

It's Not Just For Baking Going Green With Baking Soda

Did you know that the old pantry standby, baking soda, can help you and your family go Green?

That's right, simple sodium bicarbonate has a myriad of uses beyond leavening your baking products. Baking soda can be used for everything from personal hygiene, cleaning your house, killing unwanted insects and weeds, melting snow, tenderizing meat . . . the list is long and impressive.

This simple workhorse of a miracle product could help us all save both money and the planet. A naturally-occurring earth mineral, it is found throughout nature, in the soil, oceans, foods and our bodies, affecting all living creatures by maintaining the ph balance and carbon dioxide levels. And because it is a naturally found material, using it for your everyday cleaning, baking and deodorizing will not harm the environment.

While everything else in the world seems to be getting more expensive, a box of baking soda has remained relatively the same. When you think of all the products it can replace, it's worth its weight in gold.

And for those of you concerned with the environment, dump those harsh chemicals and plastic-packaged cleaning products. A box of baking soda and a jar of vinegar are the only things you need to keep your home clean and germ free. And it can be recycled. The baking soda you use in your fridge, freezer, or cupboards to absorb odors can be used to clean your counters, floors and laundry after you replace the boxes with fresh ones.

Baking Soda For Personal Hygiene and A Healthy Body

Baking soda makes a great antacid and gas reducer. Sprinkle a pinch in foods like beans and cabbage while cooking to relieve gas. For heartburn relief, drink a glass of water with 1 teaspoon baking soda mixed in.

As an alternative to expensive sports drinks like Gatorade, try this: boil a quart of water, add 1 tablespoon salt, 1 teaspoon baking soda, 5 teaspoons sugar, and 1 package sugar free Kool Aid or similar children's drink. Mix together, pour into a container, and refrigerate until cool.

To clear a stuffy nose, add a little baking soda to your vaporizer.

Everyone knows brushing your teeth with baking soda can help to whiten them, but did you know it's also an effective mouthwash for both killing germs and freshening the breath? In fact, cancer centers often recommend that their patients gargle with a solution of baking soda and salt water following chemotherapy to reduce the risk of infection. Keep a little handy in a plastic bag or pill box in your purse for a quick gargle when you go out to lunch.

To make your own toothpaste, use 2 tablespoons baking soda and 1 tablespoon peroxide. Brushing with this mixture will cut germs and grime on your teeth and mouth and leave your breath fresh and deodorized. You can also soak your toothbrush in a teaspoon of this paste in a glass of water to keep the brush clean and germ-free.

Soak dentures and retainers in a solution of baking soda and water to keep them fresh and clean.

As a shampoo, baking soda leaves both hair and scalp clean with no chemical residue. Just make a loose paste of baking soda and water and use it like your usual shampoo. If your hair is oily, add a little vinegar or lemon juice to the mix. For those with dry or frizzy hair, adding a little olive oil will help condition your hair and reduce tangling.

For some it may take a week or two for your hair to adjust to the difference, especially if you shampoo often, but the transition is well worth it for clean, shiny, non-chemically stripped hair. It's also an effective treatment for dandruff.

If you're not ready to give up your shampoo but still want the benefits of baking soda, mix 2 teaspoons baking soda with 1 teaspoon shampoo.

For cold sore relief, wet a little baking soda with just a drop of water to make a paste, apply to the cold sore, leave it on for up to 10 minutes, then rinse away. Do not scrub it.

Use dry baking soda instead of your usual deodorant for all day odor protection without staining your clothes.

Mix a solution of one part baking soda to three parts water to clean and soothe insect bites, sores, acne, eczema, hives, fungus, razor burn, and other skin conditions. This also makes a gentle exfoliating face scrub and effectively removes bad odors like grease, onion, and garlic from your hands.

Add a cup of baking soda to your bath water for softer skin, stress reduction, and to soothe the pain and itching of skin infections like chicken pox and poison oak and ivy.

