All-Natural Cleaning Solutions

All-Natural Cleaning Solutions

Summary – Printed with permission of www.realsimple.com

Use Lemons to Clean Your…

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

Cutting boards: To remove tough food stains from light wood and plastic cutting boards, slice a lemon in half, squeeze onto the soiled surface, rub, and let sit for 20 minutes before rinsing.

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

Faucets: Combat lime scale by rubbing lemon juice onto the taps and letting it sit overnight. Wipe with a damp cloth.

Garbage disposal: Cut a lemon in half, then run both pieces through the disposal. "The lemon cleans it and makes it smell great," says Linda Mason Hunter, a co-author of 'Green Clean'.

Grout: Spilled morning coffee on your tile countertop or

backsplash? Here's how to tackle grout stains: Add lemon juice to 1 or 2 teaspoons cream of tartar (an acidic salt that acts as a natural bleaching agent) to make a paste. Apply with a toothbrush, then rinse.

Hands: When you touch raw fish, the smell can linger on your fingers. Rub your hands with lemon juice, which will neutralize the odour

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 tomato soup and other acidic foods on dishwasher-safe items, rub lemon juice on the spots, let dry in a sunny place, then wash as usual.

NOTE re 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," says Karyn Siegel-Maier, author of The Naturally Clean Home.***

Use Baking and Washing Soda to Clean Your…

Can opener: Dip a toothbrush in a paste of 2 tablespoons baking soda and 1 teaspoon water and use it to dislodge gunk.

Garage floors (and other concrete surfaces): Pour washing soda generously on oil and grease spots and sprinkle with water until a paste forms. Let stand overnight. The next day, scrub with a damp brush, hose down, and wipe clean.

Garden tools: Dip a moist stiff-bristled brush in washing soda to scrub trimmers, clippers, and more. Rinse, then place in a sunny area to dry. (Don't use washing soda on aluminium tools.)

Grills and barbecue utensils: To combat tough grease stains, dip a moist stiff- bristled brush in washing soda and scrub away.

Stove burner grates: In a dishpan, soak them in 1 gallon warm water and ½ cup washing soda for 30 minutes. Rinse and dry.

Stained teacups and coffee mugs: Fill with 1 part baking soda and 2 parts water and soak overnight; rub with a sponge and rinse.

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 baking soda and water) to white painted walls (baking soda may dull colored walls). Let dry before brushing it off with a clean cloth.

NOTE re baking soda: ***Baking soda (a.k.a. sodium bicarbonate) and its close cousin, washing soda (sodium carbonate), both absorb odors. But unlike baking soda, slightly stronger washing soda can't be ingested; wear rubber gloves when handling it.***

Use Toothpaste to Clean Your…

Acrylic accessories (such as desktop organizers): Squeeze toothpaste onto a toothbrush and work it into scratches until they diminish. Wipe residue off with a cloth.

Chrome fixtures: To polish faucets and taps in the kitchen or bathroom, smear a dime-size amount of toothpaste onto them, then buff with a soft cloth until they shine.

Scuffed linoleum: Reduce marks by scrubbing them with toothpaste and a dry cloth until no toothpaste residue remains.

Piano keys: Rub each key carefully with a damp cotton swab

and a dollop of toothpaste. Wipe dry and buff with a clean cloth.

Tarnished silverware: Put a dab of toothpaste on a soft cloth, rub it onto the tarnish, then rinse with water and dry with a clean cloth.

Steam iron: Mineral deposits can stain an iron's soleplate. Apply a dab of toothpaste and work it into the plate. Use a clean cloth to remove residue.

NOTE re toothpaste: ***The combination of a mild abrasive, a surfactant (detergent), and an antibacterial agent makes toothpaste a potent stain-fighter. "Stick with standard paste, not gel, and steer clear of formulas designed for tartar control and whitening," says Siegel-Maier. "These often contain chemicals and additional abrasives that can damage items such as fine silver."***

Use Table Salt to Clean Your…

Artificial flowers: Place the fake blooms inside a paper bag and pour in salt. Close the bag and shake vigorously. The salt will dislodge accumulated dust and dirt.

Glassware: Salt won't scratch the way a scouring pad can. To get out stubborn stains, add some salt for extra abrasion and scrub.

Greasy pots and pans: Sprinkle salt on cookware to absorb excess grease. Dump out the salt before washing as usual. (Not recommended for non-stick cookware.)

Spills in the oven: If that casserole bubbles over as you take it out of the oven, pour salt on the spill to soak it up. When the oven is cool, wipe with a damp sponge.

Stained teacups and coffee mugs: Sprinkle salt on the outside

of a lemon peel; rub the affected area till clean.

Wooden counters and tables: Cover grease splatters with salt to absorb as much as possible. Wait an hour, then brush away the salt.

NOTE re table salt: ***Salt's granular texture makes it perfectly suited for scouring. Table salt, sea salt, and kosher salt can all be used, but table salt is the cheapest choice.***

Use white bread to:

Dust an oil painting: Gently dab a slice of white bread over the surface to pick up dirt and grime.

Use ketchup to:

Remove tarnish from copper and brass cookware. Squeeze ketchup onto a cloth and rub it on pots and pans. They should go back to their coppery colour in minutes. Rinse with warm water and dry with a towel.

Use Oatmeal to:

Scrub very dirty hands. Make a thick paste of oatmeal and water; rinse well.

Use Rice to:

Clean the inside of a vase or a thin-necked bottle. Fill three quarters of the vessel with warm water and add a tablespoon of uncooked rice. Cup your hand over the opening, shake vigorously, and rinse.

Use Tea to:

Scour rusty garden tools. Brew a few pots of strong black tea. When cool, pour into a bucket. Soak the tools for a few hours.

Wipe each one with a cloth. (Wear rubber gloves or your hands will be stained.)

Use Glycerine to:

Remove dried wax drippings from candlesticks. Peel off as much wax as possible, then moisten a cotton ball with glycerin and rub until clean.

Use Club Soda to:

Shine up a scuffed stainless-steel sink. Buff with a cloth dampened with club soda, then wipe dry with another clean cloth.

Use Hydrogen Peroxide to:

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

Use Cornflour/Cornstarch to:

Clean grease spills on carpets. Pour cornflour/cornstarch onto spots and let sit for 15 to 30 minutes before vacuuming.

Use Rubbing Alcohol to:

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