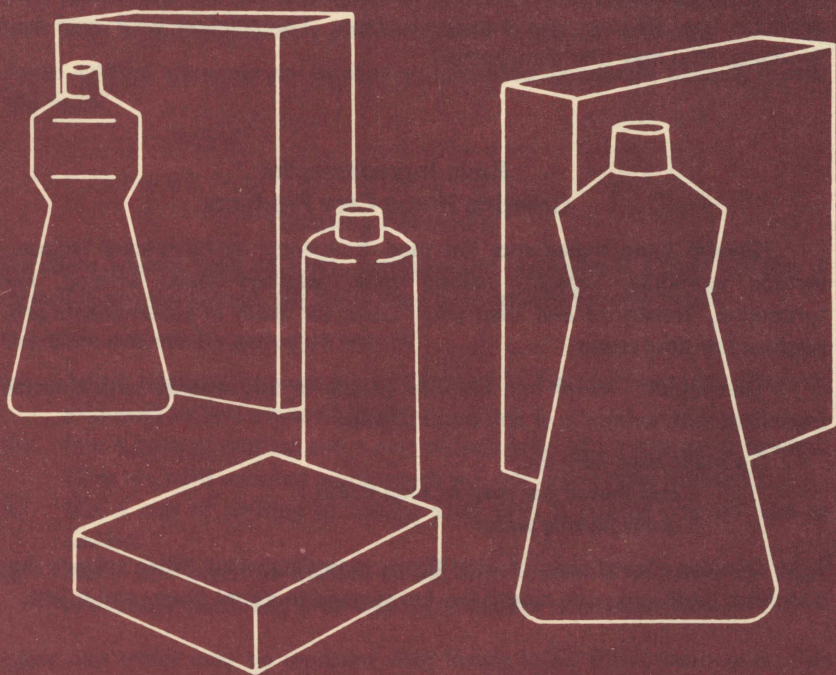


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CLEANING ON A SHOESTRING

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TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
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CLEANING ON A SHOESTRING

Extension Home Management Specialists
The Texas A&M University System

Cleaning on a shoestring can be approached two ways — from the standpoint of time or money. It is possible to create your own home-care products or to purchase commercial products. Home-created products often are less expensive but require more time to make.

Many cleaning products available today are basic ingredients that have been premixed, perfumed and packaged in aerosol cans or attractive bottles. These products may be more expensive but require less time for preparation.

When selecting commercial products, read the labels carefully since many products are abrasive and damage surfaces. Try creating your own home-care products. You may like them better!

Basic Ingredients for Creating Home-Care Products

Several basic ingredients are used frequently in home-care recipes. These include ammonia, vinegar, baking soda, washing soda, whiting, kerosene, turpentine, linseed oil and soap jelly. Look for them at supermarkets and paint, hardware or drug stores.

Remember: *Never* mix chlorine bleach or any cleaner with chlorine as an ingredient with ammonia or any other cleaner.

To make *soap jelly* use:

1 cup shaved bar soap or soap flakes

1 quart boiling water

Dissolve shaved soap or soap flakes in boiling water. When entirely melted or dissolved, pour into wide mouth jar. Let it stand in a cool place until it jells.

General Household Cleaners

Try this homemade cleaner:

- 2 tablespoons ammonia
- 2 tablespoons liquid detergent
- 1 quart water

Mix and use for general household cleaning.

Cleaning Windows and Mirrors

Try one of the following solutions to clean windows and mirrors:

- (a) Add 4 tablespoons household ammonia to 1 quart of warm water for heavy greasy soil.
- (b) Add 2 tablespoons vinegar to 1 quart of warm water for water spots.
- (c) Use 1 tablespoon kerosene to 2 quarts of warm water for light greasy soil.
- (d) Use 1 tablespoon washing soda to 1 quart of warm water.