Baking soda is great for bathing babies. It's gentle on their sensitive skin and gets rid of cradle cap.

For sunburn relief, take a cool bath with 2 cups of baking soda in the water. This is also a good way to relieve fevers from colds and flu.

Adding a little baking soda to the water when you wash dishes will help keep your hands soft and cut any grease in the water.

Rubbing a paste of baking soda and water on callouses will help to soften them.

For removing ink, paint or grease from your hands, mix a paste of baking soda and water and wash as usual.

For tired and/or sore feet, soak them in a tub of hot water and 1 cup baking soda.

To treat minor burns, apply a paste of baking soda and water to the affected area and let it dry.

Combat the itching and burning of athlete's foot by dusting feet, socks, and shoes with baking soda. If that doesn't work, try making a paste of 1 teaspoon baking soda and 1/2 teaspoon water and rubbing it between your toes. Let it dry, and wash off after 15 minutes. Dry your feet thoroughly before putting on your shoes.

Clean hairbrushes and combs in a solution of 1/2 cup baking soda and 1 cup water.

Using Baking Soda All Around the House

(better than all those harsh, expensive, environmentally toxic chemicals)

We all know how well baking soda works to eliminate odors—who doesn't keep an open box in the refrigerator or add a little to the litterbox or garbage pails to keep them smelling fresh? But did you know how many other things it can clean and deodorize?

For an all purpose cleaner you can use throughout your home, mix 1 quart water, 4 teaspoons baking soda, and 1/2 cup vinegar. Keep in a spray bottle to wipe down counters, appliances, windowsills, and even floors for a clean that cuts through dirt, grime, dust and spills.

Kitchens

Pouring 1/4 cup of baking soda down the kitchen drain helps keep your drains and garbage disposals smelling fresh.

Most kitchen drains can be unclogged by pouring in 1 cup baking soda followed by 1 cup hot vinegar (heat it up in the microwave for 1 minute). Give it several minutes to work, then add 1 quart boiling water. Repeat if necessary. If you know your drain is clogged with grease, use 1/2 cup each of baking soda and salt followed by 1 cup boiling water. Let the mixture work overnight; then rinse with hot tap water in the morning. NOTE: to keep your drains clear, pour a cup of plain yogurt down them once a month (the natural bacterias in yogurt dissolve grease and food residue).

Make your own dish soap by combining 2 tablespoons baking soda with 2 tablespoons borax.

To remove food odors from plastic containers, rinse with hot water and baking soda. For tough odors, let them soak in the solution overnight.

Remove newsprint, coffee and tea stains on counters using a paste of baking soda and water.

Remove stains and odors from coffee pots, blenders, and food processors by running a solution of 1 cup baking soda to 1 cup water through them.

Remove mineral deposits in metal coffeepots and teapots by filling them with a solution of 1 cup vinegar and 4 tablespoons baking soda. Bring the mixture to a boil, then let simmer for five minutes, rinse and allow to dry.

For burnt-on food in pans, sprinkle with baking soda then add boiling water. Let soak overnight and the dried-on food removes easily.

Remove even the toughest burned-on food remnants in your cast iron pans by boiling 1 quart water with 2 tablespoons baking soda for five minutes. Pour off most of the liquid, then lightly scrub with a plastic scrub pad. Rinse well, dry, and season with a few drops of cooking oil.

Keep a box of baking soda handy around the stove to sprinkle on grease fires.

To keep stainless steel sinks and appliances shiny and clean, wipe with a solution of 1 cup vinegar, 1/2 cup baking soda, and a cup of water. Allow to dry to a haze then wipe with a clean, dry cloth.

Keep the vegetable crisper in your refrigerator smelling fresh by sprinkling a little baking soda in the bottom.

Clean out your dishwasher using a gallon of hot water, a cup of baking soda and a cup of vinegar to break down hard water stains and get rid of any sour smells.

