

Simple Homemade Cleaning Recipes

All-Purpose Household Cleaner

- 1 quart warm water
- 1 tsp. liquid soap
- 1 tsp. borax
- squeeze of lemon or splash of vinegar

This solution can be used for a multitude of cleaning jobs including countertops, floors, walls, rugs and upholstery.

Air Freshener

- Leave open boxes of baking soda in refrigerators, closets and bathrooms.
- Open doors and windows for good ventilation. Use stove fan when cooking.
- Use flowers, herbs and spices to add subtle fragrances to indoor air.

Drain Opener

- ½ cup baking soda
- 1 cup vinegar
- boiling water

Dissolve baking soda and vinegar in boiling water, and pour the solution down the drain. Continue to flush with hot tap water until the clog breaks.

Degreaser (engine and tool)

Use a water-based cleaner in place of kerosene, turpentine and commercial engine degreaser.

Degreaser (kitchen)

Use a non-chlorinated scouring powder with abrasive scouring pad or fine steel wool.

Floor Cleaner

- Vinyl floors: ½ cup vinegar or ¼ cup borax with 1 gallon water. Polish with club soda.
- Wood floors: damp mop with mild vegetable oil soap.

Disinfectant

Use ½ cup borax in 1gallon hot water. To inhibit mold and mildew, do not rinse off borax solution.

Furniture Polish

1 pint mineral oil with a few drops of lemon juice.

Glass Cleaner

¼ cup vinegar in 1 quart warm water. (Do not use this as a windshield wiper solution as it may damage the pump - use plain water for this purpose.)

Mildew Cleaner

Scrub with baking soda or borax; for extended mold inhibition, do not rinse off.

Oven Cleaner

- Scrub with 2 tbsp. or more of baking soda or borax in 1 gallon water, using very fine steel wool (0000). Wear gloves. For very baked-on spots, try scrubbing with pumice (available at hardware stores.)
- As a last resort, use a pump oven cleaner that says, "No caustic fumes" and "No lye."

Rug and Upholstery Cleaner

Use the All-Purpose Household Cleaner.

Scouring Powder

Use baking soda or a non-chlorinated commercial scouring powder.

Spot Removers

- All-Purpose: ¼ cup borax in 2 cups cold water; soak the stain prior to washing as usual.
- Blood: Pour 3 percent hydrogen peroxide solution directly on the stain, rinse with water and wash as usual.
- Ink: Apply a paste of lemon juice and cream of tartar; allow it to dry, then wash as usual.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Scrub with baking soda or mild detergent.

Tub/Tile Cleaner

Use scouring powder or baking soda.

WARNING: Borax is the most caustic of the cleaners on this list. Store it with special care in cabinets out of the reach of children and use it well diluted. Latex gloves are advisable.

Have other cleaners or chemicals to dispose of properly? Make a no-cost appointment at the Landfill's hazardous waste facility (319-356-5185) or see www.icgov.org/esrc for the next mobile collection at East Side Recycling Center.