

A photograph of a glass of water, a lemon slice, and a whole lemon on a bed of green grass. The glass is partially filled with water and has a white lid. The lemon slice is cut in half, showing the segments. The whole lemon is bright yellow. The grass is vibrant green and fills the background.

XCentric Ideas

A Green Home

‘Home should be a sanctuary, a place that feels safe and healthy, looks beautiful, and smells wonderful.’

- Christie Matheson

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Recipes from the Internet – not tested
All photos my own

Going green...

White vinegar, lemon juice and bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) are excellent substitutes for everyday house-cleaning.



Baking soda (bicarb of soda – koeksoda)

Around the house

Air Freshener

- Leave opened box of baking soda in room. **For smoke odours:** mix equal parts white sand & baking soda then pour mixture into ashtrays. Helps to diffuse & mask the smoke in the air.

Carpet Cleaners

- Deodorise: sprinkle baking soda on carpet; \pm 1 cup/medium sized room. Vacuum after 30 minutes.

Deodorant

- No deodorant, rub some baking soda under your arms. It will soak up any smells and sweat.

Sunburn

- Mix some baking soda with water and apply it to your burn.

Bee stings

- Apply a paste of baking soda & water to the area. It will help numb the pain & reduce swelling.

Luggage Freshener

- Musty trunks & smelly luggage pieces. Sprinkle baking soda inside, close the case & let it sit a day or two. Remove the baking soda with a vacuum.

Musty Books Fix

- Damp or musty books, sprinkle baking soda on the pages & allow time to air out. If there's mildew on the paper you can rub the baking soda into the spots and lay out to bleach in the sun.

Baking soda (bicarb of soda – koeksoda)

Bathroom

Grimy bathtub

- Sprinkle baking soda around the wet tub to make a paste. Scrub it clean. Rinse with a mixture of vinegar and water for extra disinfecting.

Toilet

- ½ Cup of baking soda in the toilet bowl for light-duty cleaning. Let it sit for 30 minutes, then brush it away. For stubborn toilet stains, scrub with fine steel wool dipped in baking soda.

For tough grout, tile stains or mildew stains on grout

- Use a paste of 1 part bleach to 3 parts baking soda. Apply the paste. Scrub it with an old toothbrush. Rinse the paste off.

Add a perpetual air freshener to the toilet area

- Keep baking soda in a pretty dish on the back of the tank. Add your favourite scented bath salts to the mix, as well. Change every 3 months. Sprinkle baking soda in the bathroom trash can after each emptying.

Light cleaning of a shower curtain

- Sprinkle baking soda on a sponge. Scrub as needed. Rinse the shower curtain well.

Floors

- A tile or no-wax bathroom floor can be cleaned with 1/2 cup baking soda in a bucket of warm water. Mop and rinse the floor.

For an upset stomach

- Mix ½ tsp of baking soda with ½ cup water & drink it. Your stomach will quickly feel better.

Baking soda (bicarb of soda – koeksoda)

Kitchen

Clogged drains

- Sprinkle ½ cup of baking soda down the drain, then pour 1 cup of white vinegar. Follow immediately with 2 cups of boiling water. It will fizz and bubble and your drain will become unclogged. Do this once a month to keep drains free and clear.

Microwave

- Remove dried food from the inside of your microwave. Place a bowl filled with water & some baking soda in your microwave & cook it on high for \pm 1 min. Wipe clean with a sponge.

Oven cleaner

- Sprinkle baking soda all over the bottom of the oven, until its covered completely with about 4 cm of baking soda. Using a clean spray bottle, spray the baking soda with water until the baking soda is thoroughly damp but not flooded. Then you can go off and do other things. When you think of it, dampen the baking soda again if its drying out. Before you go to bed, do that again. When you wake up in the morning, the baking soda can effortlessly be scooped out of the oven with a sponge, bringing all the grime with it. The only downside is that you need to rinse out the white residue left by the baking soda.

Dishwasher

- Sprinkle baking soda in the bottom of your dishwasher and on the dishes. Then fill the 2nd receptacle with detergent. This will help add a little more power to the detergent while sanitizing the dishwasher.

Rust

- A potato, cut lengthwise, dipped into baking soda will remove rust. Be sure to wet the surface lightly before scrubbing. Rinse thoroughly.

Baking soda (bicarb of soda – koeksoda)

Laundry

Mattress Freshener

- When stripping the beds for laundry, freshen up the mattress by sprinkling a thin layer of baking soda directly on top of the mattress. Leave for a few hours then vacuum it up.

