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You could start by informing yourself about cleaning products, what they contain and what they do to you and the environment.

Think before you buy complex chemical cleaners - there are alternatives.

Previous generations survived without a range of manufactured bleaches, sprays, cleaners and powders. So can we if we are prepared to make an effort.

Five basic ingredients serve most cleaning needs:

- * **baking soda** -
cleans
deodorises
softens water
is a good scouring powder.
- * **borax** -
cleans
deodorises
disinfects
- * **pure soap** -
bio-degrades completely
non-toxic, available in liquid
flakes, powder or bar form
- * **washing soda** -
cuts greases
removes stains
- * **white vinegar** -
cuts grease, freshens.



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Here are some proven recipes for cleaners:

- * **general cleanser** - always use the simplest, mildest product that will get the job done. Try warm water mixed with soap or vinegar.
- * **air freshener** - find source of odour and eliminate, place bowls of pot pourri.
- * **to absorb odours** - 2-4 teaspoons baking soda or vinegar in small bowls in refrigerator, around the home, bottom of bin.
- * **disinfectant** - 1/4 cup borax in two litres of hot water.
- * **dish washing** - liquid or powdered pure soap
- * **tub, tile, toilet** - scrub with sponge or firm bristle brush using powdered soap or a scouring powder of baking soda, borax or salt.
- * **lime deposits** - undiluted vinegar.
- * **soap scum** - paste of vinegar and washing soda.
- * **windows or mirrors** - 3 tablespoons vinegar 1 litre warm water.
- * **bleach** - substitute 1/2 cup borax per washload to whiten whites and brighten colours.
- * **detergents** - soap flakes or powder.
- * **fabric softener** - 1 cup vinegar or 1/4 cup baking soda during final rinse.
- * **spray starch** - 2 tablespoons cornstarch dissolved in 1/2 litre cold water in spray bottles.
- * **kettle de-scaler** - fill kettle and boil for 20 minutes with 2 teaspoons of borax added, rinse well.
- * **oven cleaner** - wipe with soapy cloth while warm.
- * **metal cleaners** -
 - aluminium** - soak overnight in vinegar and water, rub.
 - brass** - mix equal parts salt and flour with a little vinegar, then rub.
 - chrome** - rub with undiluted vinegar.
 - copper** - rub with lemon juice and salt or hot vinegar and salt.
 - gold** - lukewarm soapy water, dry and polish.
 - silver and stainless steel** - rub with paste of baking soda and water.
- * **drains** - never tip oil or fat down drains and always use a strainer. If blocked, pour a mixture of up to 3 cups

vinegar and 3 tablespoons baking soda down drain, then seal tightly with a rubber plug - flush 30 minutes later with hot water.

- * ***floor cleaners*** - hot water and pure soap.

- cork, tile, lino, slate floors** - 1/2 cup white vinegar in bucket of hot water.

- * ***floor polish*** - beeswax, 1 part lemon juice to 2 parts olive or vegetable oil or 3 parts olive oil to 2 parts vinegar.

- * ***insect repellents*** - small amounts of citronella
Flyswatter Dimp - mix 'Dettol' and olive oil.

- * **cockroach bait-**
borax mixed with icing sugar or baking soda with mashed potato and place near the entrance to their nest.

- * **garden pests** - chopped chilli peppers and garlic mixed with pure soap. Spray on plants.



If you have purchased commercially prepared household cleaners, here are some tips on how to use them carefully and how to dispose of them:

Storage of household hazardous wastes

Always store hazardous chemical products in their original containers so that handling and disposal instructions on labels can be followed and so that other users are not misled about the contents.

Store hazardous chemical products in properly closed containers, in well ventilated areas and in places where children and pets cannot reach. Be careful not to store bleaches too close to ammonia or acids. A chlorine bleach and ammonia mixture creates a highly poisonous gas.

Recycling of household hazardous wastes

If you have unwanted leftover or hazardous products other than medicine and certain pesticides, ask if a friend, relative or neighbour could make use of them. Or perhaps you can donate paint and other products to community groups, etc.

However, be sure to pass them on only in their original containers with their original labels, and with any safety notices or instruction leaflets that came with them.

Disposal of oven cleaners, toilet bowl cleaners, sink/drain cleaners, bleaches, rust removers and most acid and alkali products -

Always try to use completely or to pass onto other people, all of the contents of these household products.

Unwanted or leftover portions should be sealed in their original containers and disposed of at a household hazardous waste drop-off facility.

Sealed empty containers should be disposed of with your ordinary rubbish. They should never be reused to store other materials.

Disposal of paint and solvents, spot removers, carpet and furniture cleaners, floor and furniture polishes and glues.

Always try to use completely or pass onto other people the contents of these products.

Unwanted leftover portions should have absorbent material such as kitty litter, sand or sawdust mixed with them in their original containers. Allow them to harden or dry, then the containers should be tightly sealed and placed in plastic bags and disposed of with your rubbish.

Disposal Drop Off Centres

The following centres accept most household hazardous waste,

- * Constellation Drive Transfer Station, North Shore
- * Pikes Point Transfer Station, Onehunga
- * Waitakere Recycling & Baling Station
- * East Tamaki Transfer Station
- * Rodney Waste Transfer Station Silverdale

Disposal of prescription medicines and over the counter drugs-

Never pass on prescription medicines or over the counter drugs to anyone.



Unwanted leftovers should be flushed down the toilet. This is the only exception to the rule of never flushing dangerous chemicals down the toilet. It is recommended so that children can never come upon and misuse the drugs. However, if you have a septic tank system do not flush antibiotics down the toilet as they can destroy the bacteria required in the tanks.

(If you are connected to a septic tank system, antibiotics should be crushed or broken, mixed with other rubbish and put out for collection).

REMEMBER!
HELP PRESERVE THE ENVIRONMENT
USE CHEMICAL FREE ALTERNATIVES FOR HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS



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