

CLEAN & GREEN

CHEAP AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY
HINTS AND TIPS FOR AROUND YOUR HOME



Contents

Cheap ways to clean your home	3
Baking soda.....	4
White vinegar.....	6
Lemon juice.....	7
Salt	7
Other useful tips.....	7
Controlling pests	8
Rats and mice	8
Cockroaches.....	8
Ants	9
Flies.....	9
Recycling tips.....	10
Recycling bin usage.....	10



CHEAP WAYS TO CLEAN YOUR HOME

You don't always have to buy expensive cleaning products for general household cleaning. You may already have some very good cleaning products in your kitchen cupboards. If you've got salt, baking soda, vinegar and lemons then this booklet will give you some ideas on how to use them for basic cleaning tasks.

These cleaning tips are not new – they've been used successfully for many generations but sometimes we need reminding of what we have at our fingertips. Not only are these methods easy on the pocket, but they also have less impact on the environment. You can feel good about using them in the knowledge that they're safe for you and your family, and you're saving on the grocery bill.

Make your own green cleaning kit using four readily available ingredients: baking soda, salt, white vinegar, lemon juice.

These can be as effective as commercial products and are definitely much safer and less expensive. This cleaning kit can handle all tasks for less than \$10 and reduce your family's exposure to chemicals.



BAKING SODA

Baking soda can help remove strong, smelly odours from household laundry even when, after repeated washing, they still linger.

Smoky smells

Soak smoky clothes overnight in a 1/2 cup of baking soda to 1 bucket of water before washing in the washing machine.

Sweat odours

Use the same solution as above for soaking washable hats, gloves, scarves and headbands. For stubborn smells, add 1 cup of baking soda to the washing machine load.

Mechanical smells

If you have clothing with petrol, oil, or other mechanical smells, place them in a bag with a 1/2 cup of baking soda. Leave the bag sealed for a day or two before washing.

Spills and thrills

Dry baking soda rubbed directly onto clothing can remove the smell of vomit or baby spitup, spills and stains. Leave for 1-2 hours, then wash.

Treating stains

Rub a paste of 6 tablespoons of baking soda with a 1/2 cup of warm water onto stained clothing before washing. Be sure to check for colour fastness first.

Blood stains

Baking soda rubbed onto a dampened blood stain can help lift the stain from the fabric.

Sweat stains

A baking soda paste can also be useful in removing sweat stains and odours on clothing. Rub the paste onto clothing before washing. With tough stains you may need to let the paste sit for 1-2 hours.



Fruit and wine stains

Fruit and wine stains need to be treated immediately, but if you're in a hurry, pour a little baking soda on the stain and leave for a few hours. Later, run hot water through the back of the stain.

Baking soda in the refrigerator

Store an open box of baking soda in your refrigerator and freezer to help eliminate odours. Replace at least every 3 months; the box may need replacing sooner if it begins to absorb too many odours. Try dating the box or plastic container to help you remember when to replace it. Use the same method between uses in the microwave to cut down on odours.

Baking soda in the refrigerator vegetable crisper bins

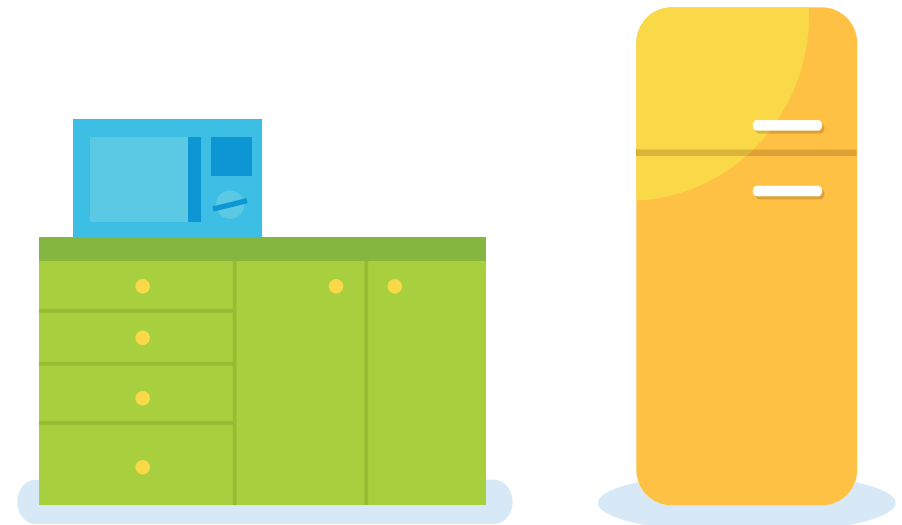
Try sprinkling soda in the bottom of your crisper bin to eliminate odours. Cover with a folded paper towel. Replace every 3 months.

Baking soda and refrigerator stains

Remove food and rust residue from your refrigerator with a cleaning paste made from 3 parts baking soda to 1 part of water.