Soften clothes

- Try a ¼ cup of baking soda in the wash cycle to soften clothes and absorb odours.

Tips for Whites and Brights

- Add a ½ cup of baking soda to the wash when you add your regular liquid detergent. The baking soda has been known to give you whiter whites, brighter brights and odour free clothing.

Perspiration Stains

- Scrub in a paste of baking soda and water. Let it sit for 1 hour. Launder as usual.

Dry-cleanable Clothing

- Some dry-clean-only items can be cleaned with a solution of 4 tablespoons baking soda in cold water. Test for colorfastness first.

Smelly Hampers

- Freshen laundry hampers by sprinkling baking soda over dirty clothes as they await washing.

Ink stain on leather

- To remove the stain, lay the item flat. Sprinkle baking soda on the stain. Leave on until the ink is absorbed. Brush it off. Repeat if necessary.

Baking soda (bicarb of soda – koeksoda)

Pet care

Clean teeth

- For your dogs or cat, dip a small, soft-bristled toothbrush into baking soda and brush gently.

Smelly dog or cat?

- Does Whiskers smell funky? Has Mr. Sprinkles gotten into something rank? Baking soda is a great option for dry bathing your pet. This is especially helpful since most cats hate water.
- To dry bathe your dog or cat, sprinkle your pet's coat with baking soda, then give the coat a good rubdown with your hands. Next, use a gentle brush to spread the baking soda throughout the coat until the baking soda is gone. And since it is non-toxic, there's no need to worry if your pet takes a liking to its taste.

Pet Bedding

- Freshen your pet's favourite pillow by sprinkling the bedding with baking soda, letting it stand 15 minutes, then vacuum it thoroughly.

Cat litter

- To control odours after you've emptied the tray and before filling again, sprinkle ½ cup baking soda over the bottom of the pan.

Birds, Ferrets and Other Caged Critters

- Most bird & rabbit cages, ferret houses, hamster homes and the like can be adequately cleaned by wiping them down with a sponge sprinkled with baking soda or dampened with vinegar. Both of these are especially good with urine smells and stains. You might also want to add a thin layer of baking soda on the cage floor after cleaning to help control odours.

White vinegar

Around the house

Vinegar Spray Bottles

In addition to your regular bottle of vinegar, a really useful item is a spray bottle. Ideally, you want 2 - 1 with pure vinegar; the other with a ½ vinegar-½ water combination. Having vinegar in a dispenser of this type makes its use much simpler in many cases.

Stickers

- To remove stickers that have been used to "decorate" furniture and other surfaces, moisten with vinegar. Let sit for at least ten minutes, then remove.

Room odours

- For persistent room odours, place a bowl of vinegar in the room overnight.

Windows

- Spray with ½ vinegar ½ water solution. Wipe clean with either newspapers or cloth.

Shiny floors

- No-wax floors can be cleaned with a solution of 1 cup vinegar per 4.5 litres of water for a shinier surface.

Wood panelling

- To clean wood panelling, use a mixture of ½ cup olive oil, ½ cup vinegar and 2 cups warm water. Apply to panelling with a soft cloth. Dry with a clean cloth.

Silver, Pewter, Copper or Brass

- To clean, dissolve 1 tsp salt in 1 cup vinegar. Add flour to create a paste (1/4 cup or more). Apply the paste to the metal item & let stand for at least 15 min. Rinse with warm water and polish with a soft cloth.

White vinegar

Bathroom

Bathtub and Shower Cleaner

- 1 part vinegar, 1 part water. Mix ingredients in a spray bottle. Spray the shower wall and tub. Let it sit for at least ½ hour. Rinse it off.

Shower heads

- To remove corrosion or chemical build-up from showerheads, soak in vinegar overnight.

Toilet

- Remove stains from the toilet bowl by spraying with vinegar.

Faucets (taps)

- To remove soap build-up from faucets, clean with a mixture of 1 part salt to 4 parts vinegar.

Mildew & grime

- Clean soap scum, mildew, and grime from bathtub, tiles and shower curtains. Simply wipe the surface with vinegar and rinse with water.

Germs

- Kill germs on bathroom fixtures by using 1 part vinegar to 1 part water in a spray bottle. Spray the bathroom fixtures and floor, then wipe clean.

Mildew in your rug

- Once mildew gets into a rug, it lives and grows. Kill it with a 50/50 mixture of vinegar and water. Pour the mixture onto the rug. Let stand until the rug is completely dry.

