Utah State University
DigitalCommons@USU

All Archived Publications | Archived USU Extension Publications

1-1-1996

Housecleaning on a "Shoestring"

Marilyn Noyes
Utah State University

Warning: The information in this series may be obsolete. It is presented here for historical purposes only. For the most up to date information please visit The Utah State University Cooperative Extension Office

Recommended Citation
Noyes, Marilyn, "Housecleaning on a "Shoestring"" (1996). *All Archived Publications.* Paper 432.
http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_histall/432

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Archived USU Extension Publications at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Archived Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact becky.thoms@usu.edu.

Utah State University Extension electronic publishing

Housecleaning on a "Shoestring"

Marilyn Noyes, PhD, Family Resource Management Specialist

September 1996 FL 183

Cleaning on a shoestring can be approached two ways—from the standpoint of time or money. You can create your own home-care products or buy commercial products. Home-created products are often less expensive but require time to prepare. Many cleaning products are basic ingredients that have been pre-mixed, perfumed and packaged in bottles or aerosol cans. These products may cost more but take less time to prepare.

Read labels of commercial products carefully, since many products are abrasive and damage surfaces. Try your own home-care products. You may like them better!

Basic Ingredients for Creating Home-Care Products

Home-care recipes include ammonia, vinegar, baking soda, washing soda, whiting, mineral spirits, boiled 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 and 1 quart boiling water. Dissolve shaved soap or soap flakes in boiling water. When entirely melted or dissolved, pour into wide mouth jar. Let stand in a cool place until it jells.

General Household Cleaners

Try this homemade cleaner: 1 tablespoon ammonia, 1 tablespoon liquid detergent, 2 cups water. Mix and use for general household cleaning. May be put in a spray bottle.

Windows and Mirrors

Try one of the following solutions:

- Add 1 tablespoon household ammonia to 1 quart of warm water (for heavy greasy soil inside windows).
- Add 2 tablespoons vinegar to 1 quart of warm water (for water spots on outside windows).

- 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, as it may injure the finish.

All Weather Cleaner

Mix in a 1 gallon container:
1 pint rubbing alcohol
1 tablespoon ammonia
1 tablespoon liquid detergent
Fill the container with water. Use as a window spray. This helps prevent steaming and freezing.

No-wipe Window Washing

(for outside windows only)

Fill pail 1/2 full with warm water.

Add:
2-3 tablespoons laundry or dishwasher detergent
1 tablespoon liquid "Jet Dry" or other dishwasher wetting agent.
Brush or sponge on window. Immediately hose off. Water will sheet off, no drying necessary.

Caution: Be sure windows are tightly closed!

Porcelain

Porcelain enamel on sinks, bathtubs and lavatories is a glass surface. Strong scouring power may scratch the finish beyond repair. Use one of these cleaners for porcelain enamel:

- Add 2 tablespoons ammonia or kerosene to 1 cup of soap jelly. Store in covered jar and use as needed.
- Mix four parts whiting with 1 part soap jelly. Store and use as needed. (This milk scouring agent will not injure most surfaces.)
- Mix 1 cup of whiting or baking soda with ½ cup pine oil. Use as needed.
- Make stiff paste of whiting mixed with ammonia. 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 rush 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. Handle it carefully. Label it "poison" and keep out of the reach of children.

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

Drain Pipes

Flush with ½ pound washing soda to 2 cups boiling water. Then rinse.

Furniture—Dusting

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

1. Put cloth in 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. (Do not use oil to dust waxed surfaces, because it softens the finish.)
2. Mix 1 tablespoon of mineral spirits or turpentine with 1 quart of hot water. Dip squares of clean cloth into this solution, wring out, dry and store.
3. 1 tablespoon of mild soap powder
   1 quart 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 cloth into the solution. After a few minutes, squeeze out, dry and store.

Store dust cloths in covered containers such as glass jars, plastic containers, or coffee cans. Keep them clean; wash them often. Treat cloths after each washing.

Furniture Polish

Mix equal parts:
Denatured alcohol solvent
Strained fresh lemon juice (not canned or frozen juice)
Olive soil or boiled linseed oil
Gum turpentine

To Apply: Shake before using. Apply with a clean, absorbent, lintless cloth. Rub furniture. Polish with a dry woolen cloth. This polish keeps indefinitely.

Furniture Cleaning

Light Soil
1 tablespoon liquid dishwashing detergent
1 quart water

Swish up thick suds. Use suds for cleaning. Wipe off with clean, damp cloth. Wipe dry. Work on a small area at a time.

Furniture Beauty Treatment

Use this to clean and restore finished wood furniture (not paint or shellac). It will disguise scratches, remove dullness, and restore oils.
In the top of an old double boiler or in a 2-quart can, add:

3 tablespoons boiled linseed oil (buy it as such)
1 tablespoon turpentine
1 quart hot water
Place over hot water until the moisture is as warm as a gloved hand can stand. For best results, provide a means for keeping the solution hot while it is being used.

Dip a soft, clean cloth into the solution. Lift it out and squeeze until it does not drip. Go over an area no larger than about 1 by 2 feet, re-dipping the cloth in the hot solutions, squeezing it until it does not drip, and washing until the area is clean. Follow immediately with a clean, dry, absorbent cloth until all oil is removed. Boiled linseed oil allowed to remain on the wood will become tacky. Continue until the entire piece has been cleaned.

This solution not only cleans wood, it also protects the finish. The hot water and turpentine remove the soil and the boiled linseed oil lubricates the wood, thus preventing hair-line checks in the finish. It also makes checks already in the wood less noticeable.

This solution is highly recommended for cleaning and revitalizing all woods, including kitchen cupboards, wall paneling and all furniture woods.

Painted Surfaces

Do not use turpentine to clean painted surfaces.

For ordinary cleaning, use a mixture of soap jelly or liquid detergent and warm water. Add enough water to make light suds. Dust painted surfaces thoroughly before washing, then wash with a soft cloth dipped and wrung out in cleaning solution. Rinse well and dry with soft cloth. Wash only a small area at a time. Whiting paste may be used for very soiled places. Make it with four parts of fine whiting to one part of soap jelly. Mix thoroughly and keep in a small jar. Apply with soft cloth; rub lightly. Rinse thoroughly.

For badly soiled painted surface:
1 gallon hot water
1 cup ammonia
½ cup vinegar
¼ cup washing soda

Wash small area at a time. Wipe each washed area with a second cloth wrung out of clean warm water.

(This is quite drying to the skin. You may want to use rubber gloves.)

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:

1 tablespoon vinegar to 1 quart of water
2 teaspoon cream of tarter to 1 quart of water

Brass and Copper

Clean brass and copper with a paste of:

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

Add whiting and ammonia to soap jelly before it congeals, and beat together. After using 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.

Antique-finished brass can be polished with boiled linseed oil or lemon oil.

Iron and Tin

Iron and tin utensils rust when not dried thoroughly. Boil them in hot soda water for a few minutes to clean. (Use soda water only when necessary. It removes fat from the pores and utensils must then be re-seasoned.) 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.

Chromium

Mild suds usually cleans well. Rinse chromium well and dry with soft cloth. For stubborn spots, rub with paste of whiting and household ammonia. Rinse and polish with a soft cloth.

Super shiny: Rub with rubbing alcohol, shine dry.

(Some of the information in this leaflet is adapted from a bulletin developed by Extension Home Management Specialists in Michigan State.)

Utah State University Extension, an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, provides programs and services to all persons regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, or disability.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Robert L. Gilliland, Vice President and Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Utah State University. (EP/09/96/DF)