First remove surface soil with tissue or soft cloth. Then apply cleaning liquid with a soft cloth or sponge. Rub dry and polish with newspaper or cloth.

Avoid spilling ammonia on painted or varnished woodwork because it may injure the finish.

Cleaning Porcelain

Porcelain enamel used on sinks, bathtubs and lavatories is a glass surface. If strong scouring powder is used, the finish may be scratched beyond repair.

Use these cleaners for porcelain enamel:

- (a) Add 2 tablespoons ammonia or kerosene to 1 cup of soap jelly. Store in a covered jar and use as needed.
- (b) Mix 4 parts of whiting and 1 part of soap jelly. Store and use as needed. (This is a mild scouring agent which will not injure most surfaces.)
- (c) Mix 1 cup of whiting or baking soda with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pine oil. Use as needed.
- (d) Make stiff paste of whiting mixed with ammonia or kerosene. Wash with soapy water and rinse well. (Try this for removing stains.)

Light rust stains may be removed with lemon juice. Rinse thoroughly. For more stubborn rust stains, try a weak solution of oxalic acid (1 teaspoon of oxalic acid in 1 cup of hot water). Rinse immediately with ammonia solution. Then rinse well with water. **CAUTION:** Oxalic acid is poisonous and should be handled carefully. Label it "poison" and keep out of reach of children.

Toilet bowls are made of vitreous china, which can stand stronger cleaners. They should be cleaned frequently with detergent. Washing soda can be used only inside the bowl. It is too strong to use on other surfaces.

Cleaning Drain Pipes

To clean drain pipe, flush with $\frac{1}{2}$ pound washing soda to 2 cups boiling water. Then rinse.

To cut stubborn grease in a sink drain pipe, pour kerosene into pipe at night. Allow to stand overnight and flush.

Cleaning Furniture

Keep furniture clean with dustless cloths which gather dust instead of scattering it. Make dust cloths from soft cloth that does not leave lint. Here are ways:

- (a) Put the cloth in a tin container or jar in which a few drops of furniture-polishing oil or wax have been spread. Cover tightly and leave overnight. The cloth will absorb just enough oil or wax to remove dust and polish at the same time. (For dusting waxed surfaces, do not use oil because it softens the finish.)
- (b) Mix 1 tablespoon of kerosene with 1 quart of hot water. Dip squares of clean cloth into this solution, wring out, dry and store.
- (c) 1 tablespoon of mild soap powder
1 quart of warm water
1 tablespoon of household ammonia
2 tablespoons of boiled linseed oil or a good furniture polish

Mix above ingredients well and dip soft, cotton cloths into the solution. After a few minutes, squeeze out, dry and store.

Store dust clothes in covered containers such as glass jars or coffee cans. They should be kept clean; wash them often. Treat cloths after each washing.

Cleaning Walls and Woodwork

Painted Surfaces

For ordinary cleaning, use a mixture of soap jelly and warm water. Add enough soap jelly to water to make light suds. To clean, dust painted surfaces

thoroughly before washing. Wash with a soft cloth dipped and wrung out in cleaning solution. Rinse well and dry with soft cloths. Wash only a small area at a time.

Whiting paste may be used for very soiled places. Make it with 4 parts of fine whiting to 1 part of soap jelly. Mix the two ingredients thoroughly and keep in a small jar. Apply with a soft cloth and rub lightly. Rinse thoroughly to remove whiting.

For cleaning woodwork or light-colored, painted surfaces, use 1 part kerosene oil to 1 part vinegar. Rub over the soiled area and wipe with a dry cloth.

Papered Walls

Fresh grease spots may be removed partially by placing a clean blotter on the spot and pressing with a warm iron. Change the blotter often.

For further treatment and more stubborn spots, make a paste of water and magnesia powder or Fuller's Earth. (Use powdered magnesium oxide available at drugstores.) Apply the paste to the spot and let it dry thoroughly for 2 to 3 days. Brush off the dry powder. It may be necessary to repeat the treatment several times. CAUTION: Test first on an inconspicuous place.

