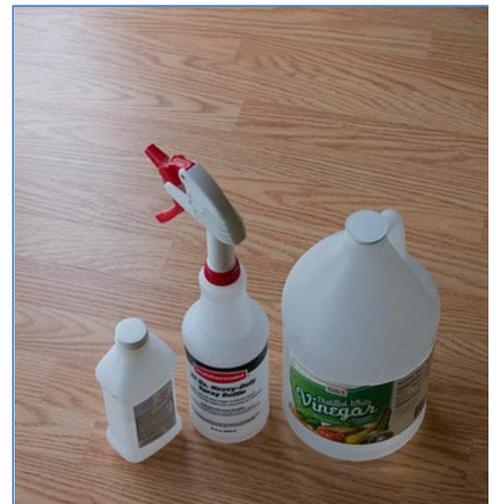
from Linda Everett at *EcoEtsy* –

<http://blog.ecoetsy.com/2009/03/eco-tip-of-the-week-best-floor-cleaner-ever>

Ingredients:

- Water
- White Vinegar
- Rubbing Alcohol
- Lemon essential oil or lemon dish soap

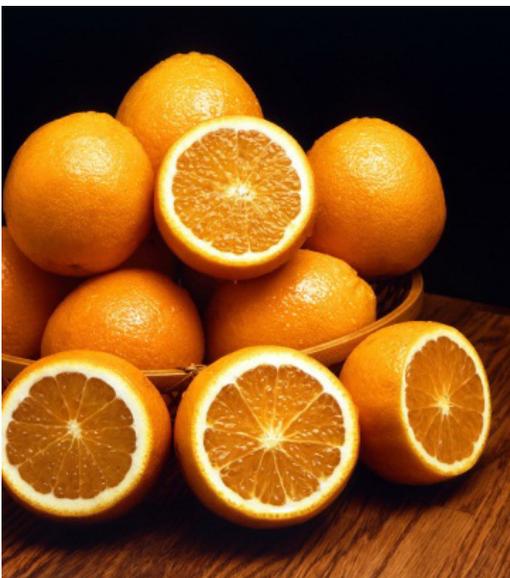
Fill a 16 oz. spray bottle with equal parts tap water, white vinegar, and rubbing alcohol. Add a few drops of lemon essential oil or lemon dish soap, to cut the vinegar odor. Shake well. Use to spot clean your laminate (e.g. Pergo) floors. The vinegar and water provide the cleaning power and the alcohol aids in evaporation, so your floor doesn't stay wet for long.



Orange Power Cleaner

from Katie Kimball at *Kitchen Stewardship* –

<http://www.kitchenstewardship.com/2013/02/05/how-to-make-homemade-orange-power-cleaner>



Ingredients:

- Rind of 3-4 oranges (after juicing or eating the insides, of course)
- White vinegar

Put empty rinds into a quart jar. Cover with white vinegar. Allow to sit for about 2 weeks, either in a cabinet or on the counter. Shake when you think of it.

After 2 weeks, strain out the vinegar, which will smell clean and citrusy, not vinegary. Citrus will help cut the grease when cleaning and be a good substitute for commercial orange cleaners that harness the natural cleaning power of oranges and then adulterate it with a bunch of chemicals.

Homemade Dishwasher Detergent

from Matt Jabs at *DIY Natural* - <http://www.diynatural.com/homemade-dishwasher-detergent-soap>



Ingredients:

- 1 cup borax
- 1 cup washing soda
- 1/2 cup citric acid
- 1/2 cup kosher salt (for scrubbing action)

Combine ingredients well and store in an airtight container. Storing in a container you were going to dispose of anyway, like an old yogurt container or coffee can, is a great idea.

Use 1 Tbsp per dishwasher load. Each batch yields 24 ounces of detergent. For a DIY rinse agent, simply fill the compartment with white vinegar and/or lemon juice.

Natural Bathroom Soap Scum Remover

from Desiree Fleck at *EcoEtsy* –

<http://blog.ecoetsy.com/2013/01/diy-soap-scum-remover-a-natural-soft-scrub-alternative>

Ingredients:

- Baking soda
- Castile soap – (Dr. Bronner’s lavender scent is recommended, but any liquid castile soap will work)
- Bowl and sponge

In a small mixing bowl pour in about 2 tablespoons of baking soda, give or take. Mix in enough castile soap to form a paste - this is not a science so just make it thick like the consistency of icing. If it’s too thick, add more soap. Too runny? Add more baking soda. When you have it a nice consistency, simply scoop a dollop of it with your sponge and start scrubbing! It does take a little elbow grease so you get a free workout and in the end you will rejoice in the success of a fantastically clean tub!



All Natural Air Fresheners

from *Care2 Make a Difference* at <http://www.care2.com/greenliving/air-fresheners-easy-greening.html>



This one is really easy – there is no better way to freshen up indoor air than opening a window, even in winter, for a few minutes. Here are a few more air freshening tips:

- Clean the source of the odor with non-toxic products
- Empty the garbage frequently
- Burn pure beeswax candles with 100% cotton wicks — they purify and clean the air
- Use an open box of baking soda for smelly rooms
- Use indoor plants to clear carbon dioxide and other toxins
- Simmer cinnamon and cloves, fresh ginger, or herbs in water on the stovetop
- Simmer water with a drop or two of your favorite pure essential oil.
- Use organic sachets and potpourris.