

Non-Toxic Homemade Cleaning Products that Work as Good or Better than What you Buy

All-purpose cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1/4 cup baking soda• 1/2 cup Borax (found in the laundry section of grocery stores)• 1/2 cup vinegar• 1 gallon of water	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mix the ingredients together in a bowl or bucket.2. Stir vigorously to dissolve the baking soda and Borax.

To make a spray cleaner, reduce this recipe and dissolve the ingredients to avoid clogging the spray bottle. Use with a mop or sponge.

Source: *Eco-Cycle*, www.ecocycle.org

Glass cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Club soda• 8 or 16 oz. spray bottle	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Fill the bottle with plain club soda, spray and wipe.

All glass cleaners work best with a lint-free cloth. This won't dry as fast as commercial cleaners but works just as well.

Source: *"Clean House, Clean Planet: Clean Your House for Pennies a Day The Safe Nontoxic Way."* By Karen Logan.

Vanilla air freshener

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 cotton ball• Pure vanilla extract (not imitation)• Small jar, dish or bowl	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Put the cotton ball into the container and soak thoroughly in the pure vanilla extract.2. Place the container behind a plant or picture frame if you'd like.

Source: *"Clean House, Clean Planet: Clean Your House for Pennies a Day The Safe Nontoxic Way."* By Karen Logan.

Wood floor polish

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1/8 cup of olive oil• 1 tbsp cider vinegar• 1 tbsp vodka• 10 drops of lavender oil (or other essential oil)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mix the ingredients together and apply to your wood floor with a soft cloth. After rubbing it in, buff with another clean, soft cloth.

Source: *Recipe Goldmine*, www.recipegoldmine.com/house/house.html

Candle wax remover

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ice cubes• Butter knife• Brown shopping bag• Warm iron	<p>"The Chill" method</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Chill the wax area with an ice cube.2. Once the wax is chilled, scrape with the edge of a butter knife. <p>"The Brown Bag" method (not recommended for colored wax as it may stain)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Place a brown shopping bag over the wax area2. Run a warm iron over the bag3. Gradually increase the heat on the iron until the bag begins to soak the wax out of the carpet. <i>Be careful to not let your iron get too hot!</i>

Bathroom

Toilet bowl cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1/2 cup Borax cleaner (found in the laundry section of grocery stores)• 20-30 drops of tea tree oil	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Pour Borax into your toilet bowl.2. Add tea tree oil to bowl. The tea tree oil adds a little disinfecting power and strong, clean smell.3. Let the ingredients sit in toilet bowl overnight4. In the morning, give bowl a quick swish with a toilet brush and flush.

Source: "Clean House, Clean Planet: Clean Your House for Pennies a Day The Safe Nontoxic Way." By Karen Logan.

Tub and tile cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1-2/3 cups baking soda• 1/2 cup high-quality liquid soap• 1/2 cup water• 2 tbsp. white distilled vinegar• 16 oz. squeeze container with a squirt flip-top cap	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mix baking soda with liquid soap in a bowl.2. Dilute with the water.3. Add vinegar last.4. Stir until lumps are gone. If it pours from container then it's the right consistency, otherwise it's too thick and needs more water.5. Shake well before using and squirt on surface to be cleaned. Use with a nylon white-backed sponge to prevent scratching.6. Rinse well.

This cleaner works great in the tub, sink and toilet bowl, but can be used on floors, garbage cans and for any greasy, grimy job.

Source: "Clean House, Clean Planet: Clean Your House for Pennies a Day The Safe Nontoxic Way." By Karen Logan.

Kitchen

Stainless steel cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1/2 cup baking soda• A few squirts of environmentally safe liquid soap or detergent	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Place the baking soda in a bowl and add enough liquid soap or detergent to make a frosting-like paste.2. Scoop some of the mixture onto a sponge and scrub the stainless steel.3. Rinse well.

Source: www.care2.com

Aluminum cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 to 3 halved lemons or 1 grapefruit cut 4 ways• Water	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Put the cut lemons or grapefruit and the water in the tarnished pan or put the tarnished utensil in a pan with water and fruit.2. Use enough water to make sure the stained sections are submerged.3. Simmer on low heat for an hour or so, until stains are gone. Works as an air freshener as well!