Washable Paper Surfaces

For heavily soiled, washable paper, try this recipe:

4 teaspoons baking soda

2 cups flour

2½ tablespoons household ammonia

1¼ cups water

Stir soda into the flour, add ammonia and water. Beat until smooth. Steam in a double boiler for 1½ hours. Leave the dough covered and, when cool enough to handle, knead until smooth and soft.

To use the wall-dough cleaner, start at the top and rub gently downward. Knead the cleaner as you work. Overlap the strokes to prevent streaking. Dusting with a soft cloth will remove crumbs left from the dough.

This cleaning dough also can be used to clean window shades.

Cleaning Varnished Surfaces

Varnished surfaces may be cleaned and polished with the following recipe:

3 tablespoons of boiled linseed oil

1 quart of hot water

1 tablespoon turpentine



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Wring a cloth out of this mixture. Wash the surface and wipe dry. Polish dry with a soft clean cloth. Protect neighboring surfaces from the solution. **CAUTION:** Do not heat this mixture because turpentine is flammable.

Cleaning Marble or Tile

Remove acid stains with household ammonia, baking soda or borax. If acid has roughened surface, rub the spot with pumice stone and water. Polish with a soft cloth.

For grease spots, make a thin paste of Fuller's Earth, spread on the spot and let it stand for 24 hours. Wash with soap and water. Repeat the process if necessary. Scrub very soiled spots with pumice stone.

Cleaning Aluminum

Scour badly abused aluminum vessels with whiting and soap jelly. Use very fine steel wool on aluminum.

Brighten discolored aluminum pans by boiling one of the following solutions in them until the discoloration disappears:

- (a) 1 tablespoon vinegar to 1 quart of water
- (b) 2 teaspoons cream of tartar to 1 quart of water

Cleaning Brass and Copper

Clean brass and copper with a paste of:

- 1 pint of soap jelly**
- 1 cup whiting**
- 1 teaspoon household ammonia**

Add whiting and ammonia to soap jelly before it congeals and beat together. After using the paste, always wash articles in hot suds, rinse and dry thoroughly.

Tarnished copper also can be cleaned with salt dissolved in hot vinegar or with lemon rind.

Brass with an antique finish can be polished with boiled linseed oil or lemon oil.

Polishing Silver

Try these silver polishes:

- (a) 1 cup boiling water
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 sheet of aluminum foil
1 teaspoon salt

Add salt, soda and aluminum foil to boiling water. Place silver in the boiling water so that each piece touches the foil or comes in contact with a piece of silver that touches it. Boil 2 to 4 minutes. Wash in hot sudsy water, rinse and dry. (Make enough of the solution to completely cover the silver.)

- (b) Add 1 part ammonia or castor oil to 3 parts whiting to make a paste. Apply with cloth to silver in hot soapy water, rinse and dry.
- (c) Add 1 teaspoon ammonia (or denatured alcohol) to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of soap jelly-whiting mixture. Rub the paste over silver. When tarnish is removed, wash in suds, rinse and dry.

- (d) 1 cup boiling water
1½ cups whiting
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup soap flakes

Heat soap flakes in water until dissolved. Remove from heat and add whiting. Stir to a smooth paste. Use as any other silver polish.

To Keep Iron and Tin Clean

Iron and tin utensils rust when they are not dried thoroughly. Boil them in hot soda water for a few minutes to clean. Remove rust from iron with steel wool or scouring powder. Before storing iron pots or pans, coat with saltless fat or oil, wrap in paper and store in a dry place.

Cleaning Chromium

Mild suds usually clean well. Chromium should be rinsed well and dried with a soft cloth. For stubborn spots, rub with a paste of whiting and household ammonia. Rinse and polish with a soft cloth.

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Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, The Texas A&M University System and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended, and June 30, 1914.

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