

DIY Natural Household Cleaning Product Recipes



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Clean your air by choosing low-VOC cleaning products

Many cleaning products re-lease volatile organic compounds (VOCs), a major component in the formation of ozone or smog. In fact, with the exception of getting vehicles off the road, using low- or no-VOC cleaning products can reduce more emissions than any other environmentally sound act.

Certain products containing the highest concentrations of VOCs include *toilet bowl cleaners, oven cleaners, furniture polish, and automatic dishwasher and laundry detergents*. While many of these products are required for home cleaning and maintenance, there are many components of high-VOC products that you can avoid when shopping for cleaners. Read the labels and watch for these clues:

VOC-based solvents: no more than 10 percent benzene, toluene, xylene, trichloroethane

Petroleum-based solvents: avoid petroleum distillates and surfactants, such as nonylphenol, ethoxylate, phenolic compounds, glycol ethers and isopropyl alcohol

Chlorine bleach or sodium hypochlorite: try sodium percarbonate instead

Phosphates: no more than 0.5 percent

EDTA and NTA: avoid these acids used to soften water and increase cleaning power

“Danger” or “Poison” = highly toxic

“Warning” = moderately toxic

“Caution” = less toxic (this may be the least offensive product available; even some “natural” products may contain some caustic ingredients, such as pine oil, and so are labeled with “caution”)

There are several products on the market that are toxic or contain ozone-causing chemicals. Many of these products, including pine cleaners, bleach, ammonia and antibacterial soaps are highly toxic and unnecessary as they can be easily replaced with safe products.

Alternative, more environmentally-friendly products, like baking soda and vinegar are equally efficient in cleaning the home. Also, purchase dye- and fragrance-free cleaners, which are typically lower in harmful agents than scented products.

Interested in making your own cleaning products?

*Not only are they safer, they are easy to make
and will save you money!*

Basic Ingredients for Many Natural Cleaning Product Recipes:

1. **Baking Soda:** *Also known bicarbonate of soda, baking soda is an effective cleaning agent that also deodorizes. You can find this in supermarkets and discount stores. Look for larger boxes near the laundry detergents. Cost: A 4 lb box at Target is around \$2.*
2. **White Vinegar:** *White Vinegar is useful for cutting grease, dissolving mineral deposits and has antifungal and germ killing properties due to its acidity. Make sure to buy white vinegar marked grain alcohol or neutral grain spirits to avoid buying petroleum byproducts. It can be found in every supermarket and discount store. Cost: Prices ranges from \$1.50 to \$5 per gallon.*
3. **Washing Soda:** *Also known as sodium carbonate is in the same family as baking soda but is processed differently. It cuts grease, removes wax and lipstick. Don't use it on fiberglass, aluminum or waxed floors—unless you want to remove the wax. It can be found in supermarkets and Wal-Mart near the laundry detergents. Cost: \$3-\$4 for a 76 oz box.*
4. **Borax:** *Also know as sodium borate, a natural mineral compound. It deodorizes, removes dirt and neutralizes hard water. It is also a laundry booster, an antifungal and possible disinfectant. New studies indicate it is not as safe as previously indicated so we have taken it out of many recipes. Still waiting for more information for the final determination of safety. It can be found in supermarkets and discount stores near the laundry detergents. Cost: About \$3 for a 55 oz box.*
5. **Liquid Castile Soap:** *Castile means that the soap is vegetable oil based, not animal fat-based. It is an all-purpose cleaner, grease-cutter and disinfectant. Look for this at Fruitful Yield, Woodman's, Soup to Nuts and Target. Cost: \$8-\$10 for 16 oz. 32 oz and gallon containers are available at Fruitful Yield.*
6. **Lemon Juice:** *Works as a nontoxic bleach, grease-cutter and stain remover. Found in supermarkets and discount stores. Cost: Around \$2 for 15 oz or you can squeeze your own lemons.*
7. **Salt:** *Try using kosher salt for a mild abrasive. Also used as a weed killer. Found in supermarkets. Cost: About \$1 for 26 oz for standard container of table salt.*

8. **Soap Flakes (laundry bar or castile soap bar):** *Excellent for use in both liquid and powdered laundry soaps. Look for a bar without artificial fragrances.* You can grate an all-natural laundry bar (Fruitful Yield) or Castile bar soap found at Fruitful Yield, Woodman's, Soup to Nuts and discount stores. Cost: \$1.83 for laundry bar at Fruitful Yield (large bar will yield more than 2 cups of soap flakes), Kirks Castile Bar Soap: \$1-\$2. Dr. Bronner's: \$3-\$5
9. **Essential Oils:** *Adding all-natural essential oils can add great fragrance to your products. Some have antibacterial and antifungal properties, while others have insect repelling properties. Note that oils are very concentrated and may be an irritant to some. Pregnant women should check before using. (All of the essential oils used in these recipes are considered safe).* Health food stores like Fruitful Yield, Soup to Nuts and Whole Foods carry a complete supply. *Berkana Way* also carries a large selection. You only need a few drops for most recipes so a small amount goes a long way. Most average \$4-\$8 per ounce.
10. **Hydrogen Peroxide:** *This works well as a non-toxic bleach and stain remover and as a disinfectant.* Look for this near first aid items in supermarkets and discount stores. Keep in opaque container. Cost: Less than \$1 for 16 oz.

