

## 25 Ways to be a Cheaper Housekeeper

**1. Use the library.** Check out the library to preview the newest books and magazines to help your housekeeping needs. Some books or magazines may turn into favorites, making them a candidate for purchase.

**2. Maintain.** Use maintenance as a weapon against tough jobs that will require more effort and tools. Setting up a cleaning schedule will help you build maintenance of chores into your daily life. Letting jobs go too long will only take more time and money at a later point to fix.

**3. Use one pot recipes for meals.** This will not only save you money on washing the dishes, but also give you more time to enjoy after dinner.

**4. Use lemon juice as a last resort stain cleaner.** Lemon juice can be especially effective on white clothing when left in sunlight. The juice acts to bleach out the stains, but will also bleach out color.

**5. Make your own fabric freshener.** Mix 4 tablespoons of a ultra liquid fabric softener with water in a new plastic spray bottle. You can use scented fabric softener or try unscented with a few drops of your favorite essential oils. Mix well and test in an inconspicuous spot first. This can be used like the commercial fabric fresheners. Test to be sure of fabric compatibility.

**6. Create your own air freshener.** Fill a saucepan half full of water cinnamon sticks, orange peels, and some cloves. Simmer on the stovetop, adding water as the mixture reduces. It will fill your home with a great smell.

**7. Find a Review.** Before you buy into the latest cleaning craze, find out if it really works. Post a thread in the housekeeping products forum . Talk with friends and family members who may have used the product already. Check out the product reviews on this site.

**8. Freshen your drain.** Putting orange or lemon peels down the garbage disposal leaves a fresh scent in your drain.

**9. Use old newspaper to dry mirrors after cleaning.**

**10. Keep your tools clean and in good shape.** Taking good care of your tools keeps them going longer. Make sure to do routine inspections of vacuum cleaners, dishwashers, garbage disposals, washing machines, and dryers. Keep brushes, dustpans, brooms, mops,

and sponges clean and ready to be used. Don't forget to clean out filters, belts, bags and other accessories for your cleaning tools.

**11. Implement a no shoe rule.** Go barefoot and give your floors a break. While some people post a sign on the door asking guests to remove their shoes, many guests will voluntarily take them off when they see a selection of the family's footwear lined up in the entryway. Even if you keep only family and close friends shoeless you'll save a lot of wear and tear on floor cleaning costs.

**12. Invest in entrance mats.** Having a doormat directly inside and outside each entrance can reduce the amount of dirt being tracked on your floors.

**13. Shop around.** Find the best deals on the products you can't live without. Check out store circulars. Shop at dollar stores or at discount warehouses. If you have the space consider buying in bulk.

**14. Cut down on outside help.** You may be able to reduce the number of visits by a paid housekeeper by delegating chores and creating a cleaning schedule that fits with your family's lifestyle. Try these chore chart tips and ideas

**15. Buy easily cared for fabrics.** Look before you buy. A dry-clean only, no iron blouse may look great on you but is it worth the added cost of the dry cleaners or home dry-cleaning products. You probably can't stay away from all special care items, but reducing them in your home can reduce your costs.

**16. Spot treat stains on rugs, carpets, upholstery, and clothing ASAP.** Fast attention prevents more expensive repairs or removals later on.

**17. Share a steam cleaner.** Go in with a few friends or family members and purchase a nice steam cleaner together. Work out a plan for everyone to have access to it for routine maintenance, and the occasional emergency.

**18. Plan a cleaning budget.** Planning a cleaning budget can help prevent impulse buying. To really get a feel for what your budget needs to be, track your spending on cleaning products over the course of a few months. Sit down and analyze where the money was spent. Determine what items were really not needed and which ones cannot be done without. Figure out how long your products are lasting. Use the information to create a budget for your family's cleaning needs.

**19. Try using natural cleaners.** For many cleaning jobs *\*alternative cleansers* may work wonders without emptying your checking account.