Mirrors

- Spray mixture of 1 part vinegar & 1 part water on soft cloth and clean mirrors.

White vinegar

Kitchen

Ant problem

- To keep ants away, spray vinegar along doorways, windowsills, countertops. If you find an ant trail (path that ants use repeatedly), clean it with vinegar.

Sink / Garbage disposal

- To remove odours from the sink or garbage disposal, pour in a cup or more vinegar. Do not rinse out again for at least an hour.

Onion & garlic

- Wipe your hands with vinegar after chopping. It will remove strong scents like onion and garlic, as well as stains from fruit juices.

Pickle jars

- Remove strong odours. Rinse jars with a half and half mixture of vinegar and water to remove garlic or other strong pickling odours.

Burnt food smell

- Boil water with several spoons of vinegar to remove the smell of burnt food from your kitchen.

Bacteria

- Spray fruits and vegetables with white vinegar and let sit for about 15 minutes to remove any bacteria that may be on the skin or surface. Rinse with cold water and process as normal.

White vinegar

Laundry

Stains

- Many persistent stains can be removed with vinegar: coffee, chocolate, ketchup, jam, cola, wine. Gently rub stain with vinegar, then wash.

Clean your iron

- To remove scorch marks from an iron, rub with a mixture of vinegar and salt.

Washing machine

- To remove soap residue from the washing machine, run an empty (no laundry) cycle with one cup vinegar added.

Smoke smell

-To remove the smell of smoke from clothing without washing it, add a cup of vinegar to a tub of hot water. Let clothing hang in the same room for several hours.

Creases

-To help remove creases in hems and new clothes, sponge them with a mixture of white vinegar and water. Then iron with ease.

Colour

-To keep colors from running in the wash, soak in vinegar before washing.

Lint (fabric fibres)

-To decrease lint on clothing, add 1/2 cup vinegar to the rinse cycle.

White vinegar

Pet Care

Keep away

- To keep cats off windowsills or other surfaces, spray with vinegar. This will also keep them from scratching upholstery (spray an unnoticeable area of the fabric first to make sure the vinegar doesn't cause a stain).

Dog's ears

- To keep dogs from scratching their ears, clean with a soft cloth dipped in diluted vinegar.

Cat litter

- Clean the cat litter pan by removing the soiled litter and pouring in 1/2 inch vinegar. Let it stand for ten minutes or so, then pour out and dry.

Pet accident

- After a pet accident, remove what you can with paper towels. Deodorize if necessary by rinsing the area with a vinegar and water solution. It's important to remove the odour - doing so helps give your pet the signal that they should not do the same thing in that spot again.

Fly Spray for horses

- 1/2 cup (Blue) Dawn Dish Soap
1/2 cup Vinegar
1/2 cup water

Just mix up all the above and spray on!

Lemon Juice

Around the house

Air freshener

- Equal parts of water and lemon juice mixed in a spray bottle makes an excellent air freshener.

Freshen Rooms

- A bowl of lemons adds a fresh scent to any room - and looks pretty in the process. Lemons can keep for up to two weeks at cool room temperature. (And you can always grab one for juice or zest for use in the kitchen.)

Furniture Polish

- Mix 2 parts olive oil to 1 part lemon juice. Use a soft cloth.

Window & mirror cleaner

- Mix equal parts lemon juice and water into a spray bottle to clean windows & mirrors.

Improve Soil

- Fix soil that needs more acidity by adding lemon peels to the ground.

Eliminate fireplace odour

- There's nothing cosier on a cold winter night than a warm fire burning in the fireplace -- unless the fire happens to smell horrible. Next time you have a fire that sends a stench into the room, try throwing a few lemon peels into the flames. Or simply burn some lemon peels along with your firewood as a preventive measure.

Lemon Juice

Bathroom

Mildew & mould

- Scrub away mildew and mould from tile and other surfaces using a paste made from equal parts lemon juice and salt.

Relieve constipation

- Before breakfast, drink four tablespoons Lemon Juice in 1 cup warm water. Sweeten with honey.

Shower

- Once the shower base has been cleaned, don't forget to give attention to the shower door or curtain. Lemon juice wiped clean with newspaper will provide a streak-free shower door, while plastic shower curtains can be machine washed.

Rust

- To remove rust from sinks, tubs and toilets - mix lemon juice and salt, then scrub with a toothbrush around small, hard to reach crevices.

Soften cuticles

- Mix 2 tsp lemon juice, 1 tsp honey and ½ cup warm water. Soak fingertips in this mixture for 5 to 10 minutes. Rinse hands, dry and push back cuticles.