Does your wood cutting board or counters smell like onions or garlic? Use a thick paste of baking soda and water to scrub the smell right out.

To remove hard water spots and stains from glassware and coffee cups, make a thick paste of baking soda and water and rub it in with your dish cloth, then rinse clean.

To clean out your oven, make a paste of baking soda and vinegar for a fast-acting, powerful cleaner that tackles the worst baked on stains.

Clean grease stains off your stove top by wetting them with water then sprinkling on baking soda and scrubbing them with a damp sponge or towel.

To clean splatters off the inside of your microwave, put a solution of 2 tablespoons baking soda in 1 cup water in a microwave-safe container and cook on High for 2-3 minutes. Remove the container, then wipe down the microwave's moist interior with a damp paper towel.

Use a paste of 2 parts baking soda to 1 part water to "rub out" most scratches and knife cuts on kitchen countertops.

Revitalize marble and granite countertops by washing them with a soft cloth dipped in a solution of 3 tablespoons baking soda and 1 quart warm water. Let it stand for 15 minutes to a half hour, then rinse with plain water and wipe dry.

Bathrooms

To remove stubborn stains in the bathroom, make a paste of 3 parts baking soda to 1 part water and scrub, then wipe clean. Put a little on an old toothbrush to remove grout stains. For cleaning away soap scum and mildew in bath tubs and on shower doors, make a paste of 1 cup baking soda and ½ cup vinegar.

To keep the bowl clean, pour 1 cup of baking soda into your toilet tank once a month. Let it stand overnight, then give it a couple of flushes in the morning. This will clean and freshen both the tank and the bowl.

Clean tough stains in toilet bowls with a paste of baking soda and vinegar. Clean the outside by sprinkling a little baking soda on a damp rag and wiping down.

Around the House

Clean windows by washing with a wet cloth and a sprinkle of baking soda. Rub the baking soda on the window and then rinse off with another cloth with hot water.

Keep moisture from accumulating under sinks and in closets and attics with an open box of baking soda.

Clean your copper and silver with a thin paste of 3 parts baking soda, a pinch of salt, and 1 part water. Rub onto each item, rinse with warm water, then dry with a soft cloth.

Clean and polish brass and brass-plated items with a paste of 2 tablespoons flour, 1 tablespoon salt, 1 tablespoon baking soda, and enough vinegar to make a thick paste. Rub this mixture on with a soft cloth, leave it dry and then buff off for a great shine.

Clean the tracks and frames of aluminum windows and doors with a ½ cup baking soda, 1 cup vinegar, and 2 cups water in a spray bottle. Spray the track and then wipe clean with a soft cloth for a shine. For really dirty aluminum, mix ½ cup lemon juice with 1/4 cup baking soda.

To remove scuff marks or grease spills from floors, sprinkle with baking soda and wipe with a warm, damp cloth. This is safe even for no-wax floors. For ink and crayon stains, mix 1/4 cup baking soda with ½ cup vinegar and rub gently with an old toothbrush.

Use baking soda in the bottom of ash trays to remove smoking odors.

To keep carpets smelling fresh, sprinkle with baking soda, let stand 15 minutes, then vacuum. To clean spills, blot as much as possible then sprinkle with baking soda and vacuum. This will also decrease the chance that the some of the spilled item with remain in the carpet and cause unpleasant odors.

To quickly clean pets and remove wet odors, sprinkle a little baking soda on their fur and brush out.

If you really like your cedar chest for storage, but hate the smell of your personal items when they are stored in it, try sprinkling a little baking soda on the bottom of the cedar chest then place papers over top so it doesn't get on your personal items. You could even just keep a small box of baking soda in the cedar chest to cut the smells without the mess.

To clean jewelry, use a paste of baking soda and peroxide to rinse dirt off in no time. For extra shine, soak the jewelry overnight in a mixture of vinegar and water.