Not ready to make all of your own cleaning products?

Here is a partial list of eco-friendly brands to try

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|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ◆ Arm & Hammer Oven Cleaner | ◆ Ecover |
| ◆ BioKleen | ◆ Green Irene (Green Irene.com) |
| ◆ BioShield | ◆ Method |
| ◆ Bon Ami | ◆ Mrs. Meyers (S.C. Johnson) |
| ◆ Clorox Green Works | ◆ Naturally Yours |
| ◆ Dr. Bronner's | ◆ Nature's Source (S.C. Johnson) |
| ◆ Charlie's Soap | ◆ Seventh Generation |
| ◆ Earth Friendly | ◆ Shaklee |
| ◆ Earth Matters | |

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Natural Liquid Laundry Soap

This works in high efficiency washers

4 cups	Water
2 cups	Soap Flakes
2 cups	Washing Soda
2 cups	Borax
30 cups	Warm water

Bring 4 cups of water to a boil.

Add the soap flakes or grated natural soap (laundry bar or castile soap) to the boiling water very slowly and dissolve over low heat.

Find a large bucket (3-5 gallons) with a lid and pour the soap/water mixture into it. Then stir the Washing Soda and Borax until it dissolves.

Finally, add 30 cups of warm water to the mixture and stir well. (Some suggest letting the mixture sit for 24 hours first. Stir frequently. The mixture will change and become gelatinous.)

Shake or stir before using. Use 1/4 to 1/2 cup per load.

Tips Add 5 drops of lemon eucalyptus or geranium essential oils to dispenser cup for subtle clean scent. Use 1/4 to 1/2 cup white vinegar in fabric softener dispenser for a fabric rinse.

Estimated Cost Per Mixture: \$3.49

Estimated Cost per Load: 3¢

Simple Washing Powder

1 cup	Baking Soda
1 cups	Washing Soda
2 cups	Grated soap flakes (laundry, castile or glycerin bar)
2-4 Tbs	Powdered Oxygenated Bleach (Optional)

Make soap flakes by grating your favorite pure vegetable soap with a cheese grater. Mix ingredients together and store in an a glass container. Use 1 tablespoon per load (2 for heavily soiled laundry), wash in warm or cold water.

This standard recipe can be adjusted for soft water by using 2 cup soap flakes, 1/4 cup washing soda and 1 cup baking soda. For hard water, the same amount of the top 3 ingredients.

*Note: This recipe can be safely used in HE washers. Cost Per Batch: \$5.18
Cost per Load: 7¢*

Pre-Wash Stain Spray

1/2 cup	White Vinegar
1/4 cup	Baking Soda
3 cups	Water

Stir together and fill a labeled spray bottle. Spray on soiled spots just before washing. Always test a hidden spot first. *Estimate Cost: 21¢*

The recipes in this booklet are from The Chimerical Cookbook, Berkana Way, Natural Home & Garden, iVillage.com, eartheasy.com, thenewhomemaker.com and Clean Air Counts.

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Bleach/Brightener Substitute

1 cup	Hydrogen Peroxide
1/4 cup	Lemon or Grapefruit Juice
12 cups	Water

Store in a labeled jug. Add 2 cups per load along with detergent.

Tub, Tile and Counter Top Cleaner (soft scrub)

1/2 cup	Baking Soda
	Liquid Soap
5 drops	Antibacterial Essential Oil such as lavender, tea tree oil, or rosemary (optional)

Pour the baking soda in a bowl; slowly pour the liquid soap or detergent, stirring until reaches the consistency of frosting. Scoop the creamy mixture onto a sponge, wash the surface, and rinse.

Oven Cleaner

2 cups	Baking Soda
1/2 cup	Plain Salt
2 tsp	Liquid Soap
1/4 cup	Washing soda
20 drops	Essential Oil (optional)
	Water

Combine the dry ingredients with enough water make a thick paste, and spread throughout oven interior. (avoid bare metal and any openings) Let sit overnight. Remove with spatula and wipe clean. Rub gently with fine steel wool for tough spots. *Estimated Cost: \$1.11*

Automatic Dishwasher Powder

Automatic Dishwasher Powder

1 Cup	Washing Soda
1/4 Cup	Citric Acid
1/4 Cup	Plain Salt
5-8 Drops	Citrus Essential Oil

Mix dry ingredients together with a whisk. Add essential oil and mix thoroughly with whisk. Put in sealed plastic container.

