

Homemade Cleaning Recipes – updated 24/07/2023

There are many homemade cleaning recipes available in fact, so many, that it can be quite overwhelming! I have tried and tested many and these are the ones that, to date, I have found work for our household.

I would stress that I am no expert and the information provided below is just what I have learned in looking for suitable homemade cleaning recipes. If you are looking for a place to start then this could be it, but you must undertake your own research if you are at all unsure about an ingredient or recipe.

The recipes below generally work out cheaper than their shop brought alternatives and have greatly reduced our plastic waste. It's also great to know exactly what we are cleaning our home with.

Some initial pointers:

- Make little and often – homemade products do not contain the preservatives that shop brought products do.
- Always read the bumpf that is provided for any ingredients you purchase and follow any guidance given.
- Some ingredients should not be combined – check this out if using something for the first time.
- Following on from the above, always test each recipe in an inconspicuous area – who knows what effect a particular ingredient may have on something you are cleaning.
- Be careful when using essential oils as they are highly concentrated and should be diluted as directed. My understanding is that these can be harmful to children and pets.
- As with any cleaning product, be careful not to get these on your skin or in your eyes, and never ingest them!
- Thoroughly clean any bottles and sprays you are repurposing.

Ingredients

- Cool boiled water – some recipes recommend distilled water, but I have always just used cool boiled water.
- Washing up liquid – eco-friendly if possible. I am currently using Ecover although I am looking at alternatives.
- Surgical spirit - also known as isopropyl alcohol and rubbing alcohol. This is a disinfectant and has bacteria killing properties and has the added benefit of

evaporating quickly, leaving no residue or streaks behind. It is available in different strengths, also known as the percentage or purity. I tend to buy the 99% solution as it is diluted within the recipes and only certain strengths are effective at killing germs. Use it carefully as it can have health implications. Due to its strong fumes, it should be used in a well-ventilated area and, as it is flammable, kept away from any flames or heat sources. I haven't quite been able to pin down how environmentally friendly surgical spirit is but as many cleaning gurus use it – including Clean and Green Nancy Birtwhistle – I am sticking with it for the time being.

- Orange essential oil. This is optional. I have only ever used well-diluted Orange and in very small quantities, but there are other essential oils, such as Tea Tree oil, which have specific cleaning properties. Essential oils are quite expensive to buy but 10 drops is equivalent to about 2mls so a bottle lasts a long time. In clarifying information to include on here, I read that the production of essential oils is not sustainable, so I potentially need to rethink my use of these.
- White vinegar. It is recommended that for cleaning purposes vinegar should have at least 6% acidity – edible vinegar has 5%. I use Ecodoo White Vinegar which has 12%. I mainly use vinegar as a fabric conditioner.
- Vegetable glycerine. Available online and from chemists. Some are derived from animal products so check out the ingredients before buying. If you have children or are an adult that loves bubbles - who doesn't? - this also makes fantastic bubble mixture (see below)!
- Soap bar.

Recipes

The first 4 recipes are a variation of the same ingredients. If you do not wish to make all 4 or don't have enough spray bottles or don't have a laminate floor, then I would suggest just going for the All Purpose and the Window, Mirror & Quartz/Granite Top Cleaner.

Apart from the cool boiled water – the cost of which will vary depending on what you pay for your electricity - I have added in the approximate cost of the ingredients for each recipe as at the time of writing (15/01/2023). When I know I need to make up a recipe, I just boil a little extra water when I am making a cuppa and put it to one side to cool down.

All Purpose – £0.04 + cost of boiled water

- 150mls of cool boiled water
- 2 squirts of washing up liquid – you may need to vary this depending on your washing up liquid - £0.04.

- Spray bottle

Spray on and wipe off with a dry or damp cloth. For stubborn marks, spray, leave on for a minute or two to work its magic and then wipe off as before.

Laminate Floor Cleaner - £0.53 + cost of boiled water

- 250mls of cool boiled water
- 60mls of surgical spirit - £0.51
- Small squirt of dish soap - £0.02
- Spray bottle

Spray on after sweeping or vacuuming the floor and wipe off with a flat head laminated floor mop.

For my kitchen floor, which isn't laminated, I just use a bucket of hot soapy water. For stubborn stains I spray first with the All Purpose cleaner, leave for a couple of minutes and if the mop doesn't remove it scrub with a dish washing brush.

Bathroom Cleaner - £1.33 + cost of cool boiled water

- 375mls of cool boiled water
- 125mls of surgical spirit - £1.06
- 1 teaspoon of washing up liquid - £0.02
- 10 drops of orange essential oil – optional - £0.25
- Spray bottle

Spray on and wipe off. We use this everywhere in the bathroom including the outside of the toilet and the mirrors!

Mirror, Windows and Quartz Top Cleaner - £0.46 + cost of cool boiled water

- 150mls of cool boiled water
- 50mls of surgical spirit - £0.42
- 2 squirts of washing up liquid - £0.04
- Spray bottle

Spray on and buff up with a dry cloth. For stubborn marks on windows/mirrors, spray and leave on for a couple of minutes and then wipe with the cloth.

