

# **Back to Basics Cleaning Guide**

Compiled as a handout for Natick Days September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009 by the Natick Recycling Committee

The following information is from Real Simple Magazine April 2009 written by Nicole Sforza, Allegra Muzzillo and Elizabeth Jenkins. **9-10-09**

## **Baking and Washing Soda** (Use rubber gloves when handling washing soda!!!!)

Baking soda a.k.a. sodium bicarbonate and washing soda a.k.a. sodium carbonate both absorb odors.

**Grills and Barbecue utensils:** Dip a moist stiff bristled brush in washing soda and scrub away.

**Stove Burners:** In a dishpan, soak them in 1 gallon of 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 sponge and rinse.

**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, brush with a clean cloth.

**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 aluminum tools)

**Oven Cleaner:** 1 cup of baking soda and 2 cups of white vinegar in a spray bottle. Sprinkle the \*\* base of the oven with the baking soda. Spray the vinegar over the baking soda to make a light foam. Let the foam sit as long as you can. Keep spraying the baking soda to keep it moist. For the side of the oven, mix some baking soda with water to make a thick paste and spread on the sides of the oven. Spray the paste with vinegar and leave on as long as possible. You may not be able to use this on self cleaning ovens, check with your manufacturer.

*\*\*The Joy of Cleaning by Leslie Reichert*

**Skunk odors from animals:** Mix 1 pound of baking soda, one large or two small bottles of hydrogen peroxide and one tablespoon of dish soap. Mix all together to form a thin paste and wash the offending surface. Rinse. This releases large amounts of O<sub>2</sub> which removes the stink. This was originally discovered by a researcher at Argonne National Labs.

**Price: Baking soda \$1.08 per pound**

**Washing soda \$7.00 for 4 pounds**

## **Beer**

To get rid of slugs in your garden submerge a small bowl of beer. The slugs will never know what hit them. (Keep your eye on your pets and kids, do this at night) **Price: 99 cents**

## **Borax**

Borax; a.k.a. sodium borate a naturally occurring alkaline when added to a wash makes detergents even more effective. It kills mold and fungus and softens waters.

**Baseboards, countertops and walls:** Dissolve ½ cup borax in 1 gallon hot water and pour the solution into a spray bottle (which you can store for later use). Spritz generously, wipe down with a damp cloth, and let air dry. (Always test on a small part first)

**China (including hand painted):** Soak china in a dishpan filled with warm water and ½ cup Borax; rinse well.

**Dishwasher:** If the machine has an odor sprinkle borax in the bottom, let it sit overnight, Then wipe down with a damp sponge. No need to rinse; just run the next load.

**Toilet:** Pour borax in the bowl and let it sit overnight. Swish the bowl a few times with a toilet brush and flush.

**Pots and Pans:** Rub borax into cookware with a damp sponge; rinse well. **Price: About \$5.00 for 4 pounds.**

## **Bread**

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

**Price: \$1.39 for 1lb 4oz. loaf**

## **Club Soda**

Shine up a scuffed stainless steel sink. Buff with a cloth damped with club soda, then wipe dry with another clean cloth. **Price: .99 cents a quart**

## **Cooking Oils**

Vegetable and plant-based oils, such as olive and sunflower dislodge dirt, diminish the scratches and imperfections. They also hydrate wood that has aged or dried out from exposure to the sun.

**Cast-iron pans:** Make a scrubbing paste with vegetable oil and a teaspoon of coarse salt to combat cooked-on debris, and then rinse with warm water.

**Hands:** To get paint off your skin, rub with vegetable oil, then wash thoroughly with soap.

**Stainless-Steel Surfaces:** For extra sparkle, pour olive oil onto cloth and buff.

**Rattan and wicker furniture:** To prevent rattan and wicker from drying or cracking, lightly brush them with vegetable or sunflower oil and gently rub with a cloth. Warming the oil on the stove first thins it and makes it easier to apply.

**Leather Shoes:** Wipe away dirt first with a damp sponge, and then apply a drop of vegetable oil to a soft cloth and rub the surface to remove scuff marks. Buff with a chamois to shine. **Price: about \$ 7.00 per pint**

## **Cornstarch**

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

**Price: \$1.19 to \$1.49**

## **Essential Oils**

These oils are extracted from plants, some essential oils can kill bacteria and mold. ***They\_Are\_very\_strong!!!!!!*** Because they are strong you need very little. For example; one\_drop of peppermint oil is as potent as 30 cups

of peppermint tea. You should be careful not to apply directly to your skin, research each oil for their strength. From the back of the package from Boyajian, Inc. ([www.boyajianinc.com](http://www.boyajianinc.com)) "it takes 44 oranges, 66 lemons and 80 limes to fill a 1 oz. bottle of oil. Use sparingly!!!!"

**Combs and brushes:** Fill a container with 1 ½ cups water, ½ Cup distilled white vinegar and 20 drops of tea-tree, lavender or eucalyptus oil. Soak combs and brushes for 20 minutes. Rinse and air dry.