**20. Follow the directions.** Following the manufacturer's recommendations makes sure that no expensive mistakes occur as the result of use. Many people overuse cleaning products to try to get done more quickly, with the only result being a hiked up cleaning budget. The directions give you an idea of how much is needed to get a cleaning job done.

**21. Use energy efficient appliances.** Check out the government's recommendations for energy efficient appliances.

**22. Line dry your clothes.** Line drying your clothes has many benefits that can save money. Eliminating the dryer cuts down on utility costs needed for its operation, but also prevents added cooling costs for your home.

**23. Get free samples.** Many times manufacturers will send out free samples of new and innovative products.

**24. Use coupons.** Using coupons and rebates can save a lot of money off of your household budget. Check the Sunday edition of your newspaper for coupons. If you have products you consistently purchase, manufacturer's websites may have printable coupons. Don't forget about rebates. Find out what is needed to redeem the rebate (cash register receipt, barcode label, etc.) Don't throw out a rebate just because it takes extra effort for savings that don't happen right away. By the time the product runs out you may have the rebate in hand to replace it.

**25. Reuse.** Find ways to reuse items in your home for cleaning purposes. Try cutting up towels or clothing into cleaning rags. These can be hemmed on a sewing machine and washed in the washing machine to reduce the need for disposable cloths.

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\*Alternative Cleansers-One of my earliest memories is of my mother cleaning with what looked to me like cooking ingredients. She would be listening to the radio as she poured baking soda, lemon, and vinegar combinations on the surfaces of our home. Magically these natural cleaning products kept our home clean and smelling fresh, without stretching an already thin household budget. Here are a few basic household ingredients and items you can use to clean your home.

Vinegar Uses: Vinegar naturally cleans like an all-purpose cleaner. Mix a solution of 1 part water to 1 part vinegar in a new store bought spray bottle and you have a solution that will clean most areas of your home. Vinegar is a great natural cleaning product as well as a disinfectant and deodorizer. Always test on an inconspicuous area. It is safe to use on most surfaces and has the added bonus of being incredibly cheap. Improperly diluted vinegar is acidic and can eat away at tile grout. Never use vinegar on marble

surfaces. Don't worry about your home smelling like vinegar. The smell disappears when it dries. Here are some uses for vinegar in the rooms of your house. Use it in the...

**Bathroom** - Clean the bathtub, toilet, sink, and countertops. Use pure vinegar in the toilet bowl to get rid of rings. Flush the toilet to allow the water level to go down. Pour the undiluted vinegar around the inside of the rim. Scrub down the bowl. Mop the floor in the bathroom with a vinegar/water solution. The substance will also eat away the soap scum and hard water stains on your fixtures and tile. Make sure it is safe to use with your tile.

**Kitchen**- Clean the stovetop, appliances, countertops, and floor.

**Laundry Room**- Use vinegar as a natural fabric softener. This can be especially helpful for families who have sensitive skin. Add ½ cup of vinegar to the rinse cycle in place of store bought fabric softener. Vinegar has the added benefit of breaking down laundry detergent more effectively. (A plus when you have a family member whose skin detects every trace of detergent.)

### **Lemon Juice Uses:**

Lemon juice is another natural substance that can be used to clean your home. Lemon juice can be used to dissolve soap scum and hard water deposits. Lemon is a great substance to clean and shine brass and copper. Lemon juice can be mixed with vinegar and or baking soda to make cleaning pastes. Cut a lemon in half and sprinkle baking soda on the cut section. Use the lemon to scrub dishes, surfaces, and stains. Mix 1 cup olive oil with ½ cup lemon juice and you have a furniture polish for your hardwood furniture.

My favorite use for the fruit is to put a whole lemon peel through the garbage disposal. It freshens the drain and the kitchen. Orange peels can be used with the same results.

### **Baking Soda Uses:**

Baking soda can be used to scrub surfaces in much the same way as commercial abrasive cleansers. Baking soda is great as a deodorizer. Place a box in the refrigerator and freezer to absorb odors. Put it anywhere you need deodorizing action. Try these three kitchen ingredients as natural cleaning products in your home.