

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/dfel/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, naphtha, 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

thenewhomemaker.com/natural-cleaning-alternatives

greenlivingideas.com/category/eco-home-living/housecleaning/

thegoodhuman.com/category/cleaning

cleaningcleaner.com

realsimple.com

GREEN CLEANING



Definition:

A process of cleaning to protect health without harming the environment.

www.raleighnc.gov/sustainableraleigh



City of Raleigh
Office of Sustainability



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 works too.

Mold & mildew removers can contain bleach, formaldehyde and sodium hypochlorite.

instead of mildew removers:

- Mix 2 teaspoons tea tree oil, 1/4 cup vinegar and 2 cups water and spray area, don't rinse.
- Use vinegar for non-porous washable surfaces.

Drain cleaner ingredients can include lye, hydrochloric acid and trichloroethane.

instead of drain cleaner:

- Pour 1 cup baking soda down drain and follow with 3 cups boiling water. Add 1 cup vinegar if still clogged.

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.

lemon



effective against household bacteria; shines; removes tarnish

Counter Stains

Baking soda

Lemon juice

Make a paste; let it soak in and then rinse.

Chopping Block/ Cutting Boards

Lemon

Rub lemon over board to disinfect surface. For tough stains, allow juice to sit for 10 minutes and wipe.

Metal Polisher

Lemon

Salt or Baking Soda

Rub tarnished brass, copper, aluminum or bronze with sliced lemons. For tougher jobs, sprinkle salt or soda on lemons first.

Disposal Deodorizer

Lemon or orange peel

Grind fresh lemon or orange peel in the garbage disposal.

Rust Remover

Lemon

Salt

Sprinkle salt on rust, squeeze lemon until soaked. Leave 3 hours and use rind to scrub residue.

white vinegar



cuts grease; removes mildew, odors, some stains and wax buildup

Mirror Cleaner

1 cup vinegar

3 cups water

Mix ingredients in marked spray bottle; use cotton cloth or newspaper for cleaning.

Carpet Cleaner

Vinegar

Replace carpet cleaner chemicals with undiluted vinegar and shampoo carpets as usual.

Sticker Remover

Vinegar

Sponge vinegar over sticker several times; wait 15 minutes and rub off.

Ant Deterrent

Vinegar

Wipe counters to deter ants. Spritz under and around pet food bowls on vinegar-safe surfaces. Sprinkle crushed red peppers where ants enter.

Weed Killer

2 tablespoons liquid soap

Gallon vinegar

Spray weeds; don't overspray other plants!

baking soda



cleans; deodorizes; softens water; scours; polishes

All-Purpose Cleaner

1/2 cup vinegar

1/4 cup baking soda

1/2 gallon water

Mix and store in container.

Scouring Powder

Baking soda

Apply baking soda to wet sponge and gently wipe.

Soft Scrub

Baking soda

Liquid soap

Mix until consistency of frosting, only make quantity desired for immediate use.

Shower Cleaner

Baking soda

Vinegar

Spray vinegar and sprinkle with baking soda, let sit for 30 minutes; or use sponge with baking soda applied for vertical surfaces.

Grease Spot Remover

Baking soda

Sprinkle on garage floor spot; scrub with wet brush.

Insect Killer

1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda

Pint water

Apply to roses every 7 days to kill aphids.

olive oil



polishes wood, metal and plant leaves; lubricates squeaky hinges

Shoe Polish

Olive oil

Few drops of lemon juice

Apply to shoes with cotton cloth. Leave for a few minutes, wipe and buff with clean cloth.

Furniture Polish

1/2 teaspoon olive oil

1/4 cup vinegar or lemon juice

Mix ingredients in glass jar. Apply small amount to soft cloth and wipe wood surfaces. Cover and store out of direct sunlight.

Stainless Steel Polish

Olive oil

Many cleaning standbys, such as ammonia, can dull and even corrode chrome and stainless steel. Olive oil, however, is a safe and effective shining agent.

Hinge Lubricant

Olive oil

Lubricate hinges by applying a small dab to a cloth, then wiping the top of the hinges so that the oil runs down the sides.