I love this recipe for cleaning windows. When I think back to my childhood Windowlene seemed to be the product of choice for this job. It had to be applied to the window and then wiped off, but the pinky cream dried on and required severe elbow grease to

restore the view. It was a job that seemed to take my mother all day, especially after my parents had secondary glazing installed (I did start off helping but the novelty soon wore off!). Now I clean windows and mirrors just for the sake of it because this cleaning product is such a joy to use - is that such a thing? Lol.

Disinfectant - £1.70 + cost of cool boiled water

- 85mls of cool boiled water
- 200mls of surgical spirit - £1.70
- Spray bottle

Spray on and leave.

De-icer - £1.70 + cost of cool boiled water

- 100mls cool boiled water
- 200mls of surgical spirit - £1.70
- Spray bottle

Spray onto iced over windows – some scrapping may be required. NOTE: be careful not to spray onto the paintwork if using to de-ice cars as the paintwork could eventually become dull.

Fabric Conditioner for cost see below

For towels – add white vinegar to the fabric conditioner compartment of your washing machine - **£0.14.**

For other washing - **£0.31 per wash**

- 200mls of white vinegar - £0.63
- 15mls of glycerine - £0.40
- 20 drops of orange essential oil - £0.50
- Storage bottle

Add 2 – 3 tablespoons to the fabric conditioner compartment of your washing machine. This is a Nancy Birtwhistle recipe from her book Clean and Green. I make double the recipe at a time.

Shower Cream (for cleaning you not the shower 😊)/Liquid Hand Soap - £0.34 + cost of boiling water

- 1 bar of soap - £0.34

- 750mls -1 litre of boiling water (not cooled) depending on the size of the soap bar.
- Empty plastic bottles suitable for either using as a shower cream or a liquid hand soap.

Grate the soap and add the boiling water and stir. Once cooled blend using a stick blender. Decant into the empty plastic bottles leaving a space of 2 -3cms.

I have only just recently started doing this and to date, have only used it as a shower cream. Depending on what soap bars you use, you will need to experiment with what works. I have found after decanting the mixture the product can become a little solid as it cools, and the space is therefore needed for adding a little more hot water and shaking the mixture so it is squirtable!

Bubble Mixture - £0.51

Not cleaning but who can't resist making bubbles!

- 125mls of water
- 15mls of glycerine - £0.40
- 30mls of washing up liquid (possibly better with Fairy) - £0.11
- Jar

Combine well in the jar and have fun!

Other standalone products I use

Ecoegg Hard Surface Cleaner: This is a naturally occurring clay which I use in the showers as it helps the water to run off and prevent limescale build up. Unfortunately, it does come with a nylon sponge which I have plans to write to the manufacturer about.

Bicarbonate of Soda: Good for deodorising and using as a scourer.

Citric Acid: Excellent for removing limescale, particularly from toilet bowls.

Oxygen Bleach (sodium percarbonate): This is a safe, non-toxic and biodegradable alternative to chlorine bleach. I currently add to washing to brighten whites and use to remove tea and coffee stains from mugs.

Soda Crystals: I use this for reducing the amount of laundry powder needed and for doing a regular maintenance clean of the washing machine.

Homemade cloths: I cut up old towels into cloths. As far as I am concerned, life is too short to sew proper edges so I cut the cloths up using pinking shears. The edges initially fray but just cut off the loose threads and hey presto, an endless supply of household

cloths for the dishes, cleaning and wiping up spillages. When dirty I simply chuck them in to be washed with the towels.

Euroscrubby: These are quoted as being made from 100% cotton and are great little scourers which we use for washing up and all sorts of cleaning jobs. When dirty, they just get chucked into the wash with the towels or into the dishwasher!

What next?

For me, I want to look at replacing the shop bought cream cleaner and the Ecover toilet bowl cleaner I currently use. There are alternative recipes in Nancy Birtwhistle's book, Clean and Green, and I hope to shortly find the time to make these up and put them to the test.

I would also like to find something effective, other than horrible chemicals, for managing mould in the bathrooms. It is much better since we have started drying off the shower surrounds and ventilating the room for a good half an hour after the last person has ablated, but patches do reappear with a regular occurrence. I have tried some homemade recipes for managing mould with varying degrees of success – and which are much less harsh and toxic than their chemical alternatives - but I haven't yet found the go to solution.

As identified above, I also need to look further into essential oils and their sustainability.

And finally.....

It's a bit of a cliché but this is a journey and all about small steps and as I said before, I am no expert and I still have lots to learn. If you can help me with my journey and/or I can help you further yours then please get in touch by emailing lynn@hannawin.com with subject line "Homemade cleaning recipes".

If you would like to try a sample of any of the recipes described before you invest in the ingredients, then again please get in touch as above. I will need you to provide a clean spray bottle or container as appropriate – named, so you get the right one back!

Good luck and happy cleaning 😊

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Update 24/07/2023

Shiny Sinks: Sprinkle some bicarbonate of soda around the sink, squirt in a little washing up liquid and scrub with a cloth before rinsing. For stubborn marks, scrub with a Euroscrubby. Or you could use the cream cleaner below.

Cream Cleaner: This is a Nancy Birtwhistle recipe – I have found it excellent for cleaning the bath and shifting other stubborn marks, especially when used with a Euroscrubby.

- 100g of bicarbonate of soda
- 35mls of vegetable glycerine
- 15mls of washing up liquid
- A pot – I use an old Atrixo hand cream tub

Mix all together and apply with a cloth or Euroscrubby.