

Bicarbonate Of Soda

- **Washing Up** To a bowl of hot water, add 1 tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda & the juice of half a lemon.
- **Cleaning Sinks** Either place bicarbonate of soda directly onto a damp cloth or make up a paste of soda with a little water. Wipe around the sink & rinse well.
- **Cooker Tops** As above, make a paste of soda & water and apply with a cloth. Wipe over well and rinse with cold water.
- **Blocked Drains** Pour about 16 tablespoons of bicarbonate of soda down the sink and then pour in about 120ml of white distilled vinegar. Put the plug in for a couple of minutes as the 2 chemicals will fizz. Rinse through with boiling water.
- **Scouring Powder** Mix together equal quantities of bicarbonate of soda, borax substitute & salt as a scouring powder on heavy grease and dirt.
- **Oven Cleaner** Dampen the floor of the oven, sprinkle with bicarbonate of soda and dampen again. Leave the mixture overnight and then remove with a cloth. Rinse with hot water.
- **Fabric Conditioner** To make your own fabric conditioner, mix equal quantities of water, bicarbonate of soda and vinegar in a storage bottle, take care as the vinegar & soda will fizz up. Add ¼ cup of conditioner to your wash.
- **Deodorising Drains** To freshen drains & help prevent blockages, pour a cup of bicarbonate of soda down the drain and then wash down with some boiling water.
- **Bathroom Cleaning** To clean all areas in the bathroom, including baths, sinks, tiles etc, make a paste of bicarbonate of soda and water. To give a fresh smell add a couple of drops of lemon essential oil. Using a cloth, wipe around the bathroom & rinse well to remove the white residue.
- **Toilet Cleaning** To clean the toilet bowl, sprinkle in bicarbonate of soda, add white vinegar and scour with a brush.
- **Grout Cleaning** To clean grout make up a paste of 2 parts bicarbonate of soda and one part vinegar or lemon juice (this will fizz up). Apply the paste to the grout with a toothbrush, leave for 10 mins and then rinse off.
- **Pet Odours** To help freshen carpets, sprinkle bicarbonate of soda on the carpet, leave for 10 mins and then vacuum.
- **Fridge Odours** To eliminate smells in the fridge leave a box of bicarbonate of soda, opened in the fridge. Stir occasionally and replace after about 3 months.
- **Air Freshener** Mix 8 tablespoons of bicarbonate of soda with 3- 4 drops of essential oil and place in a bowl.
- **Clean Fruit & Vegetables** Place the fruit or vegetables in a bowl of water with a sprinkle of bicarbonate of soda, wash and then rinse.
- **Laundry** Add ½ cup of bicarbonate of soda to a load of washing to help with the removal of stains and grease.
- **Thermos Flasks** To get rid of smells in a thermos fill the thermos with hot water and add a spoonful of bicarbonate of soda. Leave to soak for at least 30 mins then empty and rinse.
- **Chopping Board.** Regularly give your chopping board a deep clean by spreading bicarb over the surface and spray with vinegar. Let it bubble for a while and then rinse with hot water.
- **Onion Odour.** To remove the odour of onion and garlic from wooden or other porous surfaces, sprinkle some bicarb on to a damp cloth and rub into the surface. Rinse with water.
- **Dishwasher Cleaning.** Freshen up your dishwasher by adding about 150g of bicarb and running it through a rinse cycle.
- **Plastic Food boxes.** Remove odours from plastic food boxes by filling them with very hot water, add 1 tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda. A few drops of liquid detergent and 1 tablespoon of vinegar. Leave to stand for 15mins, or longer, then rinse clean.
- **Tea & Coffee stains.** Use a paste of bicarb to remove tea & coffee stains from cups.
- **Microwave Cleaning.** To clean the microwave wipe the inside with a solution of 4 tablespoons of baking soda to 2 pints of water. Another method is to place some bicarb and water into a microwave-safe cup and place in the microwave. Allow to boil for 3 – 5 mins. The damp inside walls of the microwave can be now be easily wiped clean with a cloth.
- **Cleaning Silver.** Remove tarnish from silver by applying a paste of water and bicarb with a damp sponge, rinse & buff dry.
- **Rust.** To remove rust from metal chair or table legs, make a paste of 1 tablespoon baking soda with a teaspoon of water. Apply to the rust with a damp cloth, scrub lightly with a piece of tin foil & wipe clean with a paper towel.
- **Wooden floors.** Remove water spots from wooden floors by applying a bicarb solution on a damp cloth. (Remember not to get the wood too wet as this may damage it)
- **Walls.** To clean marks, such as crayon, pencil or grease, off washable walls use bicarb on a wet sponge and scrub gently.
- **Carpet Stains.** Remove wine or grease stains from carpet by lightly sprinkling area with baking soda. Dab it up and add a little more if necessary. Leave on until the wine is absorbed, then vacuum up any residue left.

