

Spring Cleaning with Homemade Products



Try these DIY cleaning products to get your home sparkling clean this spring.

As spring approaches, our thoughts are turned to...spring cleaning! We've been cooped up in our houses all winter and

we're ready to see the shine of clean walls, windows, and floors! But with the plethora of products available, it is difficult to decide on which ones to choose and which ones we can afford! So the answer is...homemade cleaning solutions. Now is a great time to revive an article written by Carolyn Washburn, a USU professor from Washington County. Thanks to her list of homemade cleaning products, we can have products that are less expensive, less toxic, and are safe and effective.

Some of the basic supplies needed include baking soda, vinegar, lemon juice, borax, cornstarch and salt. Here are a few of her recipes:

Four recipes for general cleaning:

- 1 tablespoon ammonia, 1 tablespoon liquid detergent, 2 cups water.
- 1 cup vinegar, 1 gallon water.
- 2 tablespoons vinegar, 1 teaspoon borax, hot water.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ammonia, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vinegar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup baking soda, 1 gallon water

Five recipes for cleaning windows:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vinegar and 1 gallon water (2 tablespoons to 1 quart).
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ammonia and 1 gallon water.
- 1 tablespoon ammonia, 1 tablespoon vinegar, 1 quart water.
- 3 tablespoons denatured alcohol, 1 quart water.
- 3 tablespoons dish detergent and 1 tablespoon "Jet Dry" in $\frac{1}{2}$ pail of water for outdoor windows.

Other cleaning solutions she suggests include:

Baking Soda

Baking soda neutralizes acid-based odors in water and absorbs odors from the air. Sprinkled on a damp sponge or cloth, baking soda can be used as a gentle, non-abrasive cleanser for kitchen countertops, sinks, bathtubs, ovens and fiberglass. For laundry, add up to a cup per load to eliminate perspiration odors and neutralize the smell of chemicals. It is also a useful air freshener and carpet deodorizer.

Vinegar and Lemon Juice

White vinegar and lemon juice are acidic and neutralize alkaline substances such as scale from hard water. They are natural cleaning products as well as disinfectants and deodorizers. Acids dissolve gummy buildup, eat away tarnish and remove dirt from wood surfaces. Vinegar can be used as a softener in laundry cleaning. Lemon juice can be mixed with vinegar and baking soda to make a cleaning paste.

Borax

Borax is a natural cleaner and bleach. It can boost other cleaning products, but be cautious when using it since it can cause skin, eye and respiratory irritation. Don't use borax around food, keep it out of the reach of children and pets and be sure to rinse it out of clothes and off surfaces.

Cornstarch

Cornstarch can be used to clean windows, polish furniture and clean carpets. As a window cleaner, use it with water, vinegar and ammonia. To use on stains and to polish, use a mixture of water and cornstarch. Sprinkle on carpets to remove stains and odors.

Salt

Salt as a cleaner is one way to be a little “greener” at home. It is inexpensive, does not harm the environment and is readily available. Salt mixtures can remove yellowing, clean tarnish, remove lipstick, get rid of mold and can work as a drain cleaner.

Soap vs. Detergent

Liquid dish soaps and detergents are necessary for cutting grease, but they are not the same thing. Soap is made from fats and lye. Detergents are synthetic materials. Unlike soap, detergents are designed specifically so they don't react with hard water minerals and cause soap scum. If you have hard water, buy a biodegradable detergent without perfumes. If you have soft water, you can use liquid soap.

Ammonia and Denatured Alcohol

Additional cleaning products are ammonia and denatured alcohol. Be careful not to mix ammonia with a bleach product, as it can produce a harmful gas. These toxic products need to be stored carefully and used in well-ventilated areas. Be sure to keep all homemade formulas labeled and out of the reach of children.

Happy Cleaning!



This article was written by Gaelynn Peterson. Gaelynn is a long-time resident of Wayne County where she serves the residents as Utah State University faculty with an emphasis in FCS and 4-H. She has an M.S. in Psychology and has worked with at-risk students before joining the USU family. As a mother of seven and grandmother of 28, she has had a lot of experience working with youth, and she loves it! She enjoys traveling, camping, Lake Powell, and any beach.

*Learn more about homemade cleaning products:
<https://extension.usu.edu/admin/files/uploads/mpp-2009-04-01-s-004.pdf>*

Less is More: 3 Tips to Spring Clean Your Life



LIVE WELL UTAH



LESS IS MORE:
3 TIPS TO
SPRING CLEAN
YOUR LIFE

Do you find yourself surrounded with clutter? Try these three tips to spring clean your life and clear away some of the clutter.

