

Salty Vixen's Cleaning Guide



A realistic cleaning schedule:

Don't stress about cleaning your whole place at once. Get started with our one-day-at-a-time plan that groups like tasks together to save you prep and cleaning time. Check off your chores as you complete each day of the week.

MONDAY

Make it Mop Monday because floors tend to take a beating over the weekend. If you don't have time to vacuum or mop the entire house on Monday, focus on these high-traffic areas:

- Foyer/entry
- Stairs
- Family room/den
- Mudroom
- Bedrooms
- Under the kitchen table
- Bathrooms

TUESDAY

It's all about the bathrooms today on Toilet Tuesday. How often you clean your toilets depends on use, but weekly is a good place to start.

- Scrub toilets
- Clean bathtubs and showers
- Disinfect bathroom sinks and counters
- Spray plastic shower curtains with disinfectant; wash as needed
- Change out the towels
- Take bath mats outside and give them a good shake
- Check toiletries to see what you're running low on

WEDNESDAY

Wipe It Wednesday eradicates dust, germs, and grime. Basically, if it has a surface, clean it today. Your surfaces and items to dust or wipe down will vary but likely include:

- Mirrors
- Ceiling fans & Light Fixtures
- Doorknobs
- Windowsills
- Blinds
- Refrigerator handles
- Refrigerator shelves
- Microwave
- Stove
- Toaster
- Tabletops
- Counters
- TV
- Furniture

THURSDAY

Today is Throw It Out Thursday. Organizing your home isn't a once-and-done project. Instead, do a little decluttering and editing every week, and you'll avoid those daunting piles of stuff. Train your eyes to seek out anything outdated, unwanted, or expired—and donate, recycle, or dispose right now. Some common clutter you can tackle quickly today:

- Junk mail
- Magazines
- Catalogs
- Newspapers
- Food
- Clothes with holes
- School or craft projects you don't plan on keeping

FRIDAY

Fold It Friday is all about the laundry. Whether it's the kids' school clothes or your work clothes, now is the time to get everything washed and folded or hung up.

Today you will:

- Soak and treat clothes with tough stains
- Make sure sports uniforms are ready for weekend games
- Launder bedroom linens
- Wash towels
- Fold clean laundry
- Iron
- Hand-wash delicate items
- Put away clean clothes
- Clean blankets and wash bed skirts and mattress protectors (once a month is a good goal)
- Ready dry-clean-only items for delivery

SATURDAY

You've worked hard all week, so today is Slow It Down Saturday. Set a timer for just 20 minutes, and clean the areas that need it most. Enlist the help of anyone who lives with you—having them work alongside you or assigning them their own spaces—so you get more done in less time.

SUNDAY

Take a break for Self-Care Sunday! Enjoy your day off.

Assemble Your Cleaning Kit:

Nothing feels better than having all the necessary supplies close at hand. Fortunately, you can gather the essential tools for a hardworking kit quickly and without spending a fortune. Stock your caddy or cabinet with our must-haves, and rest assured you'll be ready for just about any mess that comes your way.

ALL PURPOSE:

Consider the items below your core cleaning crew. Since you'll be using these items often, select good-quality versions and stock up on extras as your storage space allows.

Microfiber cloths: The synthetic fibers in these cloths help lift dirt and dust. Stock up on a range of sizes, thicknesses, and textures. Toss them in the washer after using.

Cotton cloths: Although microfiber gets most of the attention, classic cotton is a go-to for polishing shiny surfaces and absorbing spills. Again, have various sizes, thicknesses, and textures on hand.

Paper towels: Sometimes you just need a paper towel to lift grime. Look for towels made from recycled material or unbleached paper, which composts faster.

Spray bottles: Regardless of whether you prefer a plastic or glass container, opt for a pump and trigger that's sturdy and comfortable.

Glass cleaner: Select a commercial brand or make your own

Bucket: One sturdy plastic pail that holds 2.5 to 3 gallons will take care of most cleaning needs. A comfortable handle and integrated spout are essential features.

Magic Eraser: These dense foam pads are a cross between a sponge and ultrafine sandpaper. The abrasiveness lifts a wide range of stains, as well as a thin top layer. Avoid use on soft materials (marble, stone, wood) and know that most painted surfaces will eventually need repainting after frequent use.

Dish soap: Dawn is a popular pick, but any liquid soap that cuts through grease is essential when doing the dishes or scrubbing vents, floors, and appliances.⁰²

Cleaning vinegar: This inexpensive acidic liquid both disinfects and deodorizes. Distilled white vinegar will do the job most of the time, but you can break out the more-acidic cleaning vinegar for tough stains and major mold problems.

Baking soda: Simple sodium bicarbonate is just abrasive enough to lift stains and make surfaces shine. Pair it with an acid, such as vinegar or lemon, for a foaming cleanser

All-purpose bleach: When used in moderation and with good ventilation, this laundry staple disinfects and whitens. Warning: Never combine bleach with ammonia or other cleaners.

