

# The Natural Way to Clean Everything in Your House

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A list of tips from [The Good Human](http://The Good Human) website

A reader emailed me about the best way to clean something in her house, and I pointed her to one of my posts about natural cleaning. But then I thought I maybe should create a single post with all the natural cleaning information I had collected and written about, so you can bookmark this one post and refer to it when you need it. Please also refer to this post for many more [natural cleaning recipes](#). Of course, this is for for homemade products, but for those less adventurous there are plenty of safe, natural cleaners on the market. If you have something to add, please be sure to leave a comment or email me and let me know!

## Cleaning Metal Surfaces:

**Silver** – Put some water in a pan with a few teaspoons of washing soda, bring to a simmer. Throw in a little piece of aluminum foil, and then dip your silver right into the mix. Pull the item out, dry it off, and shine it clean with a rag.

**Pewter** – Wash your pewter items in warm soapy water (use biodegradable soap!), rinse, and polish with a clean cotton cloth. Instant clean!

**Chrome** – You can clean anything that is chrome just by combining 1 tablespoon of ammonia with 1 pint of water. Just rub the concoction on the chrome and watch the dirt come right off.

**Iron** – If you have iron cooking pans or other items that are looking a little rusty, you can clean them with a damp cloth and some steel wool. Wipe down the item with the cloth, scrub lightly with the steel wool, rinse and then dry. Be sure to rub in a little vegetable oil once it is dry to inhibit any further rusting.

**Brass & Copper** – By combining a few tablespoons of lemon juice and 1 tablespoon of baking soda, you have a great brass and copper cleaning agent. Just rub in on and then polish it off...so shiny! If your items are heavily soiled, you can soak them in hot vinegar and some table salt. The shine will start showing up on its own, and once you see it, take the item out and rinse it. You can also rub lemon on brass and copper to get into any grooves that need cleaning...just be sure to wipe it off once it is clean.

### **Remove Candle Wax From The Carpet:**

First lay the newspaper down on top of the wax and set an iron to low. Once it has warmed up, start running the iron over the newspaper right on top of the wax. Slowly the wax will start melting and get absorbed into the newspaper, lifting up off the carpet. I had to do this once in my old apartment and it worked like a charm. There was a little residue and color left over, but it was way better than the big hard chunks of wax that were on the floor.

### **To Clean Wood Floors:**

Before you work on making the floor sparkle, they should be cleaned with **vinegar and water**. A small amount of vinegar in a bucket of warm water will do wonders for your wood floor. Make sure your floor is sealed and you wring out excess water before mopping the floors, as too much water could damage your wood. That all being said, once they are clean, you can now work on making them shine:

– If you have **natural unsealed wood floors** (which you probably don't), you can use linseed oil with a rag, allow it to soak in for a little while, and then mop it up with a little more oil.

– For **sealed floors**, you can use 1 part white vinegar to 1 part vegetable oil to give it a great shine. Just combine the two, grab a rag, and rub it in like you are polishing a car. The shine will blow you away.

### **To Clean Appliances:**

**Microwaves** – Mix 1/2 of water with a few teaspoons of baking soda in a microwave safe bowl. Put the bowl in the microwave and run it for 2 minutes. Take out the bowl and wipe it clean with just a rag; every last spot will come out!

**Ovens** – You can rub the inside of your oven with wet steel wool to remove the tough stuff, and then sprinkle baking soda throughout the oven. Let it sit for a few minutes, then just wipe it all clean with a wet rag...all done and no caustic chemicals!

**Coffee Makers** – When the coffee maker is empty, pour in a mixture of 1 cup white vinegar and some hot water to fill up the reservoir to the top. Run the coffee maker like you were making coffee, just without any beans in it. Once the cycle has finished, run it twice more with just plain water, which will rinse out the vinegar and any build up left inside. The coffee will taste better the next time you make a cuppa Joe!

**Refrigerators** – Baking soda all the way...why would you want to spray chemicals in the giant box that holds your food! Make a nice paste from baking soda and water (equal parts of both) and scrub away. Wipe down with a clean cloth and all will be clean!

### **Removing Stains:**

- On white items, **apply white vinegar or lemon juice to the stained area**. Allow to soak in to the fabric then wash as normal. The stain should come right out as if it had never been there!
- If you happen to spill wine onto your clothes, **grab the salt** before doing anything else! Dump some salt on the stained area right away, which absorb a lot of the moisture before it sets. Wash as normal as soon as you can.
- For red wine stains, chocolate or other dark stains that have been there a while, you can try to soak the item in a **bowl of glycerine**, available from your local grocery or natural store. Soak the clothes for a half an hour and then wash.
- Party guest spills red wine on your nice carpet? Get up as much of it as you can with a wash or dish cloth, then quickly pour **white vinegar** directly on the spot. Let it soak for a few minutes, then rinse it out with a wet rag. And then berate your party guest!
- If your kids come in **covered with grass stains**, you can usually get them out by soaking their clothes in either glycerine or washing soda prior to washing.

