



Back-to-Basics: Cleaning Products



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Lemons

The acid in lemon juice removes dirt and rust stains. It's especially effective when mixed with salt, which makes an excellent scouring paste.

Dip the cut side of a lemon half in baking soda to tackle countertops; wipe with a wet sponge and dry. Do not use on delicate stone, like marble or stainless steel (it may discolor).

To increase the grease-cutting power of your dishwashing detergent, add a teaspoon of lemon juice

Faucets: Combat lime scale on faucets by rubbing lemon juice onto the tops and let it sit overnight. Wipe with a damp cloth.

Garbage Disposal: Cut a lemon in half then run both pieces through the garbage disposal. The lemon cleans it and makes it smell great.

Grout: Add lemon juice to 1-2 teaspoons cream of tartar to make a paste. Apply with an old toothbrush. Rinse.

Hands: raw fish

Laundry: to brighten whites, add 1/2 cup lemon juice to the rinse cycle for a normal-size load.

Plastic food-storage containers: to bleach stains from acidic foods, rub lemon juice.

Borax

When added to a wash, borax makes detergents even more effective. It's also quite alkaline so it kills mold and fungus and softens water.

Baseboards, countertops, and walls: Dissolve 1/2 cup borax in 1 gallon hot water and out the solution into a spray bottle. Spritz generously, wipe down with a damp cloth and let air-dry.

Dishwasher: If the machine is smelling like last night's chicken cacciatore, sprinkle borax in the bottom, let it sit overnight, then wipe down with a damp sponge. No need to rinse; just run the next load.

Toilet: Pour borax in the bowl, and let it sit overnight. Swish the bowl a few times with a toilet brush and flush the next day. Gets rid of rust stains.

Vinegar

Inhibits the growth of mold, mildew, and some bacteria.
Cuts detergent residue, makes a great fabric softener substitute (sensitive skin).

Dishwasher: disinfect the interior of the machine, pour 1/2 cup vinegar into the reservoir and run an empty cycle.

Drains: cleans drains and the pipes. After 30 minutes flush with cold water.

Floors: Add 1/4 cup vinegar to a bucket of warm water to clean almost any floor except marble (can scratch) or wood (it can strip it).

Glassware: Add 1 cup vinegar to the rinse water.

Moldy walls: spray vinegar on the affected areas. After about 15 minutes, rinse and let dry thoroughly.

Shower heads: Pour vinegar into a plastic bag and knot. Soak overnight. Rinse with water in the morning.

Remove hard water spots. Glasses: 2:1 water-vinegar. 3-4 glasses simmer 15-20 minutes. Remove to sudsy water, polish dry.

Baking & Washing Soda

Both absorb odors, washing soda is slightly stronger and can't be ingested. Wear rubber gloves.

Garage Floors (concrete surfaces): Pour generously on grease and oil spots and sprinkle with water until a past forms. Let stand overnight. Scrub damp brush, hose down and wipe clean.

Stove burners: In a dishpan, soak them 1 in gallon warm water and 1/2 cup washing soda for 30 minutes. Rinse and dry.

Upholstered furniture: To remove odors, sprinkle baking soda on the fabric then vacuum.

Scuffed walls: Erase crayon marks by applying a baking soda paste (equal parts) to white painted walls (may dull colored walls) let dry before brushing it off with a clean cloth.

Table Salt

Granular texture makes it great for scouring.

Glasses: stubborn stains, won't scratch, scrub.

Greasy pots and pans: sprinkle salt to absorb excess grease. Dump out the salt before washing as usual. Not recommended for nonstick cookware.

Spills in oven: pour salt on the spill to soak it up. When the oven is cool, wipe with a damp sponge.

Hydrogen Peroxide

Disinfect a keyboard. Dip a cotton swab in it to get into those nooks and crannies.

Cornstarch

Clean grease spills on carpets. Pour onto spots and let sit for 15-30 minutes before vacuuming.

Rubbing Alcohol

Erase permanent-marker stains from finished wood floors or solid-surface countertops. Pour onto a cotton ball and apply. Clean faucets.

Cream of Tartar

Tartaric acid, mild acidic powder

Burned on Food:

Fill the burned pot or pan with enough water to cover the burned area with at least a half an inch of water. Pour about 1 to 2 TBS cream of tarter over the water. Place pan on stove and heat to a low simmer. Let simmer for 5 or 6 minutes. Cool. Scrub with "Tuffly" scrubber. Voila! (Also works well on burner dripper pans on the stove—make a paste of equal parts cream of tarter and vinegar, rub on, let sit 10-15 minutes, scrub off burned on build up.

Rust in Laundry:

Make a paste of cream of tartar to clean rust from washable fabrics. To make the paste, mix a small amount of water with some cream of tartar until the consistency is appropriate. Apply this to rust stains and gently rub it into the stain. Let the mixture set for about 10 minutes and wash as usual.

Stains in Your Tub:

Let this simple solution of cream of tartar and hydrogen peroxide do the hard work of removing a bathtub stain for you. Fill a small, shallow cup or dish with cream of tartar and add hydrogen peroxide drop by drop until you have a thick paste. Apply to the stain and let it dry. When you remove the dried paste, you'll find that the stain is gone too.

Ring Around the Collar:

Wet the collar area and rub in some cream of tartar. Launder as usual and the collar will be clean.