



GENERAL HOME

Air Fresheners & Deodorizers:

- Remove the source of the odor and open the windows to ventilate the area, otherwise you are just masking the problem.
- Cut a fresh **lemon** and squeeze the juice into a bowl and leave it out. (Using the cut lemon without squeezing is often just as effective.)
- Apply **pure vanilla extract** (or any essential oil) to a cotton ball and place into a saucer. Use in the car, house or fridge.
- Place **cloves** and **cinnamon** in a pot and boil in water. Allow them to simmer on the stove.
- Keep **vinegar** in a spray bottle and use as needed on cutting boards and toilet rims. The smell of vinegar will disappear within a few hours along with the odor.

Cat litter box:

- Cover the bottom of the litter box with **baking soda** before adding new litter.

Garbage odors:

- Remove the stinky bag of trash, sprinkle **borax** or **baking soda** into the base of the can and place a new bag over it. Consider **composting** organics, compost will not stink if done properly. Contact High Country Conservation Center for more information on how to get started.

Refrigerators, closets and other enclosed areas:

- Keep a box of opened **baking soda** out and exchange it for a new one about every 3 months.

All-Purpose Cleaners:

- Combine ½ teaspoon of **washing soda** or **borax**, a dab of **liquid soap** and 2 cups of **hot water** in a spray bottle and shake until the washing soda has dissolved. Apply and wipe off with a sponge/rag.
- Mix 2 Tablespoons of **baking soda** and 1 pint of **warm water** in a spray bottle, shake to dissolve the baking soda. Spray on the area and scrub clean with a sponge/rag. Adding a squeeze of **lemon** or splash of **vinegar** to the bottle will help to cut grease.
- Mix 2-3 drops of **dishwashing soap**, about 2 Tablespoons of **vinegar** or **lemon juice** (bottled lemon juice is fine), 1 teaspoon of **borax**, and 1 quart of **water** and wipe or spray onto the area to be cleaned. Wipe dry with a cloth

Carpet Cleaners:

Also see Spills & Stains in the Laundry section.

- Use very **hot water** by itself in a steam cleaner. For tough areas add 2 tablespoons (and no more) of **dish soap** for each gallon of water.

Carpet Deodorizers:

- Sprinkle the carpet liberally with **baking soda**. Wait 15 minutes and vacuum. For extra musty rugs, let the baking soda sit overnight. You can even put a few drops of your favorite essential oil into the box of baking soda and allow it to absorb the smell for a day, then sprinkle on carpets and follow the previous instructions.
- Mix one part **borax** to 2 parts **cornmeal** and sprinkle onto the carpet. Let it stand for one hour before vacuuming.

Crayon Marks:

- Rub the mark with **toothpaste** and a damp cloth. *Not for use on non-vinyl wallpaper.*

Disinfectants:

- Combine 1/2 cup **borax** and one gallon **hot water** and use immediately by wiping with a rag soaked in the solution or by spraying. Try adding a few sprigs of fresh thyme. Steep for 10 minutes, strain into the borax/water solution and allow to cool.
- Spray **white vinegar** and follow by a spray of **hydrogen peroxide** and wipe clean with a sponge. (Mixing the two prior to spraying will make it 10 times less effective, but the order they are sprayed in does not matter.)
- Mix 4 tablespoons of **vinegar**, 2 tablespoons of **borax** and 2 cups of **hot water**. This one is great for cutting boards (immerse the cutting board in the solution for 10 minutes and finish by washing with dish soap and water) and microwaves (wipe the inside of the microwave with the solution– it will clean and eliminate odors without leaving a residue).

FUN FACT: Studies have shown that the vinegar & hydrogen peroxide method above is actually more effective at disinfecting than bleach! Who knew? For more information check out the Science News article "How to Disinfect Your Salad" 9/28/96

Floors:

Floor Polishes:

- Mix one part **lemon juice** to 2 parts **olive oil** and apply a thin coat. Rub in well with a soft cloth.
- Mix 3 parts **olive oil** and one part **vinegar** and rub in well with a soft cloth.

Linoleum

- Spread a small amount of **skim milk** evenly over the surface. This will not create odor but it will not provide a high gloss finish either.

Wood

- Apply a thin coat of equal parts **mineral oil** and **vinegar** and rub in well.

Cleaners

- Mix 1 cup of **white vinegar** with 1 gallon of **hot water**. Effective for brick & stone tiles, linoleum and no-wax flooring.

- For greasy floors, use the above recipe and add 1/4 cup **washing soda** and 1 tbsp. **vegetable-oil-based soap** to the mixture.
- Mix 1 gallon of **hot water**, 3-5 drops of **dish soap**, and ¼ to ½ cup of **vinegar** or **lemon juice** in a bucket and add an **herbal tea bag**. Allow the tea bag to steep for 3-5 minutes, remove the bag and mop. The tea bag flavor can change with the season –it will scent the air and certain types, such as peppermint, will add antibacterial qualities. Note: Only use herb teas- black teas can stain.

Vinyl Floors

- Mix 1 gallon of **water**, ½ cup of **vinegar**, and ¼ cup of **borax** in a bucket and use to mop as usual.
- Remove scuff marks with **toothpaste**.

Furniture (not upholstered- See Upholstery section)

Polish

- Use a soft cloth to wipe furniture with a small amount of **mayonnaise**.
- Dip cloth in **cool tea** and rub into furniture.
- Mix two parts **olive oil** with one part **lemon juice**. Apply mixture to furniture with a soft cloth and wipe it dry.

