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From: Roxie Dinstel
Re: Pinching Pennies to run Mondays on page A-3
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The days are getting longer and the sunshine is invading all those corners of the house that we’ve been ignoring all winter. If spring cleaning is in order, there are great ways to clean without cleaning out your pocketbook.

Though great cleaners help, your best friend in cleaning is time. Many cleaners need time to work. Leave them alone for several minutes to soak in and do their job. Spray or sprinkle the cleaner and walk away. Find something else to clean and straighten while they work. Then when you do wipe up, it will be an easy chore.

While we are always on the lookout for that new magic cleaner, sometimes it is a great idea to go back to our grandma’s day and use what she did. The miracle cleaners of the day were baking soda, vinegar, lemon juice, salt, and even water. These are still effective cleaners and are very inexpensive. Not to mention, many of these are less caustic and abrasive than our more modern cleaners.

Vinyl and ceramic tile will shine if you use 1 cup vinegar in a gallon of hot water. There’s no need to rinse and you won’t have the film that is sometime left behind by plain water.

One of my jobs as a teenager was to clean all the windows in the new houses built by my father’s construction company. No one wants to move into a new house with dirty windows. Our cleaner was 1 cup of rubbing alcohol, 1 cup water, and ¼ cup of ammonia. Spray it on the windows and use a newspaper to scrub. The alcohol eliminates streaks.

For an all-purpose spray cleaner, fill a spray bottle with water and add 1 tablespoon dishwashing liquid. Put the top back on and shake it well. It smells great and works beautifully.
Baking soda is a mild abrasive and absorbs odors. Sprinkle it onto a damp sponge to
tackle grimy bathtub rings, scour vanities, or remove food deposits from the kitchen
sink.

For tougher grime, make a paste of baking soda and water, apply to the tub or sink,
and allow it to stand for 10 to 20 minutes. Dirt, soap scum and deposits soften and
are easier to remove.

White vinegar dissolves dirt, soap scum, and hard water deposits from smooth
surfaces, yet is gentle enough to use in solution to clean hardwood flooring.

It is a natural deodorizer, absorbing odors instead of covering them up. With no
coloring agents, white vinegar won’t stain grout on tiled surfaces. Because it cuts
detergent residue, white vinegar makes a great fabric softener substitute for
families with sensitive skin.

Salt and ice are great for cleaning the inside of coffee pots and thermoses. Put two
tablespoons of salt inside the pot, add a few ice cubes, and then 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 grime.

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
(or overnight for the tough ones), the deposits can be scrubbed away. For really
tough deposits, you might have to do more than one application.

Oven racks and grills can be cleaned by placing them in a plastic bag with 1 cup of
ammonia. Close the top, lay it flat (on a surface that 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.

Never forget about the power of water. Simply soaking those hard cleaning jobs in
water can make them much easier to finish.

Shine up all the nooks and crannies of your home and you’ll be ready to enjoy the
summer weather, which is just around the corner.

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