

Cleaning around the house



Consolidate your cleaners and reduce unnecessary packaging by changing the mindset that every cleaning job requires a different cleaning product.

Basic cleaning supplies

Many common household products can make effective and inexpensive cleaners. Use the following products to clean your house from top to bottom.

- Baking soda
- Lemon or lime juice
- Washing soda
- White vinegar
- Non-scratch scrub sponge
- Drain snake
- Pumice stone



Make your own cleaners

Make a simple all-purpose cleaner by combining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup white vinegar with water in a 16-ounce spray bottle. Then add $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons non-antibacterial liquid dish soap. Add lemon juice if desired.

Find additional recipes in the Green Cleaning Guide at hennepin.us/residents/recycling-hazardous-waste/reduce-household-hazardous-waste.

Buy in bulk

If making your own cleaners doesn't work well in your household, you can still reduce waste by purchasing household cleaners, dish soap, laundry detergent, and more from the bulk dispensers at co-ops or zero-waste stores. Remember to bring and refill your own containers.



Replace disposables with reusables

Choose durable, not disposable, for the following items: toilet brushes, mops, dusters, cleaning cloths, wipes, and more! Old cut-up shirts or regular washcloths can replace most disposable cleaning tools you have in your home. Microfiber cleaning cloths are also highly effective for capturing dust and leaving surfaces streak-free.



Laundry

Washing and drying

Check the tags of your clothing, linens, and accessories for washing instructions. The instructions will include the temperature to wash and dry the clothes and if they should be put in the dryer. Improper heat and impact from tumbling in a dryer can break down your clothes prematurely.



Purchase concentrated laundry detergent in liquid or powder form to reduce packaging waste or buy your own using refillable containers from the bulk section of a co-op or zero-waste store. Another cost-

effective option is to make your own – see recipes starting on page 60.

Consider going without fabric softener and instead adding white vinegar to the softener dispenser of your washing machine. Vinegar does double duty in the washer as it can also help brighten your clothes. And don't worry, the vinegar smell won't last. Minimize your use of bleach as bleach is a hazardous chemical.

Swap out dryer sheets for reusable dryer balls. You can buy these or make your own (search online for a variety of types).



You can also avoid static by hanging your clothes to dry. If you like your clothing to have a scent, use a homemade linen spray or keep a sachet of flowers, herbs, or cedar in your dresser. You can also use

pieces of cloth soaked in vinegar and essential oil as a dryer sheet replacement. They are easily stored in a glass jar to soak before and after the load of laundry is done drying. Just run them with a load and then put them back in the jar to be ready for the next use.

If you have a foldable rack or laundry line, use them to air dry as much as possible. Use cold water to preserve the fibers and color, and try not to wash your clothes if they do not need it. Unless it is soiled or stinky, you may be able to air out your clothing and wear an item a few times before it goes into the laundry.

Removing stains

If you spill, act quickly to clean it for best results. There are several options for removing stains with simple ingredients that can be purchased in bulk. Be sure to test fabrics in an unseen area before treating the stains, and take special care on delicate fabrics like wool, silk or suede.

Try the following to remove stains:

- **Baking soda and vinegar:** Works as a general stain remover. Rinse stain with lukewarm water and soak in a vinegar/water solution for up to 30 minutes before putting in the washer. You can also mix a paste of vinegar and baking soda to put on the stain.
- **Presoak in washing soda and water:** Washing soda is available in a cardboard box and is both a laundry additive, multipurpose cleaner, and general stain remover. Soak clothing following the instructions on the box before washing.
- **Hydrogen peroxide:** Use for grass, blood, coffee, and wine. Dab or spray peroxide on stain and let it sit for 15 minutes before rinsing and laundering. This may bleach colors if left on too long.
- **Freezer:** If you have gum stuck to clothing, try freezing it for several hours then breaking it off

Heat from dryers can set stains, so make sure that the stain is gone before putting it in the dryer. Or consider using the power of the sun to dry and whiten clothing. Sunshine can help fade stains on light or white fabrics.

Another easy option is to designate a pair of work or play clothes that you don't mind staining, and always wear these for especially messy jobs such as yard work or painting.

A note on dry cleaning

Many chemicals in the dry-cleaning process can be dangerous to your health and to the environment. Try to buy clothing that doesn't require dry cleaning, hand wash your clothes when possible, or look for an environmentally friendly cleaner that uses the "wet cleaning" process. Professional wet cleaning is a water-based, non-toxic, energy-efficient technology that uses computer-controlled washers and dryers to get your clothing just as clean as it would be if otherwise dry cleaned. Check with your local dry cleaner to see if they offer wet cleaning rather than dry cleaning.

Microplastics from clothing

When washing clothing, micropolastics shed from synthetic fabrics such as nylon and polyester. These microplastics are not filtered out and end up in our water. To reduce microplastics from clothing, buy clothing made from natural fibers like cotton and wool, wash your clothes less often, and hang your clothes to air-dry.