Elbows

- You can also rub cut lemons directly on elbows to lighten and soften them.

Lemon Juice

Kitchen

Dishwasher

-To get rid of dishwasher odour, place a cup of lemon juice in the bottom of an emptied-out dishwasher, and then run the rinse cycle. The lemon will deodorize and disinfect the dishwasher.

Garbage disposal

- Put a whole lemon peel through the garbage disposal. It freshens the drain and the kitchen.

Chopping board

- Slice a lemon and rub this over the surface of your chopping block to disinfect and deodorize it. Squeeze some lemon juice over any tough stains on the board, let this sit for about 10 minutes and then wipe it away.

Prevent potatoes from turning brown

- Potatoes and cauliflower tend to turn brown when boiling, especially when you're having company for dinner. You can make sure the white vegetables stay white by squeezing a teaspoon of fresh lemon juice into the cooking water.

Freshen the fridge

- Remove refrigerator odours with ease. Dab lemon juice on a cotton ball or sponge and leave it in the fridge for several hours. Make sure to toss out any smelly items that might be causing the bad smell.

Lemon Juice

Laundry

Tennis shoes

- A solution of lemon juice and water can also help whiten tennis shoes. Add a ½ cup of lemon juice to a 3.8 litres of warm water and let the shoes soak for a few hours. Dry the shoes in the sun to add to the bleaching effect of the lemon juice.

Bleach delicate fabrics

- For a mild, stain-free bleach, soak your delicates in a mixture of lemon juice and baking soda for at least half an hour before washing.

Remove unsightly underarm stains

- Avoid expensive dry-cleaning bills. You can remove unsightly underarm stains from shirts and blouses simply by scrubbing them with a mixture of equal parts lemon juice and water.

Rid clothes of mildew & rust

- You unpack white clothes or table cloths you've stored for the season and discover that they are stained with mildew. To get rid of mildew, make a paste of lemon juice and salt and rub it on the affected area, then dry it in sunlight. Repeat the process until the stain is gone. This works well for rust stains on clothes too.

Brighten whites

- A little lemon juice in the rinse is great for brightening whites.

Lemon Juice

Pet Care

Fleas

- Mix a tablespoon of bottled lemon juice into a spray bottle full of water and spritz directly onto your pet's coat.

Train a dog to stop barking

- Squirt some lemon juice in the dog's mouth and say "Quiet."

Houseplants

- One solution to prevent your cat from chewing your houseplants is to regularly spray diluted lemon juice on the leaves. Most cats hate this taste and will leave your leaves alone.