Source: "Clean and Green: The Complete Guide to Nontoxic and Environmentally Safe Housekeeping." By Annie Berthold-Bond

Copper cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 lime or lemon• Table salt (ordinary)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cut the lemon or lime in half.2. Sprinkle a little salt on whatever needs polishing and start rubbing immediately.3. Rub until tarnish comes off.4. Rinse.

Source: "Clean House, Clean Planet: Clean Your House for Pennies a Day The Safe Nontoxic Way." By Karen Logan

Silver cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Container large enough for silver pieces• 1 tbsp. baking soda• 1 tbsp. salt• 1 piece of aluminum foil• Water	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In the container add baking soda, a piece of aluminum foil (shiny side up) and salt.2. Boil 1 quart water and add it to the container.3. Immerse the silver in the solution.4. After soaking, rinse and dry. Repeat as necessary.

For larger silver items, double or triple the recipe.

Source: "Clean and Green: The Complete Guide to Nontoxic and Environmentally Safe Housekeeping." By Annie Berthold-Bond

Garbage disposal cleaner & air freshener

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Citrus peels (any kind will do)• Ice cubes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Drop three or more ice cubes and a couple of fresh citrus peels down your disposal and grind them. The ice cubes help to cool down the grease and grind it out. The citrus peels add a refreshing scent and have a natural acid cleaning power.

Source: "Clean House, Clean Planet: Clean Your House for Pennies a Day The Safe Nontoxic Way." By Karen Logan

Clogged pipe cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 cup baking soda• 4 cups inexpensive vinegar• Hot tap water	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prime the tap so hot water is ready to flow right away.2. Empty 1/2 cup of baking soda into the drain.3. Follow with 2 cups vinegar4. Pour another 1/2 cup baking soda in the drain and follow with two more cups vinegar. The mixture will foam impressively.5. Once foaming stops, flush with hot tap water (no need to be boiling hot) for about a minute, or until the drain clears. Use a plunger to help loosen grime in the pipes.6. Flush with hot water again. Repeat as necessary - usually about every three months.

Source: Bruno Bowles, [EnviroChallenger](#) coordinator

Oven cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baking soda• 1 clean spray bottle• Water• 1 sponge	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sprinkle 1/4-inch thick layer of baking soda over the bottom of the oven.2. Using a clean spray bottle, squirt the baking soda with water until the baking soda is thoroughly damp but not flooded.3. Wet the baking soda again two times over the next few hours and let the mix sit over night.4. In the morning, scoop the baking soda and grime out with a sponge.

Tested by City staff.

Source: www.care2.com

Laundry

Red wine stains

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 lemon• Cornstarch• Glycerin (found in craft stores, natural food stores and some pharmacies)• Eucalyptus essential oil	<p>New stain:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Rinse the stain in cool water right away.2. Rub a slice of lemon over the stain several times. <p>Old stain:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Treat the stain with glycerin and wait 30 minutes.2. Rinse and allow it to air dry. <p>If the stain persists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Make a mix of one heaping tablespoon of cornstarch, two drops of eucalyptus essential oil and one teaspoon of glycerin.2. Add just enough water to make a thick paste and spread it on the stain.3. Without rinsing, put the garment in the sun to dry. Repeat the paste application if necessary.

[Source:](#) "The Naturally Clean Home." Karyn Siegel-Maier

Starch spray

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 to 3 tbsp. cornstarch• 1 cup water• 1 spray bottle	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Combine cornstarch and water in the spray bottle.2. Shake well.3. Proceed as with commercial starches.

[Source:](#) "Clean and Green: The Complete Guide to Nontoxic and Environmentally Safe Housekeeping." By Annie Berthold-Bond

Non-bleach stain remover

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sunlight• Lemon juice	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Apply a small amount of lemon juice to the stain (works well with cotton whites like T-shirts, sheets, blouses and pants).2. Let it sit in the sun.3. Wash as you normally would.

[Source:](#) "Clean House, Clean Planet: Clean Your House for Pennies a Day The Safe Nontoxic Way." By Karen Logan

Outside

Barbecue and grill cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 tsp. of salt• 1 lemon• 3 cups warm water	<p>Exterior:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mix table salt in the warm water and use a wash rag to scrub the exterior of the barbecue.2. Wipe clean with unsalted water. Clean the barbecue over your grass or patio. <p>Grill:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cut lemon in half and rub the lemon over the grill.2. Let the grill sit for a few minutes, then use a coarse sponge or wire brush and warm salt water to scrub the grime off.3. Repeat if necessary.

