



Your green cleaning kit

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As you are doing your house cleaning, do you ever get the feeling that there should be another option? (No, we don't mean a housekeeper, though that would be nice.) There you are, inhaling fumes of chlorine, ammonia, acids and worse, coughing now and again (or constantly). Soon enough you get the idea that there must be a better choice. You are right: there is a better choice.

A green-clean kit should be an essential for every household, not only because it would be better for the environment and your health, but also because it probably will save you money. And from the perspective of your health, the BC Lung Association puts it concisely: "Contamination with toxic cleaning products can build up over a long period of time from a variety of sources, and serious health effects can occur."

To build your own green-clean kit is simple. Your starter kit should include baking soda, white vinegar, borax, Murphy's liquid soap, scouring pad, cotton washcloth or a sponge, cotton rags and a 16 oz spray bottle. Add a little elbow grease and you have it. Now, some recipes for individual cleaning tasks.

ALL PURPOSE CLEANER: Many commercial products contain chlorine and ammonia and worse toxins. Your alternative is easy is two parts borax mixed with one part baking soda. Sprinkle on surface and wipe with damp cloth. To wash the area, use a 1:1 mix of water and vinegar.

FURNITURE POLISH: Try one part lemon juice or vinegar with two parts vegetable oil. Apply sparingly with soft cloth and buff.

DRAIN CLEANER: Commercial drain cleaners, by definition, contain very strong chemicals and agents. The alternative is based on rocket science. Think back to your childhood and those fun 'rockets' we used to shoot off in the back yard... you know, the one with baking soda and vinegar? For cleaning minor clogs, start with half a cup of baking soda down the drain, followed by half a cup of vinegar. Let it fizz for a few minutes. Then pour down a kettle full of boiling water. Repeat if needed. If the clog is stubborn, use a plunger. If very stubborn, go to the mechanical snake.

GLASS CLEANER: Commercial glass cleaners are mostly a mix of water and ammonia, with dye added for those pretty colours. Instead, use one part vinegar to one part water mixed into a spray bottle. Spray, polish. Done. (We bet you knew this one but were not using it.)

LAUNDRY DETERGENT: The usual laundry products contain many chemicals known to cause health problems, especially

the scented ones. A greener and healthier alternative is to mix one cup of pure soap flakes with a quarter cup of washing soda.

Your starter kit should include baking soda, white vinegar, borax, liquid soap, scouring pad, cotton washcloth or a sponge, cotton rags and a 16 oz spray bottle.

These are but a few of the health and environment-friendly cleaning products you can use around the house. There are also excellent 'green' commercial products available, but many will be based on these simple recipes. Find out more by visiting your local organic market or health product supplier.

Was it the health thing that kept you reading, or the saving money bit? Perhaps the 'help the planet angle'? Whatever your reasons, assemble your own green-clean kit this week and try it out. You will be surprised at how well it works.