



Healthy cleaning guide

Inside: find recipes tips and resources.



Metro



Safe cleaning recipes for a healthy home

We all want our homes to be free from dirt, grease and bacteria. Cleaning well doesn't have to mean using harsh chemicals found in many store-bought products. In fact, homemade natural cleaners are safe to use around kids and pets while being just as effective at getting rid of dirt and grime. These cleaners are better for you and your family, better for the air in your home and better for the environment.

These natural cleaner recipes are safe and easy to make – and more affordable than many store-bought products. All you need to start are some basic ingredients like baking soda and vinegar. So, grab your sponges and spray bottles and try out these recipes.



The ingredients are safe

White distilled vinegar is a good all-purpose cleaning agent that removes dirt, grease, soap scum and helps disinfect.

Baking soda absorbs odors, dissolves grease and is a mild abrasive, which means it rubs away dirt without scratching your countertops.

Liquid soap, such as castile soap, or other vegetable oil-based soaps, helps to remove dirt and grime and get rid of bacteria.

Hydrogen peroxide is a proven disinfectant; use it to replace bleach.

Essential oils can be diluted and added to your homemade cleaners for a nice scent. Be careful, do not apply directly to skin.



All-purpose spray cleaner

Great for countertops and other surfaces.

- ½ cup white distilled vinegar
- 1 teaspoon liquid vegetable oil-based soap
- 1 ½ cups warm water

Combine ingredients in a spray bottle and shake before use. Add lemon juice, orange peels or essential oils for a fresh scent. If using on windows or mirrors, leave out the liquid soap for a streak-free shine.



Cream Scrub

This cream scrub is perfect for sinks, tubs and tile.

- ½ cup baking soda
- About ¼ liquid vegetable oil-based soap

Add ingredients in a bowl and mix them together until they make a thick paste. Save any unused cream scrub in the fridge. The next time you use it, add a little bit of water to the mixture.



Toilet cleaner

- 1 cup white distilled vinegar
- about ¼ cup of baking soda

Pour the vinegar on the inside of the toilet bowl, aim for the sides of the bowl, not the bottom. Toss in the baking soda, spreading it over the toilet bowl as much as possible. Let it sit for 10 minutes, then scrub with a toilet brush.



Drain Cleaner

For best results, clean your drain once a month with the recipe below. Regular cleaning helps to prevent clogs, cuts down on bacteria and keeps drains free of odors.

- ¼ cup baking soda
- 1 cup white distilled vinegar
- 6 cups of boiling water

Pour the baking soda down the drain, followed by the vinegar. If possible, cover drain to create pressure. Let it sit for 10 minutes. Boil 6 cups of water, then pour the water down the drain. Repeat if necessary until drain runs freely. For tougher clogs, increase the amount of baking soda and vinegar used in this recipe.



Oven Cleaner

- 2 tablespoons liquid vegetable oil-based soap
- 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup distilled white vinegar
- Water

Make sure oven is off and cool. Remove everything from the oven; racks, pans, thermometers. Mix ingredients in a bowl, using the water to form a thick paste. Brush onto the oven surface until completely coated.

Allow it to sit for about 8 hours or overnight. Wear gloves and scrub clean using an abrasive sponge and clean water. If needed, you can use this method to clean the oven racks.



More tips for effective cleaning

- Help prevent clogs before they start by using drain covers to catch hair, food, and other debris.
- To remove stains or smells from clothing, soak items in a solution of equal parts water and white distilled vinegar before washing.
- Replace bleach with hydrogen peroxide: 3% hydrogen peroxide is a proven disinfectant and it can be used to remove mildew. Add ½ cup of hydrogen peroxide during the rinse cycle to brighten laundry.
- Use salt to remove fresh stains on carpet and upholstery. Cover the stain with a thick layer of salt. Let it sit for 10 minutes, then vacuum. If necessary, treat the stain with a clean rag using water and soap.



Finding safer products at the store

Buying Safer Products

- Read the label and look for products that say “Caution.” These products are less harmful than cleaners labeled “Warning,” “Danger” or “Poison.”
- Choose unscented products whenever possible and avoid heavily fragranced products.
- Look for products on the shelf that have an EPA “Safer Choice” label.

Avoid when possible

Air fresheners and highly fragranced products –

Artificial scents can harm air quality in your home. Try using scents from essential oils, lemons or cinnamon.

Antibacterial cleaners – For bleaching or sanitizing surfaces, use 3% hydrogen peroxide, or an oxygen-based cleaner. They are just as effective as antibacterial cleaners and much safer to use.

For more tips to clean your home
with products that are safe for
you and the environment visit
oregonmetro.gov/healthyhome
or call 503-234-3000.