Ever have a book get wet? Sprinkle a little baking soda on the wet pages then flip through to dust off. To remove musty odors from books, place 2 tablespoons baking soda in a paper bag, set the book inside, and close the bag. Let it sit in a dry area for a week, then remove the book and shake off any loose powder.

Freshen your shoes and rubber gloves by sprinkling a little baking soda inside them.

Sprinkle mattresses and pillows with baking soda before replacing sheets.

Clean dirt and grease from your computer keyboard using a thin paste of vinegar and baking soda.

Add 1 tablespoonful of baking soda to each bucketful of warm water when stripping wallpaper to make the task easier.

Remove water rings from wood furniture by rubbing with a soft cloth dipped in a paste of baking soda and toothpaste.

Need to fill nail holes in the wall but don't have any spackling? Use a paste of baking soda and white toothpaste.

Got scratches on your CDs (this is NOT for use with DVDs)? Dip a wet paper towel into some baking soda and gently rub the CD. It will polish the edges of the scratches, which are the reason the CD won't play properly.

Eliminate musty smells from a humidifier by adding 2 tablespoons baking soda to the water each time you change it.

Laundry

Instead of fabric softener, add 1/2 cup of baking soda to your washing machine for the rinse cycle. Baking soda naturally softens water and adds no harsh chemicals that could irritate sensitive skin. For washing, replace half of measured detergent with baking soda to clean out stains and odors from your clothes, leaving whites whiter and colors brighter. Pretreat tough stains with a baking soda paste prior to washing. This even works for grease.

Using baking soda in your washer also aids in the removal of those unexpected surprises like candy and gum, which can then be easily scraped off with a plastic tool.

Clean shower curtains in the washer with 1 cup baking soda and 1 cup vinegar.

To get blood stains out of clothes, soak overnight in a cool bucket of water, with 1 cup vinegar and 1 cup baking soda. Never soak blood stains in hot water.

Remove scuff marks from leather jackets, shoes or purses with a soft toothbrush and a paste made from vinegar and baking soda. The vinegar will soften your leathers while the baking soda cleans it.

To clean suede, sprinkle dry baking soda on it and brush off.

To clean and remove scuff marks from white sneakers or dress shoes, mix a little baking soda and lemon juice and rub with a soft cloth or an old toothbrush (for tough stains).

Cooking

(Baking soda isn't just for baking)

To loosen any feathers or hairs left on chicken, rub the skin with baking soda then rinse with cold water. This also helps tenderize all kinds of meat. Just rub the baking soda into the meat, refrigerate for an hour, rinse off, and marinate, season, or cook as usual.

When canning or cooking wild game, add a pinch of baking soda to remove the "gamey" taste.

To remove the acid bitterness and tannins from coffee and tea, add a pinch of baking soda to the water while brewing. This also helps people with ulcers who shouldn't drink but still like coffee and tea.

Rubbing a little baking soda on the fat of a pork chop or on the skin of a chicken before baking will make it crispier and help keep the meat moist for a great taste.

Add 2 teaspoons of baking soda to a quart of water while boiling cauliflower or corn to keep the vegetables white and crisp.

When cooking or canning tomato sauce, salsa or whole tomatoes, add 2 tablespoons baking soda for every quarts of sauce to neutralize some of the acid in the tomatoes. This will also cut back on the time you have to boil/pressure cook tomatoes by 15 minutes.

When you want tender cabbage, add 3 tablespoons of baking soda per gallon of water to soften your cabbage faster. It also helps remove some of the gasses from the cabbage.

Have trouble digesting greasy foods? Add 1 teaspoon of baking soda to the grease while frying.

Wash fresh fruits and vegetables in a sinkful of water and a cup of baking soda to remove dirt and pesticides. Rinse and prepare as usual.

If you like fluffy scrambled eggs but you're out of milk, try adding 1 teaspoon of baking soda for every 2 eggs. The baking soda won't affect the taste.

