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Household cleaning recipes

Craig Birdsong¹

It is possible to cut the cost of cleaning your home by using homemade cleaners. Many ingredients for home care products are ones you may already have in your kitchen, laundry or workshop. Others may be more difficult to locate—for these, see the listing at the end for possible sources.

All Purpose Cleaner

For general household cleaning, mix:

- 2 tablespoons ammonia
- 2 tablespoons liquid detergent
- 1 quart warm water.

Soap Jelly (used in other formulas)

Dissolve 1 cup of shaved soap or soap flakes in 1 quart of boiling water. When entirely melted or dissolved, pour into wide mouth jar. Let stand in a cool place until it jells.

Aluminum Cleaner

Scour badly abused aluminum vessels with whiting and soap jelly. Use very fine steel wool.

Brighten discolored aluminum pans by boiling one of the following solutions in it until the discoloration disappears:

- A) 1 tablespoon vinegar to 1 quart water

Or

- B) 2 teaspoons cream of tartar to 1 quart water.

Brass and Copper Cleaner

Make a paste of:

- 1 pint soap jelly
- 1 cup whiting
- 1 teaspoon household ammonia

Add whiting and ammonia to soap jelly before it congeals, and beat together. After using the paste, wash articles in hot suds, rinse and dry.

Tarnished copper also can be cleaned with salt dissolved in hot white vinegar or lemon juice.

Brass with an antique finish can be polished with boiled linseed oil or lemon oil.

Cleaner for Wooden Surfaces

Mix:

- 1 cup boiled linseed oil
- 1 cup turpentine
- 1 cup white vinegar

Dip soft cloth in solution, wring out and apply. Let dry. Follow with thin coat of paste wax. Buff with soft cloth.

Ceramic Tile Cleaner

Make a solution of:

- 2 tablespoons trisodium phosphate
- 1 gallon water

Apply to tile and grout with a brush, sponge or cloth. Mop up dirty water with sponge or cloth. Needs no rinsing unless a higher concentration of trisodium phosphate is used for heavy cleaning.

Mildew and other stains can be removed from grout with a solution of ½ cup bleach and 1 cup water. Let stand five minutes and rinse with clear water.

Warnings

1. Never mix chlorine bleach with any other cleaning agent, such as ammonia or vinegar. It may create toxic fumes.
2. Store all cleaning solutions out of reach of children. Solutions may be stored in empty "store-bought" containers.
3. Do not spill ammonia on painted or varnished surfaces. It may damage the finish.
4. For your protection, mix cleaning solutions in well ventilated areas. If solutions are heated, use a range fan, if available.

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Chromium Cleaner

A mild suds usually cleans well. It should be rinsed well and dried with a soft cloth. For stubborn stains rub with a paste of whiting and household ammonia. Rinse and polish with a soft cloth.

Dishwashing Detergent, Automatic

Mix:

- 1 cup soda ash
- 2 cups sodium metasilicate
- 1 cup trisodium phosphate

Use $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of mixture in dishwasher.

Dishwashing Detergent, Hand

Mix:

- 1 cup sodium phosphate
- 3 cups trisodium phosphate

Use 2 teaspoons for a dishpan of hot water.

Drain Cleaner

Mix:

- 1 cup baking soda
- 1 cup salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cream of tartar

Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of mixture in drain, add 1 cup boiling water. Allow to stand; flush with cold water.

Drain Opener

Mix:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup caustic soda
- 1 cup calcium carbonate
- 3 cups caustic potash

Pour 2 tablespoons of mixture into drain, add 1 cup hot water. Allow to stand for 30 minutes; flush with cold water. Store in airtight container. *Do not get mixture on skin.*

Dusting Cloths for Furniture Cleaning

Dust with cloths that gather dust rather than scatter it. Make dust cloths with soft cloths in one of the following ways:

A) Put cloth in a tin container or jar in which a few drops of oil or wax have been spread. Cover tightly and leave overnight. The cloth will absorb just enough oil or wax to remove dust, and polish the surface at the same time.

Or

B) Mix 1 tablespoon of kerosene with 1 quart hot water. Dip cloth in solution, wring out, dry and store.

Or

C) Mix 1 tablespoon mild soap powder
1 quart warm water
1 tablespoon household ammonia
2 tablespoons boiled linseed oil or a good furniture polish

Dip cloth in solution, squeeze out, dry and store.