Makes 20-32 loads

Use 1 tsp -1 Tbs per load.

All-Purpose/Glass Cleaner

This is used through the home for regular maintenance...kitchens, bathrooms, dusting of living spaces, flat mopping wood floors...polishing of glass and mirrors as well as stainless appliances. It also disinfects.

3 3/4 cups	Distilled or Reverse Osmosis Water
10 drops	Organic Lavender Essential Oil
5 drops	Organic Tea Tree Essential Oil

Mix ingredients together in a large spray bottle (32 oz).

Cost per bottle: 42¢

Cleansing Powder

1/2 Cup	Baking Soda
2 tsp	Cream of Tartar
2 Tbs	Borax
5 drops	Essential Oil

This is good for light colored hard surfaces such as porcelain sinks. Rinse with white vinegar and hot water.

Estimated cost per mix: \$1.04

One Size Fits All Cleaner

Take this recipe and modify it with different essential oils. Make a variation for the bathroom and add cedar wood oil to fight mold and mildew, or add Geranium oil in another formulation to create a cleaner/bug repellent for the patio furniture.

1 cup	Water
1/2 cup	Vinegar
10 drops	Essential Oil

Mix ingredients together in a spray bottle. Shake before using.

Estimated cost per bottle: 22¢

Foam Pump Hand Soap

3/4 cup	Water
2-3 Tbs	Liquid Castile Soap
5-10 drops	Essential Oil (Opt.)

Refill empty foam pump bottle with water, castile soap and essential oil. Gently swirl to mix. *Est. Cost: 51¢*

Natural Furniture Polish

1 cup	Linseed (flax), walnut, olive or hemp oil
1/4 cup	White Vinegar
5 drops	Lemon Essential Oil

Mix in a spray bottle and spritz on a soft cloth to use. Do not spray directly on furniture. *Est. Cost \$2.93*

Amazing Air Freshener

1 cup	Water
10 drops	Essential Oil

Choose your favorite fragrance of essential oil and mix with water in spray bottle. Can spray into air or on furniture, carpets and fabrics. Shake before using. *Est. Cost: 13¢*

Natural Weed Killer

4 cups	White Vinegar
2 tsp	Liquid dish soap
1/4 cup	Salt (optional)

Mix in a spray bottle. Spray on weeds carefully as it will also kill grass and flowers. If using salt it can build up in soil and potentially hurt other plants so it is best used on walkways and hardscaping.

Estimated cost per mix: \$1.18

More Recipes and Cleaning Tips

Bathroom Grout: Make a paste of baking soda and water. Brush on and let sit for a few minutes then rinse.

Blood out of Clothing: Soak in a small amount of hydrogen peroxide. Rinse.

Carpet stains: Mix equal parts white vinegar and water in a spray bottle. Spray on stain and let sit for several minutes, then clean with a brush or sponge using warm soapy water. For a heavy duty carpet cleaner, mix 1/4 cup each of salt, borax and vinegar. Rub paste into carpet and leave for a few hours. Vacuum.

Children's Toys: Add 4 Tbs of baking soda with 1 quart of water and wipe off toys.

Coffee Pots: Add 1/4 cup of salt and about 12 ice cubes, swish and let sit for 30 minutes. Fill with cold water and rinse.

Copper: Put a thick layer of ketchup on and let sit for a few minutes. Scrub off and rinse. Salt and vinegar is a great copper scrub.

Crayon on Wood Furniture: Rub mayonnaise on mark and let sit for a few minutes. Wipe away with a damp cloth.

Cutting Board Cleaner: Rub a slice of lemon across a chopping block to disinfect the surface. For tough stains, squeeze lemon juice onto the spot and let sit for 10 minutes, then wipe.

Disinfecting Cleaner: Spray surface with 3% solution of hydrogen peroxide. For extra disinfecting, first spray with white vinegar.

Unclog Drains: Add 1/2 cup baking soda and follow with 1 cup white vinegar and close drain. Let sit for about 15 minutes and flush with lots of hot water.

Fruit & Vegetable Cleaner: Spray with solution of equal parts white vinegar and water. Scrub and rinse. Follow with a spray of 3% hydrogen peroxide spray. Rinse again.

Microwave: In glass cup add 1/2 cup of water and 1/2 cup of vinegar. Microwave for 2 minutes then let sit and steam for a few more. Wipe out with clean cloth.

Stickers on walls: Sponge vinegar over stickers several times, and wait 15 minutes, then rub off the stickers. This also works for price tags (stickers) on tools, etc.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner: Mix 1/4 cup baking soda and 1 cup vinegar, pour into bowl and let it set for a few minutes to overnight. Scrub with brush and rinse.