### **To Remove Mold In The Bathroom:**

You can use **Borax and white vinegar** to make a spray that you can aim directly at the mold in the tub or shower. Once you spray it, leave it to sit for 30-60 minutes and then go back in and wipe it off. Presto, the mold will start coming off and you did not have to inhale toxic chemicals to do so. Just mix about 2 ounces of Borax and a cup of white vinegar and you are ready to go. As a backup and a maintenance tip, you can also periodically spray the moldy “areas” with straight vinegar and just let it sit there and soak in. The vinegar will kill the mold that might be growing and it will halt the growth of new mold.

### **Unclogging Your Showerhead:**

Just remove the [shower head](#), find a bowl or cup big enough for it to sit in face down, and fill it with about an inch of vinegar. After letting it sit for an hour or more, remove it from the bowl and run water through it at the sink for a few minutes. Put it back in the shower, and presto, your water pressure is restored.

### **Removing Rust:**

Here is what you need – **Salt and lime juice**. Yep, that’s it. Already have them in your house? Great, your rust remover is now free. Just sprinkle some salt on the rusty spot and put some of the juice right on top of the salt...but not so much that the salt floats away. You want the mixture to sit right on the rust. Leave it to sit for a few hours and come back with a scrubber and go to work. It won’t take much effort to remove the rust, I promise.

### **Cleaning the Toilet:**

**Lemon Juice** – I use real lemons by squeezing out the juice. When I am done, I put pieces of the peel down the disposal to clean it out.

OR

**Distilled white vinegar** – I know you have this already!

And

**Borax** – Ok, you might not have this one. But it is widely available for a few bucks and its cleaning powers go back years.

You will need to combine the ingredients to make a nice paste in a bowl. Put about 1 cup of Borax and about 1/4-1/2 a cup of either lemon juice or vinegar and it will mix together nicely. All you need to do is spread the paste you just made into the toilet bowl and let it sit a while. Then come back and scrub it with a scrubbing sponge (we use the washable kind, not the disposable kind) and flush the toilet.

### **Polish Wood:**

The first ingredient is **water**, of course. Get yourself a spray bottle and put 3 cups of water in there. Once the water is in your sprayer, you will be adding two additional items:

- 4 tablespoons of **olive oil**
- 2 tablespoons of distilled **white vinegar**

Add them to the spray bottle and shake the bottle up a little to make everything mix together. That's it, that is all the wood polish you will ever need. Be sure to test the spray somewhere on the furniture just to make sure you have the mixture right and you will not damage the wood.

### **Natural Disinfecting:**

- You can add 1 teaspoon of tea tree oil to a gallon of water to wash windows, floors and toilets to scrub away the germs.
- To chase away bugs, put a drop of tea tree oil near where they are coming in and you can bet they won't be coming in that way anymore.
- Lavender oil or tea tree oil can be applied directly to cuts and scrapes where it will cool the pain and help fight infection.
- Mixing a few drops of tea tree oil with some water in a spray bottle can clean mold in the bathroom, disinfect the floor after the dog has an accident, or can clean up after your child has been sick. (or you, after a night like the ones in college)

### **Clean The Air:**

For starters, the easiest way we have found to make things smell better is **to use essential oils**. In an empty spray bottle I mix water and a bunch of drops from a bottle of essential oils. Done! You can adjust the amount of drops you put in the bottle and of course you can always change the scent any time you want. Right now I have some cranberry scented essential oil in our water bottle...the place smells amazing and it can be sprayed on anything; the couch, the curtains, etc.

– Another thing you can do is to simmer water on the stove in a pot with cinnamon sticks or essential oils in it. However, since this one uses natural gas or electricity, it is not the best choice. Plus, you have to remember to keep your eye on it so it doesn't burn off and start catching the pot on fire!

– You could also put little boxes of baking soda around the house to absorb any bad odors. We do this for the litterbox. Even though our cat is not exactly a stinker, the baking soda absorbs any strong smells that he might leave behind. This also works great in the refrigerator to absorb the leftover smell from last night's chili.

– And lastly, you could always get some flowers from your local farmer's market and put them in vases around your house. The smell of fresh flowers is always a pleasant one and it leaves behind **no toxic residue** like plug-ins and sprays.

### **Unclog Your Shower Drain:**

*Step 1* – Put the DRY baking soda down the drain. I use about 3/4 of a cup.

*Step 2* – Pour 1/2 cup of vinegar down the drain after the baking soda. Be sure to cover the drain immediately afterwards with a rag or plug, filling the hole completely so nothing can escape. This is because the interaction of the two will cause a “mini volcano” that will want to come up and out of the drain. You want to keep it down there.

*Step 3* – Leave this concoction in the drain for about 30 minutes. While you are waiting, boil a tea kettle full of water.

*Step 4* – After 30 minutes, remove the plug and slowly pour the HOT water down the drain.

All done! Your drain should flow smoothly now. If not, just do it again. We normally have to do our tub drain often because of the wife's long hair, but it cleans it out every time.

And there you have it! An easily accessible natural cleaning list. If you have any additional tips or ideas, please let everyone know in the comments!

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