

Recipes for a HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Have you ever thought about how many chemicals you use every day? Disinfectants, cleaners and air fresheners all contain chemicals that can damage your health and the environment. However, you can make several simple substitutions with natural ingredients that work as well or better than traditional cleaners.

These substitutions are made with readily available and natural ingredients. Don't feel you need to suddenly replace all the cleaners you have always used; change a few at a time. Each substitution goes a long way toward creating a chemical-free house, a safer environment and a healthier family.



Floor and Rug Cleaner

- Clean ceramic tile using a solution of ¼ cup baking soda, ½ cup white vinegar, 1 cup ammonia and 1 gallon warm water. This solution also works well as a general cleaner.

- Make floor polish for linoleum and vinyl by mixing 1 part thick boiled starch with 1 part soap-suds. Rub this mixture on the floor and polish with a clean, dry cloth. To strip commercial floor



wax, pour club soda on the surface, scrub, let soak for a few minutes and wipe clean.

- Clean wood floors by damp-mopping with mild vegetable-oil soap; dry immediately.

- Make rug and carpet cleaner by mixing ½ cup dishwashing detergent and 1 pint boiling water. Cool and whip into stiff foam with an electric mixer. With a damp sponge, apply the solution to 4-by-4-foot sections. Wipe off the suds and rinse with a solution of 1 cup vinegar in 1 gallon of warm water. Rinse the rug and wipe, changing the rinse water frequently. Clean your rug on a dry, warm day so you can open the windows to facilitate drying.

Spot Remover

Remove butter, coffee, gravy and chocolate stains by scraping off or sponging up as much of the spot as possible and dabbing it with a cloth dampened in a mixture of 1 teaspoon white vinegar and 1 quart cold water. Or, apply a solution made of equal parts ammonia and water. (Remove the residual ammonia stain with salt and water.)

To remove grease spots:

- Apply a paste of cornstarch and water.
- Cover with baking soda or cornmeal, let dry, and brush off.
- Scrub the spot with Toothpaste.
- For grease spots on rugs, sprinkle dry cornstarch on the spot and vacuum.

Furniture Polish

Use olive oil, lemon oil, beeswax, or a mixture of beeswax and olive oil. A combination of 2 teaspoons lemon oil and 1 pint mineral, vegetable, or olive oil in a spray bottle also works.



Metal Polish

- To polish silver, cover the bottom of an aluminum or enameled pan with aluminum foil. Place the silver in the pan. Fill with enough water to cover the silver. Add 1 teaspoon baking soda and 1 teaspoon salt. Boil for 3 minutes. Remove the silver, wash in soapy water, and polish. (Do not use this method for silver jewelry or flatware with hollow handles.)



- Scrub brass with Worcestershire sauce or toothpaste; or apply tomato ketchup, let sit, and remove when dry. Or, clean it with water in which onions have been boiled. For copper, apply white vinegar and salt, and rub. To polish either brass or copper, use a paste of lemon juice and salt.

Glass Cleaner

- Mix 3 tablespoons ammonia, 1 tablespoon white vinegar and ¾ cup water.
- Mix 2 tablespoons vinegar in 1 quart water.
- Mix 1 quart water with ½ cup vinegar and 1 to 2 tablespoons of lemon juice or rubbing alcohol.

Pour any of these mixtures into a spray bottle.

Oven Cleaner

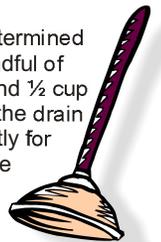
Commercial oven cleaners usually contain lye, which is extremely toxic. Instead:

- Apply a paste of water and baking soda to the spot, and then scrub it with steel wool. (Be careful not to get any of the mixture on the heating elements.)
- Sprinkle salt on spills while they are warm and scrub them off.

Drain Cleaner

- Prevent drain clogs by covering drains with screens to keep out grease, hair and food scraps. If blockage does occur, pour 1 cup each of baking soda, salt and white vinegar down the drain. Wait 15 minutes and flush with boiling water. Use a plumber's snake or plunger on tough clogs.

- The less determined can toss a handful of baking soda and ½ cup vinegar down the drain and cover tightly for 1 minute. Rinse with hot water.



Toilet Bowl Cleaner

- Pour ½ cup chlorine bleach into the bowl. Let stand for 30 minutes and scrub clean.
- Scrub with a solution of ½ cup borax and 1gallon water.

Disinfectant and Germicide

Soapy water works well in place of a disinfectant.

Air Freshener and Deodorizer

Air fresheners do not really freshen air. According to the Earth Works Group, they deaden your nasal passages or coat them with oil so you can no longer smell the offensive odor.

Instead, try vinegar or lemon juice in a spray bottle, or set small dishes of vinegar, lemon juice or baking soda around the house. A cotton ball soaked in pure vanilla will overpower odors in the car or refrigerator. Grinding lemons in the garbage disposal will give it a fresher smell.

Source: Global Environmental Outreach, February 1994.

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