Furniture Polish

Mix:

- 1 ounce boiled linseed oil
- 1 ounce turpentine
- $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce cider vinegar

Shake mixture well. Rub furniture with polish. Let stand for a few minutes, and buff with dry flannel cloth.

Glass and Mirror Cleaner

Use one of the following:

For *water spots*: add 2 tablespoons vinegar to 1 quart warm water.

For *light greasy soil*: add 1 tablespoon kerosene to 2 quarts warm water.

For *heavy greasy soil*: add 4 tablespoons of household ammonia to 1 quart warm water.

To use cleaners, first remove surface soil with a cloth. Then, spray or sponge cleaning liquid on glass and wipe off with cloth or newspaper.

Iron and Tin Cleaner

Iron and tin utensils rust when they are not dried thoroughly. Boil the item in soda water for a few minutes to clean. Remove rust from iron with steel wool or scouring powder. Before storing iron pots and pans, coat with saltless fat or oil, wrap in paper and store in a dry place.

Laundry Detergent, Enzyme Action

Mix:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup pancreatin
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salt
- 3- $\frac{1}{2}$ cups soda ash
- 1 cup sodium alginate

Use as desired.

Laundry Detergent, Low Foaming

Mix:

- 3- $\frac{3}{4}$ cups lauryl pyridinium chloride
- 2- $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sodium dodecylbenzene sulfate
- 10- $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sodium tripolyphosphate
- 8 cups baking soda

Use as desired.

Lavatory Bowl Cleaner

Mix:

- 1- $\frac{1}{2}$ cups caustic soda
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup powdered alum
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salt

Store in airtight container.

Marble Cleaner

Remove acid stains with household ammonia, baking soda or borax. If acid has roughened the surface, rub with pumice stone and water. Polish with soft cloth.

For grease spots, make a paste of fuller's earth, spread on the spots, let stand for 24 hours. Wash with soap and water. Repeat if necessary. Scrub heavily soiled spots with pumice stone.

Oven Cleaner

The next time something spills over in your oven, sprinkle the mess generously with salt. The sticky spill may lift off easily with a spatula when the oven is cool.

Or

Place a bowl of ammonia in the oven and let it

stand overnight. Much of the grease will be loosened by the next morning and can be scraped off.

Any remaining foods can be removed with the following:

- ½ cup trisodium phosphate
- ½ cup soda ash
- 1 cup sodium perborate
- 2 tablespoons powdered soap

Apply with damp sponge.

Oven Cleaner, Spray-on

Mix:

- 1 cup of oven cleaner powder (formula above)
- 1 quart water

Spray on oven surface and allow to soak for 1 hour.

Wipe clean with wet cloth or sponge.

Porcelain Cleaner

Porcelain enamel found on sinks, bath tubs and lavatories is a glass surface. If strong scouring powder is used, the finish may be scratched beyond repair.

Use one of these cleaners:

- A) Add 2 tablespoons ammonia or kerosene to 1 cup soap jelly. Store in airtight container. Use as needed.
- B) Mix 4 parts whiting to 1 part of soap jelly. This is mild and will not mar most surfaces.
- C) Mix 1 cup whiting or baking soda with ½ cup pine oil.
- D) Make a stiff paste of whiting mixed with ammonia or kerosene. Wash with soapy water and rinse well. Try this for removing stains.

Light rust stains may be removed with lemon juice. Rinse thoroughly. For more stubborn stains, try a weak solution of oxalic acid: 1 teaspoon of oxalic acid in 1 cup hot water. Rinse immediately with ammonia solution. Then rinse well with water.

Caution: Oxalic acid is poisonous and should be labeled and handled carefully.

Toilet bowls are vitreous china and can withstand stronger cleaners. Clean frequently with detergent. Washing soda can be used only inside the bowl.

Tile Cleaner

See: Marble Cleaner.

