

Clean Most Everything -- for Just Pennies

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Laboratories develop all manner of complex chemicals, yet for many of the same uses, vinegar, a substance that has been around for thousands of years, can be a safer alternative. A gallon of distilled white vinegar or apple cider vinegar can replace a number of chemical household cleaning products. Vinegar can...

Remove water rings on wooden furniture. Combine vinegar and olive oil in equal parts. On a clean soft cloth, work mixture with the grain.

Remove stains on wood floors or furniture. Clean the area with coarse steel wool dipped in mineral spirits. Scrub stain with vinegar, allowing it to penetrate for several minutes. Repeat, if necessary. Rinse with water, then wax.

Remove stickers, decals, glue. Apply vinegar directly or with a clean cloth.

Make plastic antistatic. Vinegar decreases static and attraction of dust to plastic and vinyl. Wipe upholstery with a cloth dampened with a vinegar-water solution. Add a pour of vinegar to rinse water when laundering plastic curtains or tablecloths.

Clean up pet or people accidents. Combine a small amount of liquid detergent and three tablespoons vinegar in one quart warm water. Sponge on soiled area until clean, rinse with warm water, and blot dry.

Remove perspiration odors. Wipe or rinse article with vinegar.

Remove cooking odors. Prevent odor of boiling cabbage by adding a little vinegar to the cooking water. To remove fish or onion odors from hands, wipe them with vinegar. Pour vinegar into the hot skillet after cooking fish or onions and simmer briefly.

Wash dishes. To cut grease, add a capful of vinegar to dishwater.

Rinse crystal and glassware. They will sparkle when rinsed in a solution of one part vinegar to three parts warm water.

Clean bottles, jars, and vases. Remove chalky film by pouring in vinegar. Let stand several minutes or longer, then shake or brush vigorously.

Clean coffee and tea stains from glass and china. Boil vinegar in glass coffeepots once a week, wash, and rinse. Equal parts vinegar and salt removes stains from cups.

Freshen lunch boxes. Dampen a piece of bread with vinegar and leave inside overnight.

Remove lime deposits. To clean tea kettles, coffee brewers and irons, fill with vinegar and heat or run through one cycle. Run through another cycle with plain water.

Loosen rusted, corroded screws and hinges. Pour vinegar over the head of a rusty screw or a hinge to loosen. Soak screws, bolts and nuts in vinegar and scrub with a brush.

Improve light from propane lamps. Remove mantle, place in container, and cover with vinegar. Soak several hours. Dry thoroughly.

Dye Easter eggs. For bright colors, combine one-half cup boiling water, one teaspoon vinegar, and one teaspoon food coloring. Dip eggs until colored as desired.

Keep hiking water fresh. Add several drops of vinegar to an insulated water container to keep the water fresh longer and make it a better thirst-quencher.

Make windshields frost-free. Wipe windshields with a sponge soaked in a solution of three parts vinegar to one part water.

Clean stiff, caked paintbrushes. Soak mildly caked brushes in vinegar until clean. For worse cases, gently simmer in vinegar for five to 10 minutes. Wash in warm, soapy water, then rinse.

Remove fruit stains from hands. Rub hands with vinegar.

Clean salt marks on leather. Wipe salt-stained boots or shoes with a cloth moistened with vinegar.

Iron without shine. To keep wool or other fabrics from becoming shiny when ironing, place a cloth dampened with one part vinegar to two parts water over the fabric.

Remove crayon stains. Moisten a soft toothbrush with vinegar and rub out crayon from fabric or other surfaces.