



# Extension News Column

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Spring will soon be upon us and for many of us, the idea of spring cleaning is around the corner. If you are like me and have a little bit of grime in the corners, there are some great ways to clean up without cleaning out your pocketbook.

First off, timing is everything. Many cleaners need to soak in for several minutes to do their job thoroughly, so don't start scrubbing immediately. Spray on the cleaner then find something else to clean or straighten. When you return to the original job, you'll have an easy wipe up job.

Here are some simple cleaners that work wonders for pennies.

Vinyl and ceramic tile floors will shine by using 1 cup of vinegar in one gallon of hot water. No need to rinse, and you will not have the water film that is sometimes left behind by plain water.

Window cleaner can be made by using 1 cup rubbing alcohol, 1 cup water, and a 1/4 cup of household ammonia. Spray it on the windows and use a piece of newspaper to scrub.

The rubbing alcohol keeps down the streaks.

When you need furniture polish, mix 3 cups of olive oil and 1 cup white vinegar.

Dampen a soft cloth and polish away.

For an all purpose spray cleaner, fill a 32 ounce spray bottle with water and add 1 tablespoon dishwashing liquid. Screw the top back on and shake. It smells great and is ready to clean.

Salt and ice are great for cleaning the inside of coffee pots, carafes, and thermos. Put 2 tablespoons of salt inside the carafe, add a few ice cubes and enough water to fill it about 1/3 full. If the stains are really tough, add a little lemon juice. Swirl it around, and pour out the coffee stains and grime.

If you have sluggish drains, pour a mixture of 1 cup salt, 1 cup baking soda and 1/2 cup of vinegar down the drain. Allow it to stand 15 minutes, then follow up with 2 quarts of boiling water.

Let's talk about the tough cleaning jobs. I have hard well water at my house, so lime and mineral deposits on faucets and other fixtures are my tough job. I soak a few paper towels in vinegar and wrap them around the lime deposit. In about an hour, I come back and the deposits are softened up and easy to remove. For really hard deposits, more than one application may be necessary.

Oven racks and grill racks can be easily cleaned by putting them in a plastic bag along with 1 cup of ammonia. Close the top, lay it flat (on a floor it can't harm), and let it set overnight. The next morning, the burned on gunk will rinse off with a squirt from the garden hose.

So shine up all the nooks and crannies of your home and you can enjoy the spring sun when it comes.