Baked on food in the microwave

Mix a few tablespoons of baking soda with water in a microwave safe cup. Boil in the microwave for a few minutes. The insides of the microwave will be damp and easy to clean with a paper towel or dishcloth. This has the added benefit of removing odours that may be clinging to your microwave. This is also a good general cleaning solution for the inside surfaces of your microwave.



WHITE VINEGAR

White vinegar naturally cleans like an all-purpose cleaner. Mix a solution of equal quantities of water and vinegar in a new, store-bought spray bottle and you have a solution that will clean most areas of your home. It is not only a great natural cleaning product it can also be used as a disinfectant and deodoriser. Always test on a small area to check for colour-fastness first.

It is safe to use on most surfaces and has the added bonus of being incredibly cheap. However, take special care around tiled surfaces as improperly diluted white vinegar can eat away at the grout; it can also bleach fabrics and paintwork.

Mix 1 cup of vinegar with 5 cups of water, and you've got a great window cleaner. Don't worry about your home smelling like white vinegar because the smell disappears when it dries.

Bathroom uses:

- Clean the bathtub, toilet, sink and other surfaces.
- Use pure white vinegar in the toilet bowl to get rid of rings. Flush the toilet to allow the water level to go down, pour the undiluted white vinegar around the inside of the rim, and scrub down the bowl.
- Clear drains and pipes: Boil 2 cups of vinegar and pour it down the drain a small amount at a time. Allow the vinegar to remain in the drain for about 5-10 minutes before pouring a pot of very hot water down the drain.
- White vinegar will also eat away the soap scum and hard water stains on your fixtures and tiles. (Test on a small area of your tiles first.)

Floor uses:

- Mop the bathroom and kitchen floors with a 1/2 cup of vinegar to 1 bucket of water.

Laundry uses:

- Use white vinegar as a natural fabric softener. This can be especially helpful for families who have sensitive skin. Add a 1/2 cup of white vinegar to the rinse cycle in place of commercial softener. White vinegar has the added benefit of breaking down laundry detergent more effectively – a plus when you have a family member whose skin detects every trace of detergent. For removing beer stains or smells from fabrics, soak in a solution of 3 parts water/ 1 part white vinegar.



LEMON JUICE

Lemon juice is another natural substance that can be used for cleaning around your home.

- It can be used to dissolve soap scum and hard water deposits.
- It can be mixed with vinegar and/or baking soda to make cleaning pastes.
- Cut a lemon in half and sprinkle baking soda on the cut section. Use the lemon to scrub dishes, surfaces and stains.
- Mix 1 cup of olive oil with a 1/2 cup of lemon juice and you have furniture polish for your hardwood furniture.

Rust

For removing rust stains from fabric, dab a paste of lemon juice and salt on the stain and leave for an hour. Rinse and repeat if necessary.

Lemon is a great substance to clean and shine brass and copper. Cut one in half, sprinkle salt on it and rub over the surface.

SALT

Blood stains

Stains can be removed by soaking the fabric for several hours in a solution of 1 teaspoon of salt and 600 mls of cold water, then rinse and apply a paste of laundry detergent containing enzymes and water. Don't treat the stain with hot water as this will set it.

Red wine

Treat red wine stains on clothing as soon as possible. Flush with lots of cold water, then pour salt on the stain and let it stand for an hour. Scrape off the salt and rinse thoroughly.

Salt can also soak up carpet spills. Pour it over the stain – wait until it's dry, then vacuum and clean as usual.

OTHER USEFUL TIPS

Candle wax or crayon

Scrape off as much as you can, then allow the stain to harden (applying ice cubes or placing the garment in the freezer will speed up the process). Place stain between layers of white paper towels and press with a warm iron, changing the paper as it becomes soiled.

Fruit juice

Rinse immediately with cold water. If the stain persists, and the fabric will stand it, spread the item over a bowl and pour boiling water over the stain. Otherwise, sponge or soak the stain in warm water with a squirt of dishwashing liquid.



CONTROLLING PESTS

Rats and Mice

Rats are creatures of habit. They follow well-defined paths or tracks between feeding, drinking and living areas. Inside, they tend to move close to walls rather than along an open floor. They like to feed under cover, safe from predators.

Mice usually cover very limited areas and, unlike rats, don't need to drink. They are more difficult to control than rats, as their feeding patterns are more erratic.

Rodents are nocturnal and so are rarely seen, but there will be evidence of their presence – droppings, footprints, structural damage to buildings, damage to stored grain or other foods, tooth marks, burrows and holes.

Thoroughly inspect all areas of the property for signs of pest activity.

Look for and rodent-proof any places where rats or mice are getting in. Look for openings around service pipes, gaps near wall skirtings, broken underfloor ventilation grates, missing drainage grates, gaps under doors and trees against houses which can give access to roof spaces.