**Gum-encrusted items:** Orange oil is great at removing this sticky offender from various materials. (Don't worry: it shouldn't stain fabrics. But do launder immediately.) Apply with a cotton ball.

**Toilets:** Add 2 teaspoons tea-tree oil and 2 cups water to a spray bottle. Shake, then spritz along the toilets inside rim. Let sit for 30 minutes; scrub. You can also place a few drops of your favorite oil on the inside of the toilet-paper tube. Each time the paper is used, the scent will be released.

**Price: \$14.00 for 5 milliliters at health food stores and specialty grocery stores.**

**Boyajian Pure Citrus Oils; orange, lemon and lime \$10.00 for 3 fl.oz.**

**The Body Shop; Total Energy oil \$20.00 10 ml (0.33 US fl.oz)**

## Hydrogen Peroxide

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

**Price: .99 cents for a 16 oz bottle**

## Ketchup

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 color in minutes. Rinse with warm water and dry with a towel.

**Price: \$1.00 to \$ 2.29**

## 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. (Test small areas first if unsure!!!)

**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 disposals:** Cut a lemon in half then run both pieces through the disposal. Run ice cubes through to sharpen the blades!

**Grout:** 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 odor. **Price: Depends on market about 69 cents for one.**

### **Liquid Castile Soap** (like Dr. Bonners)

Like other soaps, this plant based version efficiently loosens grime and dirt from surfaces. it's ingredients include organic extra virgin coconut, olive, jojoba and hemp oils it can be used on your body or in your bathroom and kitchen.

**Cars:** Mix ¼ cup liquid Castile soap with hot water in a bucket (fill almost to the top) wash all areas including hubcaps and rinse well.

**Floors:** Mix a solution of ¼ Cup Castile soap and 2 gallons of warm water, if floors are real greasy and ¼ cup of distilled white vinegar.

**Sinks, showers, tubs and ceramic tile:** Create a homemade soft scrubber by combining 1 tablespoon liquid Castile soap and 1/3 cup baking soda.

**Stovetop and vented hood:** Add a few quirts of liquid Castile soap to cups of hot water. Apply to the stovetop, the burners, and the vent hood to cut through accumulated grease

**Leather Upholstery:** Add 2 drops liquid Castile soap to 1 quart of warm water. Apply to the leather with a barely moist sponge. **Price: \$8.99 for 16 ounces.**

### **Rice**

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.

**Salt shaker:** Add a small amount to your salt shaker to absorb the moisture during summer weather. **Price: \$5.49 for 5 lbs.**

### **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.

**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 like a scouring pad will. 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 pour salt on the spill to soak it up. When the oven is cool, wipe with a damp sponge.

**Stained tea and coffee cups:** Sprinkle salt on the outside of a lemon peel; rub the affected area until clean.

**Wooden counters and tables:** Cover grease splatters with salt to absorb as much as possible. Wait an hour, and then brush away the salt. **Price: Table salt 59 cents a pound.**

## **Toothpaste**

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

**Acrylic Accessories (such as Desktop organizers):** Squeeze toothpaste onto a toothpaste 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 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. **Price \$3.65 for 6.0 oz.**

## **Vinegar**

Distilled white vinegar creates an environment that inhibits the growth of mold, mildew, and some bacteria, such as E. Coli and salmonella.

**Note: Vinegar may not be appropriate for all types of counters, floors, and bathroom fixtures. Always check with the manufacturer before using on any surface.**

**Coffeemaker:** Pour equal parts of vinegar and water into the machine's water chamber, then switch on the brew cycle. Halfway through, turn off the coffeemaker and the solution sit for about an hour. Turn it on again to complete the cycle, and then run several cycles with clean water.

**Dishwasher:** To disinfect the interior of the machine, pour ½ Cup vinegar into the reservoir and run on an empty cycle. Or place a small bowl filled with vinegar on the bottom rack and run an empty cycle.

**Drains:** Clean drains and the pipes they're attached to by pouring vinegar down them. After 30 minutes, flush with cold water. Try doing this once a month to stop the buildup of that residue in your bathroom drain.

**Moldy walls:** Spray vinegar on the affected areas. After about 15 minutes, rinse and let dry thoroughly.

**Showerheads:** to combat mineral deposits, pour vinegar into a plastic grocery bag and knot the handles over the neck of the showerhead, securing with rubber bands. Let soak overnight. Rinse with water in the morning.

**Steam iron:** To get rid of mineral deposits, fill the iron with equal parts vinegar and water; press the steam button. Turn off let cool empty and rinse.

**Windows:** Mix ¼ cup vinegar, 2 Cups water and a squirt of Castile Soap in a spray bottle. Spritz windows and wipe with a sheet of newspaper. **Price: \$2.99 for 128 fluid oz. or 1 gallon**