You can make your own baking powder by mixing 1 tsp cream of tartar, 1 teaspoon baking soda, and 1 teaspoon cornstarch.

Need a stand-in for yeast when making dough? If you have some powdered vitamin C (or citric acid) and baking soda on hand, mix equal parts of the two to equal the quantity of yeast required. As an added benefit—the dough you add it to won't have to rise before baking.

Kids

Keep your kids busy by making your own clay. Use 2 cups baking soda, 1 cup cornstarch and 1 cup warm water to make clay child-friendly clay. You can add a couple of drops of food coloring to make different colors.

Keep your children's stuffed animals smelling fresh by putting them in a pillowcase, sprinkling them with baking soda, and then shake them around a bit.

Clean children's toys in a solution of 1/4 cup baking soda to 1 quart warm water. Either submerge or wipe clean, then rinse with clear water.

Clean baby bottles by soaking overnight with water and a few tablespoons of baking soda in each.

Add a cup of baking soda to the diaper pail to keep the urine smell from invading your home. Adding a sprinkle on each diaper helps fight smells and prevent diaper rash.

Pests

To kill roaches in your home, set out a milk jug lid with equal parts sugar and baking soda in an area where you know the roaches will be. Roaches are attracted to the sugar, and when eaten with the baking soda the mixture is deadly to them.

It takes about 3 to 4 days for the treatment to work before you see a reduction in the amount of roaches. Another thing to note it that cockroaches are cannibals and they will eat up their dead, so you will not have hoards of dead roaches behind your cupboards, etc. Caution! Keep out of reach of children and pets.

To keep ants away from your house, mix baking soda and salt and sprinkle it around where you see ants coming in.

Sprinkle baking soda around your pet's food dishes to keep bugs away from them.

To control fleas in your yard and on your pets, sprinkle baking soda in the parts of the yard where your pet spends time. It will need to be reapplied after each rain. Also, dusting your pet with baking soda and brushing it through their fur will help control fleas without harming your pet.

Does your pet scratch at his/her ears? Scratching usually indicates the presence of ear mites. Ease the itch (and wipe out any mites) by using a cotton ball dipped in a solution of 1 teaspoon baking soda in 1 cup warm water to gently wash the inside of his ears.

Outdoors

Sprinkle baking soda on grills to clean off burnt-on food. Let soak then brush off.

Clean lawn furniture and children's pools with a solution of 1/4 cup baking soda with 1 quart warm water.

Before packing away camping gear, sprinkle with baking soda.

To keep the battery terminals in your car clean, sprinkle with a little baking soda and brush off.

You can use baking soda just as you would salt on your walkways and driveway to melt ice and snow, and it's not as harsh on your paving.

To clean up grease and oil spills in the garage or driveway, sprinkle with baking soda, let it soak for one hour, then sweep away.

A paste of baking soda and water will clean the chrome and wheels of your car.

Remove road tar from your car by making a soft paste of 3 parts baking soda to 1 part water and apply to the tar spots with a damp cloth. Let it dry for five minutes, then rinse clean.

Not sure if your soil is acidic or alkaline? Perform this simple test: mix 1/4 cup baking soda with 2 cups water. Stir in a cup of soil. If the mixture foams up, your soil is acidic. If not, it's alkaline.

Make a spray out of baking soda, vinegar and water to spray on roses as a fungicide and to control insects.

Eliminate grass and weeds from cracks in your driveway and walkways by sprinkling baking soda on the pavement and sweeping it into the cracks. It also kills certain kinds of crabgrass and dollar weed in your yard without harming grass. Just sprinkle on top of the weed straight from the box.

Give your flowering, alkaline-loving plants, such as clematis, delphiniums, and dianthus, an occasional shower with a mild solution of 1 tablespoon baking soda in 2 quarts water. They'll show their appreciation with fuller, healthier blooms.