**Where to start?**
Switching out the most hazardous products first is a good place to start. Develop a list of priorities and slowly incorporate them into your cleaning routine to eliminate feeling overwhelmed by trying to change too much all at once.

**Read Labels**
The EPA established the Design for the Environment (DfE) labeling mark to enable consumers to quickly identify and choose products that can help protect the environment and are safer for families. For more information: [www.epa.gov/dfe/pubs/projects/formulat/label.htm](http://www.epa.gov/dfe/pubs/projects/formulat/label.htm)

**Remove Toxins**
Watch for warning words such as “Danger,” “Caution,” “Warning,” “Irritants,” or “Corrosives.” Avoid products with ingredients such as ammonia, chlorine bleach (sodium hypochlorite), diethanolamine (DEA) and triethanolamine (TEA), hydrochloric acid, naptha, phosphates, sodium hydroxide (lye), sulfuric acid.

**Resources**
Helpful hints and solutions abound. In addition to numerous books on the subject, search online using words such as Natural or Green Cleaning; cleaning with lemon, vinegar or some other specific agent; alternative for bleach, etc.

- [natural-healthy-home-cleaning-tips.com](http://natural-healthy-home-cleaning-tips.com)
- [thenewhOMEMAKER.com/natural-cleaning-alternatives](http://thenewhOMEMAKER.com/natural-cleaning-alternatives)
- [thegoodhuman.com/category/cleaning](http://thegoodhuman.com/category/cleaning)
- [cleaningcleaner.com](http://cleaningcleaner.com)
- [realsimple.com](http://realsimple.com)

**Definition:**
A process of cleaning to protect health without harming the environment.
Green Cleaning describes a growing trend toward cleaning methods using natural products and non-toxic ingredients to preserve human health and environmental quality. According to U.S. EPA estimates, indoor pollution levels can be 100 times higher than outdoor pollution levels. Green cleaning techniques and products avoid the use of chemically reactive and toxic cleaning products, some of which emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs) causing respiratory and dermatological problems, among other adverse effects.

Bleach is a strong corrosive and can burn skin, eyes and the respiratory tract. Mixing bleach and ammonia or acidic cleaners, such as vinegar, produces extremely hazardous fumes.

instead of bleach:
• Soak whites in water and lemon juice, and set in the sun before laundering.
• Dry laundry on the line in direct sunlight; ultraviolet light naturally kills germs and brightens whites.
• For ink stains, soak item in milk overnight and then launder. Soaking in vinegar shines; removes tarnish.

Oven cleaners contain caustic chemicals; fumes from the self-clean cycle can even kill indoor birds.

instead of oven cleaner:
• Spread water liberally on oven bottom. Cover grime with baking soda and sprinkle more water; next morning wipe the grease away. Use liquid soap to remove residue.

Air fresheners contain formaldehyde and toxic phenol.

instead of air fresheners:
• Simmer vinegar while cooking seafood or to freshen the kitchen.