

Homemade and Natural Cleaning Products

By Sarah Aguirre

Lemon juice can be used to dissolve soap scum and hard water deposits. Kris Timken/Digital Vision/Getty Images



One of my earliest memories is of my mother cleaning with what looked to me like cooking ingredients. She would be listening to the radio as she poured baking soda, [lemon](#), and vinegar combinations on the surfaces of our home. Here are a few basic household ingredients and items you can use to clean your home.

Vinegar Uses:

Vinegar actually cleans much like an all-purpose cleaner. All you need is to mix a solution of equal parts of water and vinegar in a spray bottle and you have a solution that will clean most areas of your home.

Vinegar is a great natural cleaning product as well as a disinfectant and deodorizer. It's always best to test any cleaner on a hidden area first to make sure no color change or damage occurs. Be aware that improperly diluted vinegar is acidic and can eat away at tile grout. Vinegar isn't a good idea to use on marble surfaces, either. And, don't worry about your home smelling like vinegar. The smell disappears when it dries. Some common uses for vinegar in the rooms of your house are...

Bathroom: Clean the bathtub, toilet, sink, and counter-tops. Use pure vinegar in the toilet bowl to get rid of unsightly rings. Flush the toilet to allow the water level to go down before pouring the undiluted vinegar around the inside of the rim. Scrub down the bowl. You can also mop the floor in the bathroom with a vinegar/water solution. Vinegar will also eat away the soap scum and hard water stains on your fixtures and tile leaving them shiny and beautiful.

Kitchen: Clean the top of the stove with equal parts vinegar and water.

Most appliances can be cleaned with this same all purpose mix of vinegar and water. Counter-top surfaces can be cleaned and disinfected with the same spray. Use vinegar to clean floors and be amazed at the fresh shiny results.

Laundry Room: You can use vinegar as a natural fabric softener. This can be especially helpful for families with sensitive skin issues. Add ½ cup of vinegar to the rinse cycle in place of store bought fabric softener. Vinegar has the added benefit of breaking down laundry detergent more effectively. I like to use vinegar to clean my washing machine as well.

Lemon Juice Uses

Lemon juice is another natural substance that can be used to clean your home. Lemon juice can be used to dissolve soap scum and hard water deposits. Lemon is a great substance to clean and shine brass and copper. Try mixing lemon juice with vinegar or baking soda to make cleaning pastes. Cut a lemon in half and sprinkle baking soda on the cut section of the lemon. Use the lemon to scrub dishes, surfaces, and stains. Be aware that lemon juice can act as a natural bleach. It's a good idea to test it out on a hidden area first. Mix 1 cup olive oil with ½ cup lemon juice and you have a [furniture polish](#) for hardwood furniture. One of my favorite uses for the fruit is to put a whole lemon peel through the garbage disposal. It freshens the [drain](#) and the kitchen. Orange peels can be used with the same results. Lemon juice can also be used to treat stains because of its natural bleaching qualities.

Baking Soda Uses

Baking soda can be used to scrub surfaces in much the same way as commercial non-abrasive cleansers. [Baking soda](#) is great as a deodorizer. Place a box in the refrigerator and freezer to absorb odors. Put it anywhere you need deodorizing action. I've used it in trash cans, laundry, and even my sons super smelly sneakers. Baking soda makes a great addition in the laundry room as well. Baking soda is actually one of the most versatile cleaners on the planet.

Other Natural Cleaners

There are quite a few other options for [natural cleaners](#). You might be surprised to learn that things like ketchup, rice, coffee grounds, and other kitchen ingredients can actually do a fantastic job at cleaning house.

You can also always buy commercially available natural cleaners, but be aware of what you need to look for in a [green cleaning product](#) before you buy. Be sure to learn about [how to read labels](#) on the products you are shopping for. Many of these commercial products use natural ingredients that you may have in your home, but not all green cleaners are created equal.