

DIY Spring-Cleaning Products

Save money and make your home healthier with natural cleaning products

Commercial cleaning products do take the effort out of cleaning, but the trade off is that they introduce astringent chemical compounds into your home. Commercial cleaning products contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that reduce the quality of your indoor air. Luckily, your pantry contains everything you need to create your own, natural cleaning products that are ideal for your spring cleaning endeavors and keep your family and pets safe.

What are VOCs?

From [Environment and Climate Change Canada](#): “VOCs are primary precursors to the formation of ground level ozone and particulate matter which are the main ingredients of smog. Air pollution has been shown to have a significant adverse impact on human health, including premature deaths, hospital admissions and emergency room visits. Studies indicate that air pollution is associated with an increased risk of lung cancer and heart disease.”

Family members [also risk](#) skin and eye irritations, headaches and vomiting, liver and kidney damage as well as respiratory ailments.

Why you should Skip the Antibacterial Soaps

According to the [FDA](#), there is no evidence that antibacterial soaps offer more effective protection against bacteria than regular soap. These products do, however, pose a health risk because of the chemicals they contain the most insidious of which is Triclosan. [Triclosan](#) is an endocrine disruptor, increases the resistance of bacteria to antibiotics and is toxic to fish and other wildlife.

DIY Cleaning Product Recipes

While you may need to employ a modicum of elbow grease to achieve the best results, these cleaners are cheap, natural and easy to make.

- Bathroom and Kitchen Surfaces: Dust with baking soda and wipe down with a sponge to remove dirt and neutralize odors. Add a couple drops of lemon juice or white vinegar if you wish to disinfect your surfaces. Add a couple drops of essential oil if you want a fresh smell—lemon, orange, lavender and cedar are perfect for a surface cleaner.
- Oven Cleaner: Make a paste with vinegar and baking soda. Coat the inside of the oven with the paste and leave for an hour. Wipe with a clean, damp cloth.
- Blocked Drains: Pour a 1/4 cup of baking soda, followed by hot water, down the drain to clear. As a rule,

repeat this once a month to prevent drains from clogging in the first place.

- Window Cleaner: Fill a spray bottle with a 50/50 mix of white vinegar and water. Spray onto windows and mirrors and wipe with a paper towel for a smudge-free clean. This solution also works to remove water marks and mineral buildup on taps and plumbing fixtures.
- Flooring: Use a 60/40 mixture of vinegar and water in a spray bottle. Spray on tile, linoleum, wood and parquet floors and mop as usual. Add a couple drops of essential oil if you want a fragrance. Peppermint, cedar and jasmine are all good choices.
- Carpets: Spills can be easily remedied by sprinkling with salt to soak up and disinfect. Vacuum and wipe with club soda. Remove odors from carpets by sprinkling with baking soda. Leave for an hour and vacuum for a fresh indoor atmosphere.
- Air Freshener: A cup of water, 20 drops of lavender essential oil and two tablespoons of vodka make for [a great natural air freshener](#). The alcohol kills germs and neutralizes odors without adding chemicals to your indoor air. Lavender has antibacterial properties and adds a fresh fragrance.

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