

## It's time to start cleaning green

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When it comes to cleaning the house, the fastest way is always best. I'm not sure about you, but there are plenty of other things I'd rather do. However, I do really pride myself on keeping a pretty clean house. Being married and having two young children, I feel it is important to the health of our family to really stay on top of the chores. Good news is, it gets better!

Many household cleaners, including the really popular ones, may do the job, but they could potentially be hazardous to your health. Research has shown that children and pets are the most susceptible to the negative effects of the chemicals exposed to them by cleaning products.

The harmful gases emitted by these cleaning solutions are called "volatile organic compounds" which can cause skin and respiratory damage, and they also add to the greenhouse gases in the environment.

So whaddya do? Lucky for us, we can still clean our homes! We can still buy our cleaning supplies at the same store we're used to, but it's time to consider shopping in other aisles, and you will be happy to find it's cheaper too! Another—very important—perk? It's also much healthier for your family to "go green" when you clean! Try making your own supplies, it's actually a lot easier than you think.

I chose a topic this week that is near and dear to me, because I actually used to clean homes for a living before I made the great move to this wonderful town we call home. During the two years I cleaned, I operated as "green" as I'm preaching to you now. I know it works! It's easy! And it's worth it!

There are a lot of products on the market these days that are plant based, biodegradable, eco-friendly cleaners, but I have found that most are pretty pricey, and I've yet to find one that cleans glass without streaking. I do like Murphy's Wood soap, which smells great, works very well for dusting, and is eco-friendly.

- Vinegar: Nothing, (I've tried it all!) works better than vinegar to clean glass and mirrors. It is also a natural disinfectant. I bought a glass cleaner that was marketed as a vinegar glass cleaner, and after I used it all, I used the bottle and mixed my own solution(1/3 parts vinegar to 2/3 parts water) and have been using that same bottle ever since!

It cleans glass, counter-tops, wood floors, shower walls, it kills mold, it does it all!

- Baking soda: Sprinkle baking soda anywhere, add a little water (or concentrate soda and water together to make a paste) and you can scrub anything clean. It works well in the sinks, bathtub, toilets, and it can even polish up your silver.

Baking soda is also a great deodorizer. Dusting a light layer on your carpet and vacuuming after just 30 minutes is a fast way to freshen up a room.

- Kosher salt: If you ever have a tough calcium, rust, or grease stain, the above baking

soda/water combination with a touch of kosher salt makes an even more powerful cleaning agent.

If mixing your own supplies is not for you, at least read the labels on the products you do choose. A good rule of thumb is: If you can't pronounce ingredients, or if they are not clearly displayed on the label, use something else. Buy eco-friendly, biodegradable, plant based products when you can.

The environment is important and it's these little things that really make a difference, not only in your home, but the great home as well. There is nothing more valuable to our lives than the Earth and its precious resources.