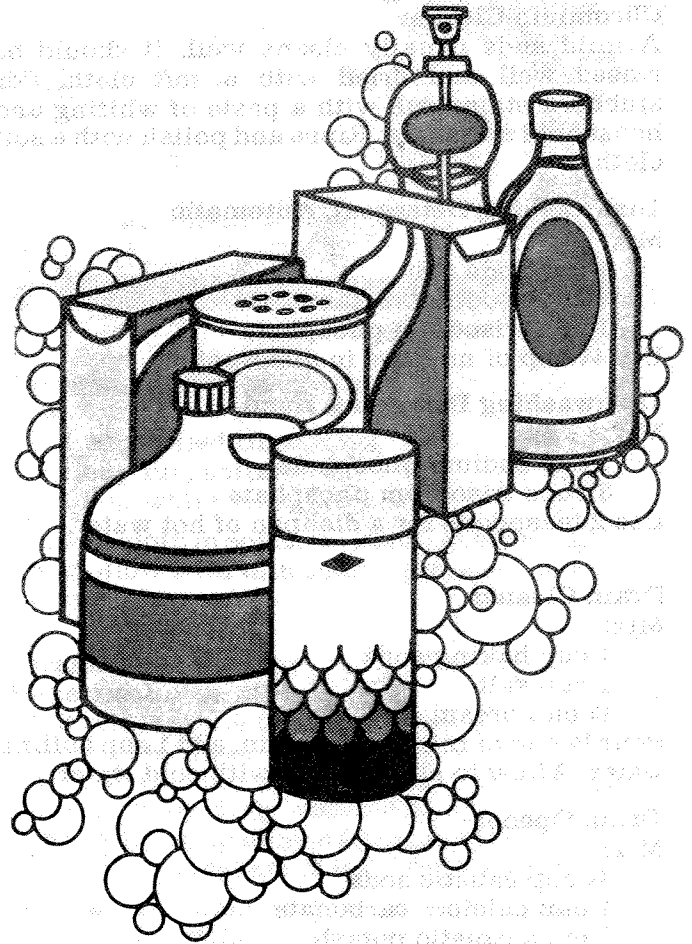
Tin Cleaner

See: Iron and Tin Cleaner.

Walls and Woodwork Cleaning

Painted Surfaces

For ordinary cleaning, use a mixture of soap jelly and warm water. Add enough soap jelly to water to make light suds. Dust painted surfaces thoroughly before washing. Wash with a soft cloth dipped and wrung out in cleaning solution. Rinse well and dry with soft cloth. Wash only a small area at a time.



Whiting paste may be used for heavily soiled areas. Make with 4 parts whiting to 1 part soap jelly. Mix thoroughly and keep in small jar. Apply with soft cloth and rub lightly. Rinse thoroughly.

For cleaning woodwork or light colored painted surfaces, use 1 part kerosene to 1 part vinegar. Rub soiled area and wipe with dry cloth.

Papered Walls

Fresh grease spots may be removed to some extent by placing a clean blotter on the spot and pressing with a warm iron. Change the blotter often.

For further treatment and more stubborn spots, make a paste of water and powdered magnesium oxide. Apply and let dry 2 to 3 days. Brush off. Repeat if necessary. *Test first on inconspicuous spot.*

Washable Papered Walls

For heavily soiled washable paper, mix:

- 4 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 cups flour
- 2-½ tablespoons household ammonia
- 1-¼ cups water

Stir soda into flour; add ammonia and water. Beat until smooth. Steam in a double boiler for 1-1/2 hours. Leave the dough covered and when cool enough to handle, knead until smooth and soft.

To use, start at the top of the wall and rub gently downward, overlapping the strokes to prevent streaking. Knead the cleaner as you work. Dusting with a soft cloth will remove crumbs left from the dough.

Window Shade Cleaner (for paper shades)

See: Washable Papered Walls on previous page.

Locating Ingredients

Though many of the ingredients needed for these cleaning products are common household items others may be more difficult to locate. The list below should be of help.

Ceramic Shops

- Caustic potash (potassium hydroxide)
- Fuller's earth

Feed and Grain Supply

- Calcium carbonate (chalk)
- Salt (sodium chloride)

Wholesale Drug Distributor

- Pancreatin

Retail Drug Store

- Alum, powdered
- Calcium carbonate (chalk)
- Caustic soda (sodium hydroxide)
- Lauril prydinium chloride
- Oxalic acid
- Sodium alginate
- Sodium dodecylbenzene sulfate
- Sodium metaphosphate
- Sodium metasilicate
- Sodium perborate
- Sodium phosphate
- Sodium tripolyphosphate

Retail Paint and Hardware Store

- Baking soda (sodium bicarbonate)
- Boiled linseed oil
- Borax
- Caustic potash (potassium hydroxide)
- Caustic soda (sodium hydroxide)
- Soda ash (sodium carbonate)
- Trisodium phosphate
- Turpentine
- Whiting

Retail Supermarket

- Ammonia
- Baking soda (sodium bicarbonate)
- Borax
- Corn syrup (glucose)
- Cream of tartar
- Salt (sodium chloride)
- Vinegar