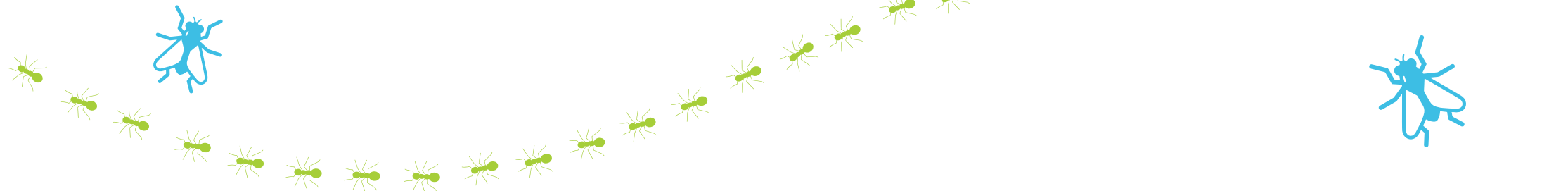
- Keep your property clean and tidy so rats and mice have nowhere to nest and no food source.
- Block up any holes that rats and mice could use with steel wool, rolled up chicken netting, light sheet iron or tin.
- Buy mousetraps from the supermarket or hardware store and bait them with cheese or peanut butter.
- Always wear rubber gloves when getting rid of dead rats or mice.



Cockroaches

- Put bay leaves or garlic in cupboards to keep cockroaches away.
- Wash the floor and walls behind fridges and stoves regularly.
- Vacuum behind pictures and curtains every week and empty the vacuum bag into an outside rubbish bin.

Do not squash cockroaches. If squashed, the eggs will spread and make the problem worse.



Ants

- Sprinkle whole or ground cloves in cupboards to keep ants away.
- Sprinkle talcum powder, cayenne pepper, cinnamon or cream of tartar at the point where the ants come inside.
- Spray equal quantities white vinegar and water along doorways, windowsills, countertops – anywhere the ants are likely to appear. If you find an ant trail, clean it with vinegar.
- Ants don't like eucalyptus oil so a spray of this might deter them.
- If you find an ants nest, pour boiling water into it. Check the water won't damage anything apart from the nest.



Flies

- Take a small glass and half fill it with apple cider vinegar, add 2 drops of dishwashing liquid and mix well. Flies are attracted to the smell and drown in the liquid.
- The same method can be used for getting rid of fruit flies. Using a screw top jar, punch holes in the lid, half fill with apple cider vinegar mixture, screw on the lid and you have a very effective trap.



RECYCLING TIPS

There are lots of innovative things you can do to help reduce your rubbish – check out some of the tips below to get started.

Making use of your mountain of plastic bags:

- Use them as bin liners
- Use them for carrying children's sports gear to school
- Use them for carrying swimming togs and towels
- Use them like bubble wrap when packing
- Use them in the garden to hold your grass cuttings and hedge trimmings before transfer to a compost bin
- Use them when packing for a holiday to keep dirty/wet clothes and shoes away from dry clothing
- Return plastic bags to supermarkets. Some supermarkets recycle them
- Reuse washed resealable bags for sandwiches and snacks rather than using plastic wrap.

RECYCLING BIN USAGE

Some local councils provide recycling bins and organise weekly collections. Others provide public recycling bins or recycling stations.

What can be recycled?

The green symbol on the right is the internationally recognised recycling symbol. Any item having this symbol or similar can be recycled.



Reuse supermarket shopping bags for your recycling. Putting recycling in plastic bags stops your recycling from blowing away on windy days, and makes it safer for staff to collect and sort your recycling.

Please rinse clean all tins and other types of containers that you put in your recycling bins to help minimise smells, insect infestation and to prevent health issues.

Paper and cardboard

Put all clean paper and cardboard, such as newspaper, envelopes, egg cartons, pizza boxes (with food scraps removed), magazines, and junk mail in the base of your recycling bin. Put loose paper into a supermarket bag and tie ends to avoid it being blown about. Put glass, plastic and tins/cans in another bag:

Glass

All brown, blue, green, frosted and clear glass bottles and jars – clean with tops off.

Plastic

All household plastic bottles and jars – including water, fizzy drink, juice and plastic milk bottles. Triangle symbols on the bottles indicate whether they are suitable for recycling.

Aluminium and tin/steel cans

Including baked beans, fruit, beer, soft drink and pet food cans. Clean and rinse.

Don't recycle:

- plastic-coated cardboard containers (Tetra Pak) like soy milk and UHT containers as they also contain a foil lining
- polystyrene
- glass tableware, containers, mirrors, pyrex, light bulbs, crystal, ceramics
- hazardous waste – broken glass, sharp objects, batteries, paint, oil. Contact your local council for advice.
- plastic shopping bags and bread bags – but you can use these to bundle up material for recycling
- plastic wrap
- grade 3-7 plastic, including ice cream, margarine and yoghurt containers
- aluminium foil
- disposable nappies.





Housing New Zealand Corporation

www.hnzc.co.nz

More information on removal of household stains can be found on the Consumer website, www.consumer.org.nz

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