Ahhh...Spring! A time of re-birth, baby animals, green grass, flowers and budding trees; basically a season for renewal all around. Historically, spring was the time homemakers cleaned the winter coal soot off the wall coverings and fixtures of their homes. A deep clean on the inside of the home, no doubt, reflected the freshness of the season outside. Here's my deep thought for you today: What kind of "coal soot" is covering your "insides?" Don't worry—this isn't about colon cleanses or detoxifying your diet. It's bigger than that. I'm talking about clutter.

Clutter is all around us; our lives are cluttered with words, images, data, sounds and STUFF. Big stuff, little stuff, stuff we don't even remember we have because it is buried under other stuff or stuffed into boxes of stuff. Clutter is our generation's "coal soot." We bring it into our lives to fill a need, be it emotional or physical. But for some reason we let it stay long after the need has been filled. My challenge to you is to clear the clutter and spring clean your life.

Here's how:

1. Create a baseline. Just like in budgeting or weight loss or any habit change, it's difficult to make changes unless you have a good idea of what's happening to begin with. For example, assess your clutter. Is it mostly clothes, toys, papers, tools or books? Start by bringing all of the same type of item together in one place. Start small, say, with shirts. Get all your shirts in one pile.
2. Assess the value. Now that you have all your shirts (or whatever item you've chosen to start with) go through

the pile one by one. Evaluate whether each item brings you joy.

3. Keep, trash, donate, or sell. Your number one goal is to only keep the items that are bringing you the most joy and the rest you can send on its way. And it's okay! There will be lots of items that have good use left in them. But if you're not using them, do what you can to get the items into the hands of someone who will.

Less truly is more. The tiny house movement really might be onto something! When we own less, we have less to clean and less to trip over in the dark – just think of the health benefits! Not to mention the potential to lift moods and bring harmony into a home; can you imagine a weekend without nagging your kids to clean their bedrooms? Fewer items to put away paired with habits of giving every item a “home” creates an opportunity for neatness.

Now, I'll share a few cautions:

1. Beware of the temptation of storage bins. While the storage industry has made leaps and bounds in developing items that are fashionable and attractive, that doesn't necessarily mean you need them. After you've decreased the number of belongings, you might just realize you don't need so many bins and pockets and cubbies to hide things in so your home has the appearance of tidiness. Tidiness is a natural result of owning less.
2. Evaluate your buying habits and motivations. As you are letting go of things you no longer need, think about why you purchased/acquired the items to begin with. If there are habits you need to change, apply those habits to future purchases and learn from the experience.
3. Be kind to yourself. You'll no doubt have some misgivings about the items you're letting go of. The money spent on those items is gone, and guilt over making a purchase you didn't necessarily use responsibly

or no longer need isn't worth it.

The feeling of a lifted burden is invigorating and refreshing. Kind of like spring... and cleaning the coal soot out.

This article was written by Rebecca Mills, Extension assistant professor in family consumer sciences and 4-H youth development

Source:

Kondo, M. (2014). *The life-changing magic of tidying up: The Japanese art of decluttering and organizing*. New York: Ten Speed Press.

5 Steps to Spring Clean Your Finances

Get started on your spring cleaning—no elbow grease required! Try these 5 steps to spring clean your finances from USU Extension Family Finance Pro Amanda Christensen.

5 Steps to Easier Spring Cleaning



The first sign of Spring brings crisp fresh air, newly budding flowers, singing birds and a sense of renewal. Getting organized and doing a bit of spring cleaning helps bring that wonderful fresh feeling into your home!

5 Simple Steps to Easier Spring Cleaning

There's more to spring cleaning than just attacking yearly tasks. It includes organizing as well as cleaning your home. We have to admit our normal routine can be lax and infrequent sometimes. Spring cleaning will ensure you make up for those hurried days of sliding a dust rag carelessly across the book case.

These five steps will make your house look like new!

- 1. Make a detailed list of what needs to be done in each room.**

Be sure jobs that you only do once or twice a year are also listed. Take your drapes to the dry cleaners or give your blinds a dip in the bathtub. If all these odd jobs are on a list, you won't forget to do them.

2. Gather together all the cleaning supplies needed for the tasks. Nothing is worse than getting ready to do your task and then finding out that you are missing the one item needed to complete your task. A large bucket or caddy is great for holding these items and carrying them from room to room.

3. Decide if you'll have help. If so, assign tasks or rooms. If you'll be tackling the cleaning alone, you might want to do it in short periods over several days to avoid burnout.

