

Queen of Clean Articles

Cleaning products you should never be without!

There are several essential cleaning products that will help you tackle almost any cleaning problem - and most of them you should already have in your own home.

White vinegar Use white vinegar to remove any heavy soap scum and mineral deposits from showers, baths and sinks. Warm the vinegar and put into a spray bottle. Let it soak for 10 to 15 minutes and then use a nylon scrubbing sponge to remove the scum. It is also excellent for removing mildew from shower curtains and unblocking sinks.

Bicarbonate of soda Perfect for removing stains without abrasive scrubbing, add one tablespoon of bicarbonate to a saucepan or casserole dish and allow to soak. It can also be used for removing crayon marks, smudges on wallpaper and heel marks on hard floors.

Lemon juice Lemon juice is Nature's bleach and disinfectant. Clean brass or copper surfaces by sprinkling with salt and then applying half a lemon, rinsing thoroughly afterwards. Clean any hard surface with 500 ml of water, two tablespoons of lemon juice, half a teaspoon of washing up liquid, one tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda and one teaspoon of borax.

Soda water is the best emergency spot cleaner available. Remove red wine, coffee and tea stains. Simply remove any solids with a cloth, wipe over the spot with a damp cloth. The carbonate will bring the spill to the surface and the salt prevents any lasting stains.

Mayonnaise is good for removing those niggling water marks from wood. Polish the item with mayonnaise and leave for an hour and then buff clean. If the marks remain then repeat but leave overnight and then shine up.

To achieve professional results, use professional tools

- For streak-free windows make sure you have a squeegee, scrubber, chamois, scraper, an extension pole and a bucket to hand.
- Fill your bucket with warm water and add *washing up liquid*. Clean it with a sponge and then use the squeegee before the window dries. Start at the top corner of the window and draw the squeegee along the top edge of the window. Be sure you overlap each stroke.
- Have your chamois ready to soak up excess water if necessary.
- You can try cleaning solutions if you prefer, but remember not to try newspaper - it is dirty, messy and leaves newsprint everywhere.
- Finally, for any remaining streaks on a dry window, use a *blackboard eraser*.

The Royal guide to spot and stain removal

The Queen has literally hundreds of alternative remedies for removing everything from acid to yellow spots. Here are just a few of our favourites:

- **Butter or margarine** Scrape of any solid concentration of butter with a blunt knife. On Washable fabrics, work in undiluted washing up liquid, wash and dry. If the stain is old, spray with WD-40 to regenerate the grease and then work in the washing up liquid.
- **Grass and flowers** Sponge on surgical spirit, repeating several times. If the stain persists, sponge with white vinegar and rinse. Work in a detergent and then wash as normal.
- **Chewing gum** Harden the gum first by putting the fabric in the freezer overnight. When you remove it from the freezer, scrape off what you can with a blunt knife then treat the area with white vinegar and washing up liquid. Sometimes rubbing the area with egg white will remove any remaining residue.
- **Mud** Let the garment dry before you attempt to remove mud. Then take the vacuum cleaner and vacuum the area with a hose attachment. Rub the cut side of a potato over the stain and then machine wash as usual.

But remember to test the products on hidden or inconspicuous areas before using it on the main fabric affected.

Quick and easy solutions to cleaning the smallest room in the house

- Clean *fibreglass shower bases* by gently heating wine vinegar and pouring it into a spray bottle. Spray heavily on the base. Wait 10 to 15 minutes and moisten a scrubbing sponge with more of the vinegar and scrub down the shower.
- To make *plastic shower* upkeep simple, apply a coat of car wax - although you shouldn't do this on the floor of the bath or shower. After showering, use a squeegee to wipe down the shower door and walls.
- Keep *tiles and grouting* clean by applying a paste of bicarbonate of soda and chlorine bleach to the grout. Let it dry then rinse.
- *Keep your toilet clean* by putting several tablespoons of citric acid in the toilet before you leave for work or at bedtime.
- Drop a couple of *denture-cleaning tablets* into the toilet and let it sit overnight. Brush under the rim with your bowl brush and flush.

The Queen says that perspiration stains are the pits

- Treat invisible *perspiration stains* by treating a garment before you pop it in the washing machine. Moisten the underarm area - or any other spot where perspiration stains are a problem - and work in a lather of soap. Once you've worked up a good lather, toss it in the washing machine.
- *Socks and tights* also need special treatment. To keep white socks looking dazzlingly new, soak them overnight in water with two or three slices of lemon. Wash them as usual the next day.
- To increase the life of your *tights*, dip them in cold water, wring them out and pop them in a plastic bag and freeze them solid. When you remove them from the freezer, let them thaw and dry completely. They'll last much longer this way.
- Even more delicate is *swimwear*. After swimming in a chlorinated pool, soak your suit for 15 minutes or so in cold water with some liquid fabric softener. Rinse in cold water then wash in cool water with a mild detergent. Chlorine is very hard on fabrics, weakening them and changing the colour, so never put your swimming gear away without rinsing it first.

Outside

Drives, Paths and Oil Patches

The best time to clean drive and pathways is when the temperature is between 10 and 15 degrees and the direct sun is not shining on it.

- To clean *old stains on concrete*, make a paste of washing detergent and hot water. Scrub it into the spot and leave for at least an hour or overnight. Wash it off with plenty of water.
- For the toughest spots use *oven cleaner*. Leave it for 15 minutes and then wash off with water. Keep children and pets away from the area.
- If you have *plant pots* on your patio or driveway, avoid mud leaking from the bottom of the pots by putting coffee filters under the soil.
- For *cushions on garden furniture*, mix your own solution. In a spray bottle combine one teaspoon of washing-up liquid with one teaspoon of borax for each one litre of warm water. Spray this on both sides of the cushion and let it sit for 15 minutes. Then hose the solution off the cushions.
- *Plastic chairs* benefit from being washed with an all-purpose cleaner and water, then a rinse with water. To maintain shine, apply a good quality paste car wax just as you would when waxing a car.