

## General House Cleaning Tips

### 1. List of supplies:

At least 2 small buckets – one for dirty rags one for clean (you could use the Clean Team Apron and skip the buckets)

Plastic Caddy Container –it’s nice to have all your stuff in one place – or if you have a big house, set up two separate containers so you don’t have to carry stuff up and downstairs – Home Depot or Lowe’s or Wal-Mart will have this

Spray bottles – for mixing your own stuff – Home Depot/Lowe’s Wal-Mart

Sponges – keep bathroom and kitchen sponges separate – I put these through the washing machine with some grapefruit seed extract to disinfect everything

Razor Blades – good to get stuff off of glass – they make some with plastic handles so you won’t hurt yourself

Toilet Brush – have one in each bathroom so you don’t carry around and drip stuff on the carpet

Toothpicks – great for getting in corners, stuff stuck in grout or in sink

Small squeegee for glass – so you won’t get spotting

Duster – “The Clean Team” sells a real feather duster – I didn’t find this as effective as just spraying and wiping surfaces, but is good just to get dust off of stuff

Telescoping duster – for ceiling fans and high up vents

Putty Knife –for scraping goopy stuff off floor – good to have one metal one for tough surfaces and one plastic one for surfaces that are less durable

Mop w/ washable pad – toss in the wash to clean – can reuse with your own cleaner

Distilled White Vinegar – dilute it 2 parts water to 1 part vinegar - this is my main cleaning solution for all surfaces, counter-tops, mirrors etc.

Scrub Brush – great for tile, grout and bathroom surfaces that require elbow grease

Gloves – latex or non-latex to protect your hands so you don’t absorb anything through the skin

Glass Cleaning Cloths – sold in packages of 6 at Home Depot or Lowe’s – won’t leave lint, fuzz or streaks on glass or mirrors

### 2. Commercial Products:

Rosemary Essential Oil - Aura Cacia Brand from Azure works great – 8-10 drops in about a cup of water in a small spray bottle - great room deodorizer - spray house after cleaning – clears the air like a rainstorm

Bon Ami – Bon Ami is bleach free/non-toxic scouring powder and it is very cheap. Great for sinks and soap scum in bathroom. Don’t use it on surfaces that might scratch. Or you can substitute baking soda and enough liquid dish detergent to give the mixture a “frosting” texture. Only make as much as you need, because it will dry out.

Grapefruit Seed Extract/Citrus Seed Extract – Anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, anti-viral. GSE is great to add to laundry or in other cleaning supplies – and totally safe to ingest. Citricidex by Source Naturals is the brand I like - it is a liquid glycerin product. Try “Ideal Nutrition” or “All About Herbs” or find it online

<http://www.iherb.com/ProductDetails.aspx?c=1&pid=1054>

Alcohol Hand Sanitizer – I don't recommend it for home – it is always better to wash your hands. However, I use it in my acupuncture practice and it is great for traveling when you can't get access to water. Best brand is EO – with non-GMO organic alcohol

<http://www.eoproducts.com/>

[http://www.eoproducts.com/Products/Hand-Sanitizer---32-oz\\_HANDSANITIZER-32OZ.aspx](http://www.eoproducts.com/Products/Hand-Sanitizer---32-oz_HANDSANITIZER-32OZ.aspx)

Biocleen and Seventh Generation – Azure Standard carries these product lines

Nature's Miracle – Amazing on pet stains/odor for carpets – eats up proteins with an enzyme formula. Better than Bac-Out by Biocleen. but not as non-toxic.

<http://www.naturemakesitwork.com/home/index.php>

Citrasolve – This is a commercial non-toxic house-cleaning product. You can buy it in bulk concentrate and it will last forever. Dilute according to instructions on the bottle. This is my favorite toilet cleaner.

3. Do-it-Yourself - from “The Green Cleaning Guide” available at

<http://www.highcountryconservation.org/publications.htm>

\*\*Note on Borax: Many recipes I found call for Borax. I didn't actually know what Borax was (although I've used it to kill ants before, so I looked it up. Here's the Wikipedia link:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borax>

Basically it's not acutely toxic in small dosages – but you should still be careful with infants and small children. I think it's commonly recommended as a natural house cleaner because it takes significantly large amount to cause problems if you actually eat it. Some people do react to exposure with skin rashes and respiratory distress, so be careful of where you leave the container.

Air fresheners – open up all the doors and windows to ventilate the area and squeeze a fresh lemon into a bowl – let it sit out on the counter – add your favorite essential oil to a cotton ball and place in a saucer, simmer cloves and cinnamon on the stove

Cat Litter – put baking soda on the bottom of the box before adding new litter

Garbage Odors – sprinkle borax or baking soda on the bottom of the can – compost organic material so it doesn't go in the trash if possible

Refrigerator – use an open box of baking soda for odors – switch it out every 3 months

All-purpose Cleaners – for countertops, walls, floors, carpets, upholstery etc.