4. Make your cleaning fun. Think of it as exercise. Turn on some lively music and move to the beat. Open the drapes and let the sunshine and fresh air in.

5. Concentrate your efforts. Do one room at a time. First, get rid of the clutter. Make a box for trash and a box for charitable donations. Get rid of items you no longer need or use. Take time to organize as you complete each task. Next, start at the top and clean chandeliers or light fixtures. Work your way down to tables, chairs, window sills and finally the floor.

When all the tasks are finished, stand back and enjoy the springtime freshness!

This article was written by Ellen Serfustini.



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Spring Into Action – Tidy Up!

Author – Ellen Serfustini



"Spring is beautiful and smells sweet. Spring is when you shake the curtains and pound the rugs, and take off your long underwear, and wash in all the corners." As noted in this quote by Virginia Cary Hudson, when winter has said it's last goodbye, it's time to open the windows, shoo away the doldrums and tackle the annual spring cleaning! Along with Spring comes thoughts of crisp fresh air, newly budding flowers, singing birds and a sense of renewal. Getting organized and doing a bit of spring cleaning, helps to bring that wonderful fresh feeling into your home.

History tells us that spring cleaning was born thanks to old wood burning stoves or oil furnaces. The arrival of spring meant warmer temperatures and home heating was no longer

required. However, the need to clean the ash and soot left behind on all household surfaces, including draperies and exposed surfaces was clearly evident. Today, modern heating systems eliminate such mess.

Spring cleaning is more than just attacking areas of your home not normally cleaned. It's combining thorough cleaning and organization of your entire home. If we are honest with ourselves, we'll admit our normal routine can be lax and infrequent. Spring cleaning will ensure you make up for those hurried days of sliding a dust rag carelessly across the book case.

To get started –

1: Make a detailed list of what needs to be done in each room.

Be sure jobs that you only do once or twice a year are also listed. Perhaps you might take your large comforters to the laundromat, or your drapes and winter coats to the dry cleaners, store your winter clothes and bring your warm weather clothes out of hiding or check the smoke detectors. If all these odd jobs are on a list, you won't forget to do them.

2: Gather together all the cleaning supplies needed for the tasks. Nothing is worse than getting ready to do your task and then finding out that you are missing the one component needed to complete your task. A large bucket or caddy is ideal for holding cleansers, rags, sponges, and other essentials. They can be toted easily from one room to the next.

3: Decide if you'll have help. If so, assign tasks or rooms. Be sure to leave potentially dangerous tasks to the adults. Don't assign cleaning ceiling fan blades or disposing of chemicals or pesticides to a young child. If you'll be tackling the cleaning alone, you might want to do it in short periods over several days to avoid burnout.

4: Make your cleaning fun. Be positive. Think of it as a 'feel good' exercise—one that will really help you to feel good

about yourself and your clean, organized environment. Turn on some lively, fun music and move to the beat. Open the drapes and let the sunshine and fresh air in.

5: Concentrate your efforts. Do one room at a time.

- Before getting down to the nitty-gritty, first remove the messy clutter.
- Make a box for trash and a box for charitable donations. Get rid of items you no longer need or use.
- Take time to organize as you complete each task.
- Don't take smaller stacks of items and create larger ones. That's not cleaning, that's reorganizing existing clutter.
- Empty wastebaskets and clean furniture tops, then proceed to dust, wash or shampoo.
- A good rule is to start at the top. Clean chandeliers, light fixtures and pictures first, then work your way down to tables, chairs, window sills and finally the floor. Rather than shuffling furniture from one room to another in an effort to shampoo the carpet, save time and back-breaking effort by covering each furniture leg with a small plastic bag. Then simply move the furniture aside to clean the area and then return to its original spot.
- As you clean each room, make a list of items to be repaired. If you need to replace a light bulb or caulk the bathroom shower, make a note. It's not necessary to repair it right away, but you'll want to be sure you complete the repair in a timely manner.

When all the tasks are finished, stand back and admire a job well done.



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Cleaning Supplies – Time to Clean Out!

Author – Teresa Hunsaker

Simplify your Cleaning Supplies - easy tips and tricks



LIVE WELL UTAH

Spring cleaning is great for your house, but does your cleaning supply closet or cupboard need a little attention too? Now is a great time to simplify and 'clean out' the cleaning closet. What should you toss and what should you

keep? I'm sharing just a few of my favorite cleaning products and how to use them, plus a couple of recipes you may want to try for yourself, if you haven't already.