If you've got big food particles stuck to your grill, you may want to do the scrubbing step first. It's best to wash your grill in a sink or bathtub depending on the size.

Weed killer

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 cup salt• 1 tsp. liquid dish detergent• 1 gallon vinegar	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Combine all ingredients in a bucket.2. Stir.3. Sprinkle over weeds.

Use this recipe only for weeds growing in sidewalk cracks and between bricks. If it's used in the garden, it will kill the plants you want to grow.

Source: Annie Berthold-Bond, Care2.com

Mold remover

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 teaspoons tea tree oil (found at natural food stores)• 2 cups water	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Combine ingredients in a spray bottle.2. Spot test the recipe on the underside of a cushion to make sure there's no discoloration.3. If there's no discoloration, spray the mixture wherever you see mold or mildew. Don't rinse.4. In a few days, the strong smell of the tea tree oil and the mold will begin to disappear.

Bring out the lawn furniture! And don't worry if mold and mildew have used the winter to make a new home on your cushions. They're easy to remove with just a few safe, natural ingredients.

Source: Annie Berthold-Bond, Care2.com

Boat cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baking soda• White vinegar• Water• Apple cider vinegar• Baby oil• Lemon juice• Salt	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. General cleaner: baking soda and vinegar2. Floor cleaner: 1 cup vinegar in 2 gallons of water3. Aluminum cleaner: 2 tbsp. cream of tartar in 1 quart hot water4. Chrome cleaner: apple cider vinegar to clean and baby oil to polish5. Mildew remover: paste of lemon juice and salt or white vinegar and salt

Source: *Citizens for a Healthy Bay*

Simple Soap Solution

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 tbsp. soap flakes (to create your own soap flakes, finely grate a bar of pure soap such as Ivory)• 2 liters warm water• Spray bottle	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In a clean spray bottle, dissolve soap flakes in water.2. Spray directly on infested areas of the plant every five to seven days. <p><i>Be careful, too much soap can burn plants.</i></p>

Adapted from *A Year on the Garden Path* by Carolyn Herriot (Earthfuture/Lantern, 2005).

Removing grease and oil stains from cement

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baking soda• Spray bottle filled with water	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sprinkle baking soda over the greas or oil stain, then spray generously with water to form a paste.2. Let the mixture sit for at least one hour, then rins with a hose.

Pets & Pests

Ant stay away (to prevent ants from getting into the house)

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 teaspoons peppermint oil• Water• 16 oz. spray bottle	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Fill the spray bottle half full of water.2. Add peppermint oil3. Spray solution where ants come in -- corners, baseboards, windowsills and behind appliances. Apply several times over several days to keep odor strong.

Source: *"Clean House, Clean Planet: Clean Your House for Pennies a Day The Safe Nontoxic Way."* By Karen Logan

Mosquito repellent

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rubbing alcohol or vodka• Essential oil such as citronella, eucalyptus, rosemary, lemon grass, peppermint or lavender	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Use 10 drops of alcohol for every one drop of essential oil.2. Reapply often (every 30 minutes to 2 hours).3. Store in a cool place for up to one week.

Cat deterrent

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 parts cayenne pepper• 3 parts dry mustard• 5 parts flour	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mix together and spread.

Source: www.care2.com

In the Car

Glass cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Club soda• 8 or 16 oz. spray bottle	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Fill the bottle with plain club soda, spray and wipe.

All glass cleaners work best with a lint-free cloth. This won't dry as fast as commercial cleaners but works just as well.

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Leather upholstery cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Half a sliced lemon	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Hold the rind of the half-sliced lemon and rub the inside of the fruit onto the stain. Or dab a cloth with lemon juice to clean the spot. A mild solution of dish washing soap and water also works.

Fabric upholstery cleaner

What you'll need:	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1/4 cup liquid soap (vegetable oil-based works the best, but any kind will do)• 3 tbsp. water	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Whip the soap and water.2. Pull the upholstery away from the foam and rub mixture into any spots.3. Rinse well by blotting it with a damp cloth.

Be sure to test this recipe on an inconspicuous part first, such as your trunk.