Duster: Our preferred tool has an extendable handle and an electrostatic head that can be washed or replaced.

Nylon broom: and dust pan Go with a classic “kitchen broom” with angled bristles. Bonus: Nylon is easy to rinse or wash after use.

Vacuum cleaner: Shop your options and test-drive a few models before you commit to a type of vacuum cleaner. Look for options that help with special considerations like pets or allergies.

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Other Items to Have on Hand

Your cleaning needs are unique, so consider adding the following tools to your kit based on your budget and storage space.

- Pumice or stone block (for cleaning hard water stains on ceramic and porcelain)
- Drain-clearing tool or drain snake
- Citrus-oil cleaner for removing adhesive (like Goo Gone)
- Wood cleaner/polish
- Oil soap
- Dryer balls (an eco-friendly alternative to fabric softener sheets)
- String mop
- Stain-fighting bar soap (like Fels-Naptha)
- Clothing steamer
- Bleach
- Oxygen-based whitener/brightener (like OxiClean)
- Handheld vacuum
- Stick vacuum
- Push broom
- Steam mop
- Steam cleaner
- Dusting mitt
- Extendable duster
- Step stool or ladder



KITCHEN:

A clean cook space requires daily attention. Keep the following helpers close at hand (perhaps in a plastic caddy under the sink) and get ready to enjoy spotless dishes, pans, appliances, and other surfaces.

Reusable gloves: Protect your hands while washing the dishes or working with harsh chemicals (especially commercial oven cleaner). Look for textured fingertips to improve your grip and fold-up cuffs to catch drips before they run down your arms.

Mildly abrasive dry cleanser: Simply shake out a powdered cleanser on stainless steel or ceramic and rub with a sponge or other tool to lift baked-on and dried stains. Baking soda fits the bill here, as do off-the-shelf options.

Cellulose sponge: Although they're manufactured, this type of sponge is made of compostable wood and other materials, so they can absorb spills and scrub many different surfaces. This sponge can be recycled or composted.

Scrubbers: The sponge's rougher cousin, scrubbers are made of various materials, including coarse plastic mesh or shredded coconut husk. The texture and durability help lift baked and dried-on stains.

Scraper: This piece of angled plastic or hard rubber chisels away stuck-on food and cooking spills without marring the surface.

BATH:

Despite its relatively small size, the bathroom has a lot of surfaces and fixtures to clean. Your specific choices for tools and cleaners will be based on what your fixtures and surfaces are made of, but you'll likely need all of the following items.

Multipurpose surface cleaner: Off-the-shelf foaming cleaners are classic, but again, the proper mix of baking soda and vinegar can be used on the sink, tub, and tile to make these surfaces gleam.

Nylon scrub brush: This is the essential tool to scrub away grime without scratching tile, stone, or fiberglass. Choose a shape and size that fit your hand comfortably.

Squeegee Wipe: away glass cleaner—or water drops before they dry and leave a cloudy residue—with this rubber-edged tool.

Toilet bowl cleaner: Both commercial cleaners and combinations of basic household ingredients can be effective. Just be sure to follow all safety recommendations when using and storing.

Toilet brush: You'll be able to reach every inch of the bowl with a brush that features a compact head and stiff plastic bristles. We prefer brush/holder sets that catch drips in between cleaning sessions.

LAUNDRY:

Nothing compares to freshly laundered clothing and linens. Get the best results and make washday less of a chore when you add the following to your routine.

Laundry detergent: The choice is yours: Liquid detergent doubles as a stain remover. Powder is often the least expensive. Or go with Pods for peak convenience.

Stain pretreaters: There are tons of specialty pens, sprays, and roll-ons available today. Most work, but so does an inexpensive homemade collection that includes hydrogen peroxide, rubbing alcohol, borax, and white chalk (to help absorb oil and grease stains).

Washtub: An inexpensive plastic basin allows you to soak stains and hand-wash garments.

Fabric softener: Adding commercial liquid softener (as well as vinegar) to a load of laundry eliminates static, minimizes wrinkles, and keeps fabrics feeling great.

Stain brush: Dedicate a small, soft-bristle brush to working on stains. Yes, a toothbrush will work too.

Drying line or rack: This could be a cord you stretch across your tub or a collapsible rack you set up as needed. The point is to create a spot to hang or drape wet items and allow them to air-dry, wrinkle-free.

Iron and ironing board: or pad Smooth wrinkles with a hot iron and insulated surface.

Lint roller or brush: Sticky rollers do a great job removing pet hair and other lightweight debris from clothing. A reusable garment brush will also do the job.

Make Your Own Cleaners:

Some of the best cleaning products can be found in your pantry: vinegar, lemons, baking soda. Here's how to use them.