Here's my go-to list of the cleaners I like to use:

All Purpose Cleaner

In my opinion, every home should have one good all-purpose cleaner. The intent of the all-purpose cleaner is to clean most surfaces and tackle many tasks. While they have their limitations, a good one will serve many functions in cleaning. They can clean floors when damp mopping, walls and counters, cupboard shelves and windows. The trick in their use may be in the strength and cleaning rag or scrubber, as well as the rinse. I have even been known to use them on a laundry stain or two.

Commercial favorites: Greased Lightening, Simple Green, Seventh Generation Free and Clear, Lysol All Purpose Cleaner, Fantastik Orange Action and 409.

Note: You can make your own cleaners with a few basic ingredients mixed with water. Here is one I like:

2 cups warm water

1 cup vinegar

1 TBS borax

1 TBS liquid Castile soap (or 1 TBS liquid dish detergent)

Mix all ingredients and put in a spray bottle.

Soft Scrubbing Cleanser

It is possible to make your own scrubbing cleansers, and they work pretty well, but for a few cents extra, it is nice to have one handy and ready to go for those tough spots and stains on porcelain, some tile and even on pots and pans.

Natural Soft Scrub

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup baking soda

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup liquid soap

5 – 10 drops pure antiseptic essential oil (lavender, tea tree or rosemary)

Place the baking soda in a bowl. Slowly pour in liquid soap, stirring constantly, until frosting-like. Add oil.

Dish Detergent

Dish detergent is a basic staple in any cleaning cupboard. It can be used to clean many surfaces and lift many stains.

Commercial Favorites: Dawn Liquid Hand Dish Detergent, Palmolive and Ivory—especially the formulas for de-greasing.

Vinegar

Vinegar is a great addition to a cleaning cupboard. Because of its acidity, it is also a pretty good disinfectant and mold inhibitor. Use it to dissolve mineral deposits, grease, remove traces of soap remove mildew or wax buildup, polish some metals and deodorize. Vinegar can clean brick or stone, and is an ingredient in some natural carpet cleaning recipes. Use it with baking soda to clean a toilet bowl, or mix it with salt to clean a tub. For a hundred other uses, go to www.vinegartips.com. It is amazing how many uses it has!

Lemon

Like vinegar, lemon juice has many options for your cleaning arsenal. In fact, many of the same uses for vinegar can be interchanged with lemon juice. No all, but many. Remember, nothing acidic can go on marble! Lemon juice can be used to dissolve soap scum and hard water deposits. Lemon juice is a great substance to clean and shine brass and copper. It can be mixed with vinegar and/or baking soda to make cleaning pastes. Cut a lemon in half and sprinkle baking soda on the cut section. Use the lemon to scrub dishes, surfaces and stains.

Homemade Furniture Polish using Lemon:

Mix 1 cup olive oil with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup lemon juice and you have a furniture polish for hardwood furniture.

Borax

Borax is a naturally occurring mineral, soluble in water. It can deodorize, inhibit the growth of mildew and mold, boost the cleaning power of soap or detergent, remove stains and can be used with attractants such as sugar to kill cockroaches. One great use for Borax is to kill odor-producing mold and bacteria in garbage cans: sprinkle 1/2 cup Borax in the bottom of the garbage can.

Note: Borax is toxic if ingested.

Rubbing Alcohol or Isopropyl Alcohol

This is an excellent disinfectant, and can be used on most home surfaces without damaging them. It is especially nice for cleaning keyboards. It cleans dry-erase boards very well and other unwanted ink-related marks. Don't buy special cleaners to get out baby formula stains, use a little isopropyl alcohol on the stain, then a regular detergent worked in. Works like a charm. Use an isopropyl alcohol/water solution for cleaning mirrors or chrome: 1 part alcohol to 4 parts water.

Many of our homes have "special" surfaces (travertine, marble, stainless steel, solid surface counters, brass and chrome) that we may need to be sure we know how to properly care for – but even many of these surfaces can be cared for with at least one or two of the above products. While there may be "special" cleaners to go with these "special" surfaces, checking to see if other options will do can save you some cash and some cupboard space.



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Teresa was raised in Arizona. She received a B.S. degree from BYU in family resource management and family finance, and a second major in nutrition and food science. She has worked for USU Extension since 1980 and has served on many state, regional and local boards—including the County Fair Board for 18 years—and has served as president of her two state associations. She has written many bulletins and publications for USU Extension and appears regularly on KSL Studio 5. She is the supervisor of the Food Stamp Nutrition program for Weber County and teaches classes on finance, home management, food storage, food preservation and food safety throughout Weber County. She is married and has two grown children. She loves to cook, sew, scrapbook, work in the garden, read, camp, hike and be involved in her community.