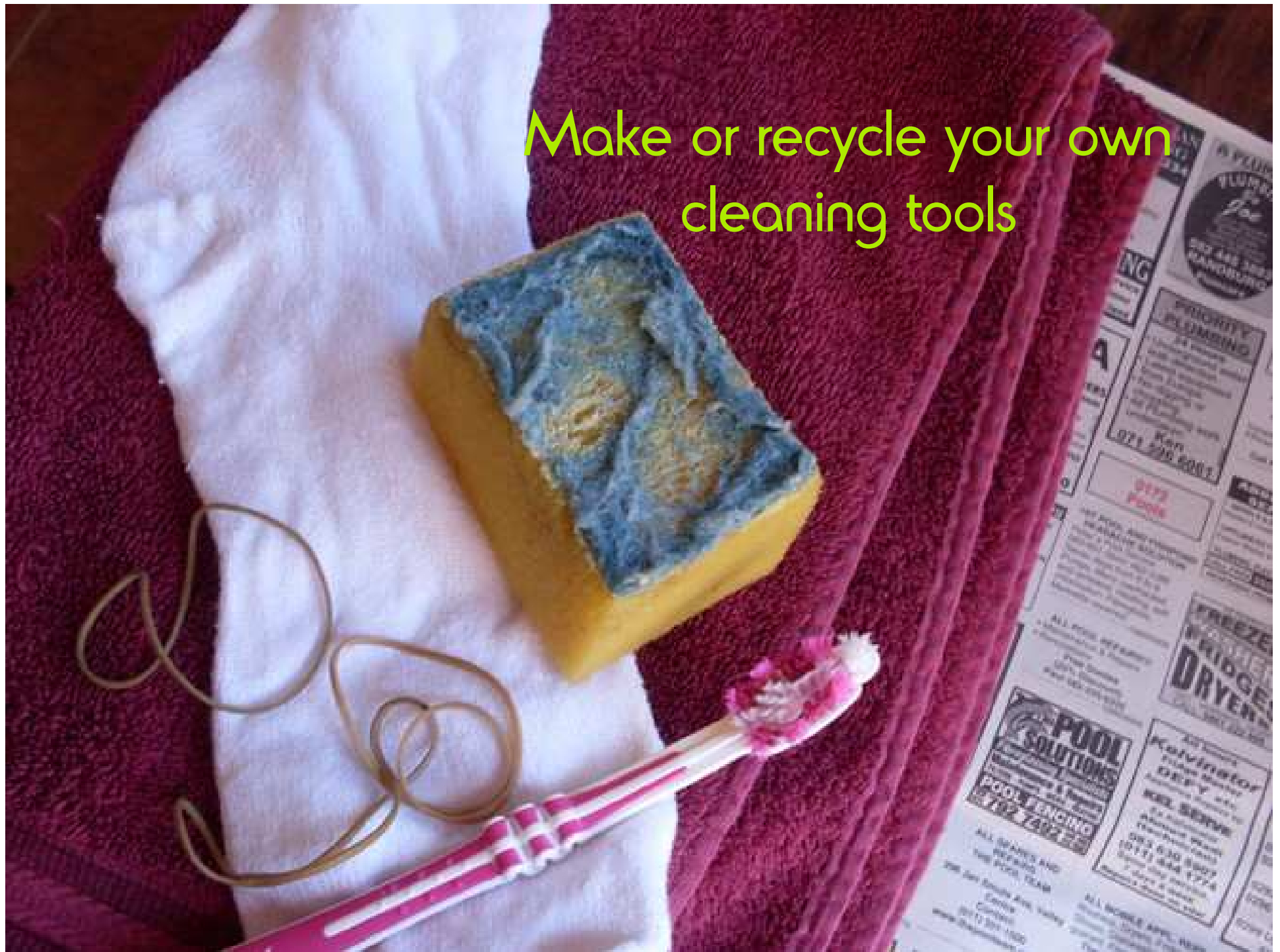
Pet accident

- After you've cleaned up, if a stain or discoloration remains, apply a generous amount of lemon juice to the area; let it soak for about 15 to 30 minutes. When the stain is removed, rinse the area well and blot it thoroughly. Another remedy to try is a paste made with lemon juice and cream of tartar, followed by the same rinsing and blotting technique.

Garden plants

- You can also leave lemon peel or spray lemon juice or lemon essential oil around the garden. Cats do not like the smell of lemon.

Make or recycle your own
cleaning tools



Make or recycle your own cleaning tools

Socks

- Good for cleaning walls, especially textured ones (sponges break off little pieces when you try to scrub textured walls).

Scrubbers

- Cut up pieces of mesh potato bags and tie into a small ball - works great for scouring dishes!

Sponges

- Throw your dirty sponge in the dishwasher or boil it with a bit of baking soda on the stove to make it look like new again.

Towels

- Cut up old towels instead of throwing them away and use them for dishcloths or in the garage.

Toothbrush

- Save that old toothbrush! You can use it to scrub floors, stains on clothing and more!

Newspapers

- Newspaper works well to clean windows. You can also try old cloth diapers.



Self-massaging techniques

Try home massage

Shoulder Tension Relief

- Reach your right arm around the front of your body and behind your left shoulder. Press firmly, in a circular motion with your fingers, on the muscle above your shoulder blade.

Then repeat on your right side with your left hand. Do this for as long as you can on each side.

Scalp Massage

- Lay your hands on top of your scalp with fingers spread apart and thumbs behind your ears. Slightly move your scalp back and forth in a circular motion using your fingertips.

Do this for about 15-20 seconds. Repeat procedure after a few minutes to get the full effect.

Sinus Pressure Release

- Close your eyes and place your forefingers on the bridge of your nose right at the end of each eyebrow. Using a circular motion, press firmly with both fingers and slide fingers along each eyebrow with pressure.

Return fingers back to the starting point. Slowly slide fingers down the side of your nose, with pressure, and across the top of cheekbones and back up to the outside of your eyes.

A black cat with striking white eyes is the central focus, sitting amidst a lush garden. The cat is looking towards the right of the frame. The garden is filled with various green plants, including tall grasses and leafy shrubs. In the background, a wooden fence and a building are partially visible under a bright sky.

I asked the waiter, 'Is this milk fresh?' He
said, 'Lady, three hours ago it was grass.'

- Phyllis Diller