Unvarnished wood

- Apply a small amount of **almond, walnut** or **olive oil** to a cloth and rub into the wood. It will absorb the oil. Wait one hour and rub off any excess.

Varnished wood

- Rub **mild vegetable oil soap** into the wood with a soft cloth.
- In a glass jar, mix **olive oil** and **vinegar** or **lemon juice** in a 2 to 1 ratio. Dab a soft rag into the solution and wipe wood surfaces. Cover the glass jar and store indefinitely.
- *See the wood floor polish recipe using mineral oil and vinegar.*

Scratches

- Rub the scratch with the meat of a **pecan** or other oily nut. If you are worried about doing more damage with the nut then try **peanut butter** which also works.
- Apply **vegetable** or **olive oil** to scratches with your thumb. Follow by polishing the surface with a clean soft cloth.

Watermarks

- Rub **white toothpaste** on the spot and allow the paste to dry. Polish with a soft cloth to finish.

Glass Cleaners

- Mix a ½ cup of **cornstarch** with 2 quarts of **warm water**. Apply to cool window with sponge then wipe with absorbent cloth or towel.
- Mix **warm water, vinegar**, and **lemon juice** together in a spray bottle, and use as needed.

- Mix ¼ cup of **vinegar** and one quart **warm water** and apply using a spray bottle or sponge. Wipe dry with a crumpled newspaper rather than paper towels for lint-free results. Try adding 1 Tablespoon of cornstarch for extra dirty windows.
- Combine ¼ - ½ teaspoon **dishwashing soap**, 3 Tablespoons of **vinegar**, and 2 cups of **water** in a spray bottle. As mentioned above- the dish soap only needs to be used the first time after using traditional glass cleaning products.

Note: It is recommended when switching from traditional glass cleaning products that dish soap and warm water be used before using one of the recipes listed here. This will remove the film many traditional products leave behind. After doing this once the film will be removed and the below recipes can be used on their own. OR try mixing 1-2 drops dish soap in with the recipe directly on the first use to avoid the two separate steps.

Metal Polishes & Cleaners

Brass

- Mix a ½ teaspoon of **salt**, a ½ cup of **vinegar**, and just enough **flour** to form a paste. Apply thickly. Let it sit for 15 minutes to a 1/2 hour. Rinse thoroughly with **water** to avoid corrosion.
- Polish using **Worcestershire sauce**.
- Pour **ketchup** onto the brass and distribute evenly, let it sit, then wipe it dry.

Chrome (See Bathroom Section)

Copper

- Mix equal parts **salt** and **vinegar** and rub onto copper surface with sponge until clean. Rinse in **hot, soapy water** and dry thoroughly.
- Polish with a small amount of **oil** on a clean dry cloth.
- Dip the cut end of a **fresh lemon** into **coarse salt** and rub onto copper pots. This will remove stains.

Gold

- Use a soft bristled toothbrush to apply, clean and polish gold with **white toothpaste**.

Pewter

- Clean with a paste made of **salt, vinegar** and **flour**.

Silver

- Boil silver 3 minutes in **water** containing a teaspoon of **baking soda**, another teaspoon of **salt** and **aluminum foil**.
- Make a paste of **baking soda** and **water**. Rub it gently onto the silver with a soft or damp cloth. Rinse and polish dry.
- Rub silver with **toothpaste**. Use a toothbrush to clean raised surfaces. Be gentle and use a soft hand as not to scratch the surface.
- To magnetize tarnish away, soak in **salted water** in an **aluminum container**, then wipe clean.

- Purchase an inexpensive silver polishing cloth. Available at many jewelry stores, these are effective without the use of any chemicals– just a little elbow grease!

Stainless Steel (See Kitchen Section)

Mold and Mildew Removers:

- Mix equal parts of **vinegar** and **borax** in **warm water** and use to wipe affected areas clean. This should be made fresh each time you use the recipe- it will not be effective if it sits for too long.

Mildew specific

- Scrub mildew spots with a solution of a half cup of **borax** mixed with one gallon of **water**. This is most effective when a nylon scouring pad is used. To prevent mold and mildew from re-growing, don't rinse off the borax.
- Make a **vinegar** and **salt** paste and scrub affected areas.

Mold specific

- Combine 2 teaspoons of **tea tree oil** and two cups of **water** in a spray bottle, shake and apply to problem areas. Do not rinse. Leave in spray bottle, as it has a long shelf life.
- Combine 20 drops of **citrus seed extract** with two cups of **water** in a spray bottle and apply to area. Do not rinse. This has a long shelf life so keep what you don't use.
- Pour straight **vinegar** into a spray bottle and apply to areas with mold. This is an effective remover as straight vinegar kills 82% of mold. Do not rinse. The smell will subside within a few hours.
- For major problems, apply **heat** to the area.

Surface Cleaners:

- Mix one quart of **hot water**, one teaspoon of **vegetable oil-based soap**, one teaspoon of **borax** and two tablespoons of **vinegar** in a spray bottle. Use and store the rest.
- Mix a ½ cup of **vinegar** and a quart of **warm water** and apply to the surface to be cleaned using a spray bottle.
- Dissolve **baking soda** in **hot water** for a general cleaner. Use in a spray bottle.
- Use weak acids, like **vinegar** and **lemon juice**, to cut grease.

Upholstery Cleaner

- Mix ¼ cup **liquid soap** and 3 tablespoons of **water** into a foam and rub into upholstery with a cotton cloth, then rinse with a clean sponge and water. Use as you would a commercial brand.