

## Non-Toxic Household Cleaners

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The household products we use on a daily basis often contain harmful chemicals and carcinogens. However, strong chemicals are unnecessary when there are many alternatives that can be made from common ingredients. You can make simple home remedies by creating the following recipes for non-toxic cleaners. After some experience, it will be easy to develop your own recipes, or make amendments to the ones below. Have fun, and feel free to experiment!

<b>Product</b>	<b>Homemade Alternatives</b>
<u>Air Freshener</u>	Boil cinnamon and cloves and let steam. Add 1/2c borax in bottom of garbage pails. Display bowls of potpourri, or use essential oil diffusers. Place bowls of vinegar or baking soda around to absorb odor in smelly regions.
<u>All Purpose Cleaner</u>	Any combination of borax, baking soda, vinegar or lemon juice, and hot water. Add essential oil for fragrance. For example, try 1tsp borax, 2Tbs vinegar or lemon juice, and 2c hot water.
<u>Antiseptic Herbs</u>	When making homemade cleaners, herbs can be added for scent and many are also natural antiseptics. Try lavender, tea tree, pine, myrrh, sage, peppermint, rosemary, eucalyptus, wormwood, thyme, or clove. You can add a few drops of essential oil, or make a strong tea of one or more of the herbs by steeping them in hot water, and adding to homemade liquid cleaners.
<u>Tub and Tile Cleaners</u>	Use baking soda with a little vegetable oil based soap. Scrub with lemon slices dipped in borax or baking soda (let it sit overnight on really tough stains). To make a scouring powder, mix 1c baking soda and 1/4c borax, sprinkle on and scrub.
<u>Bleach</u>	Add 1/2c borax to a load of laundry. Also try adding 1/4c lemon to wash and hang in the sun.
<u>Dish Soap</u>	Use a vegetable based soap (castile soap made out of olive oil is easiest to find).
<u>Disinfectants</u>	For body cuts/wounds, use rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide. For surface areas, use 1/2c borax to 1 gallon hot water (this will satisfy a hospital's germicidal requirements.)
<u>Drain Openers</u>	Pour 1/2c baking soda and 1/2c vinegar in drainpipe and let it sit. Rinse with hot water. Pour 1/4c hydrogen peroxide in drainpipe and let sit. Rinse with hot water. Repeat if necessary, or try alternating these two methods.

<u>Fabric Softeners</u>	Pour 1c white vinegar, or 1/4-1/2c baking soda or borax, into final rinse cycle. Vinegar will also act as a anti-static agent.
<u>Floor Cleaner</u>	Vinyl floors: use 1/2c vinegar and 1/4c borax with 1 gallon hot water. Polish with club soda. Wood floors: use a damp mop with mild vegetable soap (Castile soap or Murphy Oil soap).
<u>Furniture and Floor Polish</u>	Use a mixture of 2 parts olive or canola oil, 1 part lemon juice or vinegar, and essential oil for sent. For water spots, mix 10 drops lemon oil into 2c vodka. Apply a thin coat and rub into furniture. Also try 1 pint mineral oil with a few drops of lemon juice.
<u>Glass Cleaner</u>	Use any of the following mixtures: 1/8c white vinegar to 1c water, juice from 2 lemons, 3Tbs salt or borax and 1/2c water. Apply with a cloth or use a spray bottle. To avoid streaks and make windows really clean, use newspaper to wipe clean.
<u>Metal Polishes</u>	Aluminum: rub with soft cloth dipped in mix of cream of tartar and water. Brass: rub with soft cloth dipped in lemon and baking soda, or vinegar and salt. Chrome: rub wet surface with newspaper, or wipe with soft cloth dipped in baby oil or vinegar. Copper: boil in water with 1Tbs salt and 1c white vinegar. Gold: soak in luke warm soapy water, and brush with toothpaste and toothbrush. Dry with a cloth and polish with chamois cloth.
<u>Product</u>	Homemade Alternatives Pewter: rub with a mixture of salt, vinegar, and flour. Silver: cover in a pot of water with 1tsp baking soda and/or salt, and strips of aluminum foil. Let soak, or boil for 3 minutes. Rinse, dry, and polish. Stainless Steel: rub with white vinegar.
<u>Mirror Cleaner</u>	Mix 1c strong black tea (cooled) and 3Tbs vinegar. Spray on mirrors and wipe off.
<u>Mold and Mildew Cleaners</u>	Mix 1tsp borax with 3Tbs vinegar with 2c hot water into a spray bottle. Spray on and scrub off mold, add a few more sprays but don't wipe off to inhibit mold growth. If the area is really moldy, try scrubbing the area with straight borax and let sit for awhile before rinsing. To prevent mold growth, keep areas dry with good air circulation and sunlight when possible. For dark areas, make small bags of kitty litter wrapped in cheese-cloth and hang around room (change when wet).
<u>Shoe Polish</u>	Rub shoe with a fresh banana peel, and clean off with a cloth.

<u>Scouring Powder</u>	Mix 1c baking soda and 1/4-1/2c borax, sprinkle on and scrub.
<u>Stains</u>	<p>Blood: Soak in water and rub material together with soap. To bleach out, soak in 1/4c borax to 2c cold water, and wash as usual. Also try pouring hydrogen peroxide on stain before soaking.</p> <p>Juice/Wine: Add cold seltzer water and allow to sit. Stain will usually lift off.</p> <p>Oil/Grease: Cover stain with baking soda, corn meal, cornstarch, or a paste of cornstarch and water. Give it time to dry, then brush off lightly.</p> <p>General: Spray on a mixture of baking soda and soda water (this can work for almost anything). Also try rubbing with hydrogen peroxide</p>
<u>Ingredients</u>	Common Household Uses
<u>Baking Soda</u>	Absorbs odors and chemicals, and is a mild abrasive.
<u>Borax</u>	A mineral compound (sodium borate) that is available at most supermarkets. It's a disinfectant, deodorizer, mold inhibitor, and mild abrasive.
<u>Vinegar</u>	Cuts grease, dissolves sticky buildup and mineral deposits, and deodorizes. (Use white vinegar).
<u>Lemon Juice</u>	Cuts grease, dissolves sticky buildup, and has a bleaching affect.
<u>Vegetable soaps</u>	Vegetable based soaps are natural and don't contain harmful chemicals. Some common found varieties include castile soap,

#### For Further Information

Nontoxic, Natural, and Earthwise by Debra Lynn Dodd\*\*

Clean and Green: The Complete Guide to Nontoxic and Environmentally Safe Household Cleaning

by Annie Berthold-Bond

Healthful Houses: How to Design and Build Your Own by Clint Good and Debra Lynn Dodd

The Natural House Book: Creating a Healthy, Harmonious and Ecologically-sound Home by David Pearson\*\*

Soap: Making it, Enjoying it by Ann Bramson

[www.flintsinn.com/au\\_nat/env\\_make.htm](http://www.flintsinn.com/au_nat/env_make.htm)

<http://es.epa.gov/techinfo/facts/safe-fs.html> ([this site also explains what toxins are in store-bought products](#))

\*\* =(this book is available in the CCAT library)