- a. ½ tsp washing soda, dab of liquid soap and 2 cups hot water – shake until the soda has dissolved
- b. 2 tbsp baking soda and 1 pint of warm water in a spray bottle, shake well, add squeeze of lemon or splash of vinegar to help cut grease
- c. 2-3 drops dishwashing soap, 2 tbsp vinegar OR 2 tbsp lemon juice, 1 tsp borax and 1 quart of water, spray onto area to be cleaned

Carpet Deodorizer – mix a few drops of your favorite essential oil into a box of baking soda – let it sit for a day to absorb, then sprinkle on carpet, wait 15 minutes and vacuum

OR use one part borax to 2 parts cornmeal and sprinkle onto carpet – wait 1 hour before vacuuming \*\*this is one I would consider NOT using with small kids in the house b/c of the borax – especially if your vacuum is not so good\*\*

Disinfectant –

- a. combine  $\frac{1}{2}$  C borax with one gallon hot water and use immediately by wiping with rag soaked in solution or by spraying
- b. spray white vinegar followed by a spray of hydrogen peroxide and wipe clean with a sponge – if you mix prior to spraying it reduces effectiveness by 10 times – but the order they are sprayed doesn't matter \*\*tests have shown this is more effective at disinfecting than bleach\*\*
- c. For cutting boards and microwaves - mix 4 tbsp of vinegar, 2 tbsp of borax and 2 cups of hot water – immerse cutting board in solution for 10 minutes and finish washing with dish soap – for microwaves it will clean the inside without leaving a residue

Floor Cleaner – 1 C white vinegar with 1 gallon of hot water – works great on brick and stone tiles, linoleum and no-wax floors - for greasy floors, add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup washing soda and 1 tbsp vegetable oil based soap to the mix

Furniture Polish – mix two parts olive oil with one part lemon juice – apply to furniture with a soft cloth and wipe it dry

Glass Cleaners –

- a.  $\frac{1}{2}$  C cornstarch with 2 quarts warm water, apply to cool window with sponge and wipe with absorbent towel
- b. warm water, vinegar and lemon juice – combine in spray bottle and use as needed
- c.  $\frac{1}{4}$  C vinegar, one quart warm water, apply with spray bottle or sponge – wipe dry with a crumpled newspaper rather than paper towels

Mold and Mildew – mix equal parts of vinegar and borax in warm water and use to wipe affected areas clean - make this fresh each time or it won't be effective if it sits too long

Mildew specific - scrub mildew spots with a solution of  $\frac{1}{2}$  C borax mixed with one gallon of water – to prevent re-growth – don't rinse it off

Mold specific –

- a. combine 2 tsp of tea tree oil and 2 cups water in a spray bottle, shake and apply to problem area DO NOT RINSE – will last a long time in the bottle
- b. combine 20 drops of citrus seed extract with 2 cups water in a spray bottle and apply to area, don't rinse – will also keep fine in the bottle
- c. pour straight vinegar into a spray bottle and apply don't rinse – kills 82% of mold and the smell will subside within a few hours

4. Keys to Green Cleaning Success – also from “The Green Cleaning Guide”

a. Try to be patient with yourself and don't get frustrated. This is a significant change to make. You are probably changing a well-practiced cleaning routine that you may have learned as a child. Change may take time, but it's worth it. Stick with it and seek out resources when you have questions

- b. Do not switch everything at once – this will drive you crazy. Start small and learn as you go. Pick one room or bathroom to be your testing ground. Figure out what you like then add more rooms and recipes
- c. Don't get too hung up on the recipes – free form is part of the fun. But do use caution when mixing different products together – see Green Cleaning Guide for reference
- d. Use rags, sponges and newspapers instead of paper towels – this will save you money and shopping time

Other Resources:

Check out The Clean Team Website for tips on Speed Cleaning

<http://www.thecleanteam.com/>

They sell products – mops, brooms, cleaning supplies, brushes, bottles, etc. as well as handy accessories like an apron that you can wear around the house as you clean so everything comes with you and you don't have to walk back and forth with stuff.

They also have several books and DVD's to help you learn more. I highly recommend their book "Speed Cleaning." This allowed me to streamline my cleaning techniques for my house cleaning business.

<http://www.thecleanteam.com/productdetail.cfm?id=books>

Backpack Vacuums

Pro-Team

<http://www.pro-team.com/>

Hip and back vacuums/Dyson Vacuums

<http://www.bestvacuum.com/>

Euroclean Hip/Backpack Vacuum – this is what I used for my house cleaning business. Not cheap, but saves your back – extra long cord

<http://www.dsmith-inc.com/euroclean/964.htm>

[~ www.AlaskaAcupuncture.com](http://www.AlaskaAcupuncture.com)