VINEGAR:

Vinegar cleans and deodorizes almost as well as commercial all-purpose cleaners. Mix equal parts water and vinegar in a spray bottle and use the mixture to clean many areas of your home. Don't worry about your home smelling like vinegar. The smell disappears when it dries. Try the following:

In the bathroom: Clean the tub, toilet, sink, and countertops with the 1-to-1 vinegar and water spray solution. The solution will clean away soap scum and hard water stains on your fixtures and tile. You can also use it to mop tile or vinyl floors. If you have unsightly rings in the toilet bowl, flush the toilet to allow the water level to go down, then pour in undiluted vinegar and scrub.

In the kitchen: Clean the top of the stove, appliances, and countertop surfaces with equal parts vinegar and water. Use vinegar to clean floors.

In the laundry: Using vinegar as a natural fabric softener can be especially helpful for families with sensitive skin issues. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ 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. Try using it to clean your washing machine as well.

WARNING

Vinegar can discolor or damage some surfaces, so test it on a hidden area first to ensure no color change or damage occurs.

LEMONS:

Lemon juice dissolves soap scum and hard water deposits, and it's great for reviving brass and copper. Lemon's natural bleaching qualities make it a good choice for treating stains, but test it out on a hidden area first. Try some of these applications for lemons:

As a paste: Mix lemon juice with vinegar and baking soda.

On dishes, surfaces, and stains: Cut a lemon in half and sprinkle baking soda on the cut section of the lemon. Use it as you would a sponge.

As furniture polish: Mix 1 cup of olive oil with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of lemon juice to make a polish for hardwood furniture.

As a garbage disposal/drain deodorizer: Put a whole lemon peel or orange peel through the garbage disposal; it freshens the drain and the kitchen.

BAKING SODA:

Baking soda is so versatile. Use it as a nonabrasive scrubber for surface stains or as a deodorizer in the fridge, garbage, laundry, and smelly shoes. Try it:

As a paste: Measure $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of baking soda into a small glass bowl and add hydrogen peroxide to create a thick paste. Use paste to brighten grout.

As a drain unclogger: Pour in 1 cup of baking soda followed by 1 cup of heated vinegar. (Heat in a glass bowl in the microwave.)

As an oven cleaner and grease remover: Sprinkle baking soda on metal pans or surfaces and top with boiling vinegar. Let sit for 30 minutes before wiping.

As a mildew killer: Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of baking soda to laundry along with detergent. For the rinse cycle, add 1 cup of vinegar to kill bacteria and soften the fabric.

How to Use Bleach

A bleach solution can be used in place of household disinfectants to kill germs on surfaces. However, it's important to know how to use the product correctly. Here are the best ways to clean with bleach.

BLEACH IS AN OXIDIZING AGENT, NOT A SURFACE CLEANER. Oxidizing agents react with surfaces and break chemical bonds, which helps to kill germs and whiten pigments. But they don't actually remove soil on their own. You will need to scrub and rinse the surface first, then apply a bleach solution to disinfect.

BLEACH IS USEFUL BEYOND THE LAUNDRY. Besides adding it to laundry to whiten clothes, remove stains, and disinfect fabrics, you can use it to clean kitchen and bathroom nonporous surfaces, including sinks, toilets, and bathtubs. Those areas are prone to bacterial and fungal growth, against which bleach can be effective.

BLEACH AS CLEANER SHOULD BE DILUTED. Add 5 tablespoons of unscented bleach per every gallon of room temperature water or, for smaller jobs, add 4 teaspoons of bleach per every quart of water. Plan to mix a new solution each day of use since it loses effectiveness over time.

How to Make Aromatic Vinegar Cleaner

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup white vinegar (distilled)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
12–24 drops of essential oil

ESSENTIAL OILS YOU MIGHT WANT TO MIX INTO YOUR VINEGAR CLEANING SOLUTION

INCLUDE:

basil
bergamot
cinnamon
clove
eucalyptus
grapefruit
lime
oregano
rosemary
thyme

ESSENTIAL OIL COMBINATIONS



lavender



tea tree



lavender



orange



lavender



mint

How to get Rid of Fruit Flies-

Fruit flies can be so annoying, but you probably already have everything you need to rid them from your house.

The secret ingredient is apple cider vinegar.

FIRST:

COMPOST OR BAKE ANY OVERRIPE FRUIT THAT MAY BE ATTRACTING THE FLIES.

Grab a small bowl or jar, dish soap, and a bottle of apple cider vinegar. Pour about 1 cup apple cider vinegar into the bowl or jar.

Then, add a couple drops of dish soap. Do not mix the soap and vinegar. Fruit flies are attracted to the smell of apple cider vinegar and will attempt to land on it, but they're in for a big surprise.

Since the dish soap breaks the surface tension, the fruit flies will just fall in. Place the bowl where you've seen the flies, and let it work its magic.

That's it! Those fruit flies will be taken care of in no time.



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