Modern day cleaning can be a bit of a chore. But there is an alternative! You don't have to spend piles of cash on an armful of super-tough chemicals. You don't even need to find extra storage for all those dozens of bottles. In fact you can muster up your own natural house cleaners from ingredients already in your store cupboard.

By Alana Blincoe



Essential Ingredients

White vinegar, bicarbonate of soda, lemons and olive oil are all you need to keep your wood floors sleek, stainless steel germ-free and shiny, and bathroom tiles squeaky clean. And the added bonus is there's not a harmful chemical in sight.

White Vinegar

A natural disinfectant and stain remover plus it reduces mineral and lime deposits. It's a diluted acetic acid and a substitute for ammonia-based cleaners. You can use white wine vinegar, but white distilled vinegar is cheaper. Don't use malt vinegar - your home will end up smelling like a chippie.

Bicarbonate of Soda (aka baking soda/sodium bicarbonate)

A miracle cleaner. When mixed with water it forms a slightly alkaline liquid, which cuts through grease and dirt on almost any surface. Used neat it's slightly abrasive and can be used to scrub problem stains. Often vinegar and soda are mixed together for maximum cleaning strength. Baking powder works just as well - it's a mix of bicarbonate of soda and cream of tartar.

Olive Oil

A great alternative furniture polish. Don't worry about using the extra-virgin type, the most basic will do.

Lemons

The citric acid in lemon juice makes it perfect for bleaching, disinfecting, deodorising and cutting grease.

Water

Damp dusting is great for general cleaning and ensures dust is not scattered around. For best results, soak your duster in two parts water, two parts vinegar and two drops of lemon oil. Then wring out and store in a covered glass jar until you need it.

What to Clean and How to Clean it...

Glass

Wash windows with two to three tbsps of vinegar to three litres of warm water. Dry with crumpled newspaper for sparkling results.

Scummy vases? Put in one tbsp of vinegar and fill with warm water. Leave to soak for 10 minutes. Rub with a soft cloth then rinse.

Wood

Mix one part olive oil with one part lemon juice. Rub on furniture or apply with a spray bottle, then polish with a dry cloth. Use this mix to make wood floors gleam.

Floors

Mop vinyl, laminate or ceramic tiled floors with eight tbsp of vinegar diluted in three litres of hot water.

For pet odours and stains in carpets, mix equal parts of vinegar and water. Apply to affected areas. Blot with kitchen roll (recycled is preferable), until moisture is absorbed. You may need to repeat the process.

Stainless Steel

Clean and shine any stainless steel surface with a paste of soda and water. Apply liberally with a damp cloth. Leave for about five minutes, then wipe.

Microwaves and Ovens

Clean with a cloth dampened in equal parts of vinegar and water. To remove microwave odours, place some lemon slices in a bowl of water. Put on high for a few minutes.

Baths, Shower Doors, Tiles and Grout

Tackle body oils and soap scum with two parts soda to one part vinegar or lemon juice. The thick paste should be applied with a damp cloth. Leave for 10 minutes then rub with a brush or sponge. As you rinse it off, drains will be kept fresh too. Use this mix on shower doors, sinks, tiles and grout. If cleaning grout, rub with a toothbrush.

Mildew and Mould

Banish black spots with one part vinegar or lemon juice to one part baking powder. Apply and leave for one or two hours. Rinse off. It may need to be reapplied or left longer, depending on how severe your mould or mildew is.

Air Freshener

Baking soda eliminates odours. Mix eight tbsp with three drops of your favourite essential oil. Place in a decorative bowl or vase.

Soda in the bottom of ashtrays absorbs smoke smells. It's also like sand for stubbing out cigarettes.

Dab some essential oil on a light bulb. When on, the heat will diffuse the fragrance.

Toilet

Keep loos clean and fresh - put eight tbsp of soda in the bowl. Leave overnight. Sprinkle soda onto a damp cloth to clean toilet seat and cistern, then wipe with a wet cloth.

Drain Cleaner

Put down one part soda, followed by four parts hot vinegar. Leave overnight if possible.