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20 uses for vinegar that you never knew

Aug 08, 2012 · 60 Comments »

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Part of being prepared is being able to repurpose and re-use items. That's why vinegar is such a great thing!

You can use vinegar for cleaning, emergency situations, food storage and more! Take a look at 20 uses below. You can also comment below to tell us what you have used vinegar for.

1. Clear dirt off PCs and electronics

Your computer, printer, fax machine, and other home office gear will work better if you keep them clean and dust-free. Turn off your machine and wash with a mix of equal parts white vinegar and water. Wash with a cloth, not a spray bottle. You can use cotton swabs for tight spaces.

2. Get rid of smoke odor

If you've recently burned a steak or can't get rid of that cigarette smell, remove the lingering smoky odor by placing a shallow bowl about three-quarters full of white or cider vinegar in the room where the scent is strongest. To get the smell out of the air, moisten a cloth and wave it in the air.

3. Wipe away mildew

Use undiluted vinegar to wipe away heavy mildew stains. Mix it with water to clean light mildew stains. You can even use a vinegar mist in a spray bottle to prevent mildew stains from forming in rugs and carpets.

4. Clean chrome and stainless steel

To clean chrome and stainless steel fixtures around your home, apply a light misting of undiluted white vinegar from a recycled spray bottle. Buff with a soft cloth to bring out the brightness.

5. Unglue stickers, decals, and price tags

Don't you hate when you peel a sticker off of your new furniture or product and it's still sticky from the glue? Worry no more! Use full-strength white vinegar and gently scrape it off the product. Use an expired credit card to scrape. You can also use this solution to get glue off of glass, plastic and walls.

6. Brighten up brickwork

Have dingy bricks around your fireplace? Use 1 cup of white vinegar mixed with 1 gallon of warm water to scrub the area. Your bricks will be looking shiny and nice!

7. Revitalize wood paneling

You can also use vinegar to shine up your dull wood paneling. Mix 1 pint warm water with 4 tablespoons white or apple cider vinegar and 2 tablespoons olive oil. Let the mixture soak for a few minutes and then polish.

8. Remove carpet stains

You can lift out many stains from your carpet with vinegar:

For light stains, mix 2 tablespoons salt with ½ cup white vinegar. Rub into the stain, let try and vacuum.

For tough, ground-in dirt and other stains, make a paste of 1 tablespoon vinegar with 1 tablespoon cornstarch, and rub it into the stain using a dry cloth. Let it set for two days, then vacuum.

9. Keep car windows frost-free

Vinegar is a great way to keep frost from forming on your car windows. Spray the outside of your windows with a mixture of 3 parts white vinegar to 1 part water.

10. Refresh your refrigerator

Have you ever smelled a refrigerator that hasn't been used for a long time? It's gross! You can freshen up your fridge with a mixture of equal parts white vinegar and water. You can use the solution to wash the interior and exterior of the fridge.

11. Steam-clean your microwave

Fill a bowl with 1 cup water and ¼ cup vinegar. Set the bowl in the microwave and cook on high for 5 minutes. Once the bowl cools down, use the solution to wipe off the walls of the microwave.

12. Disinfect cutting boards

Use full-strength white vinegar to clean wood cutting boards or butcher block countertops. This is a great alternative to dishwasher detergent because it can weaken surfaces and wood fiber. It disinfects against E.coli, salmonella and staphylococcus.

13. Clean china, crystal, and glassware

Have soap spots and dingy spots on your dishes after you put them in the dishwasher? Simply add a few ounces of vinegar to your dishwasher. It will prevent those hard-water stains from showing up.

14. Trap fruit flies

Did you bring home fruit flies from the market? You can make traps for them that can be used anywhere around your house by filling an old jar about halfway with apple cider vinegar. Punch a few holes in the lid, screw it back on, and you're good to go.

15. Tenderize and purify meats and seafood

Soaking a lean or inexpensive cut of red meat in a couple of cups of vinegar breaks down tough fibers to make it more tender. You can also use vinegar to tenderize seafood steaks. Let the meat or fish soak in full-strength vinegar overnight.

16. Control your dandruff

Can't wear those black shirts because your dandruff will show? Vinegar to the rescue! After shampooing, rinse your hair with a mixture of 2 cups apple cider vinegar and 2 cups cold water.

17. Ease sunburn and itching

Gently rub a sunburn or rash with cotton balls or a soft cloth soaked with white or cider vinegar. Try to apply this before the sunburn begins to sting. You can use this to help treat insect bites or rashes from poison ivy or poison oak.

18. Clean your eyeglasses

When it's more difficult to see with your glasses on than it is with them off, it's a clear indication that they're in need of a good cleaning. Applying a few drops of white vinegar to your glass lenses and wiping them with a soft cloth will easily remove dirt, sweat, and fingerprints, and leave them spotless. Don't use vinegar on plastic lenses, however.

19. Stop reds from running

Unless you have a fondness for pink-tinted clothing, take one simple precaution to prevent red washable clothes from ruining your wash loads. Soak your new clothes in a few cups of undiluted white vinegar for 10-15 minutes before their first washing. You'll never have to worry about running colors again! This also works with other bright colors that you worry might run.

20. Speed germination of flower seed

You can get woody seeds, such as moonflower, passionflower, morning glory, and gourds, off to a healthier start by lightly rubbing them between a couple of sheets of fine sandpaper—and soaking them overnight in a solution of 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar and 1 pint warm water. Next morning, remove the seeds from the solution, rinse them off, and plant them.

(Hat tip to [Reader's Digest](#) for help with this article)

Your solutions!

What have you used vinegar for? Comment below and share your knowledge!



60 Responses to "20 uses for vinegar that you never knew"

[esther benedict](#) wrote:

I have used straight vinegar (cider) on fireant bites and any kind of bug bite to relieve the itch and pain.

August 9th, 2012 at 10:09 am

[Marlene Lauder](#) wrote:

I use vinegar as the rinse agent in the dishwasher. Instead of Jet Dry, I just fill the rinse agent cavity in my

August 9th, 2012 at 10:26 am

[Marlene Laudee](#) wrote:

Instead of Jet Dry I use white vinegar in my dishwasher as the rinse agent. Simply fill the dispenser cup in the door with white vinegar, set the machine to wash and your dishes come out sparkling clean.

I also use white vinegar as the fabric softener in the

August 9th, 2012 at 10:35 am

[Jon](#) wrote:

Clean my distiller boiler tank by soaking tank in full strength white vinegar overnight. Dissolves most mineral deposits and allows me to continue to distill my well water again. I have heavy minerals like lime and calcium and it removes them just fine. No commercial cleaners necessary.

August 9th, 2012 at 10:52 am

[Jon](#) wrote:

Clean my distiller boiler tank by soaking tank in full strength white vinegar overnight. Dissolves most mineral deposits and allows me to continue to distill my well water again. I have heavy minerals like lime and calcium and it removes them just fine. No commercial cleaners necessary.

August 9th, 2012 at 10:52 am

[Steven Hogan](#) wrote:

Two or three Teaspoons swallowed a day helps your digestive tract and purifies your blood, I also used it to stop infections (in the field) applied to cuts and scrapes. It is a great all around disinfectant cleaner, I prefer using it along with fresh lemon juice in my kitchen.

It's uses in cooking, sauces, dressings are endless.....

August 9th, 2012 at 11:36 am

[Steven Hogan](#) wrote:

Oh, I forgot one- Spray your tomato plants with a good coating of stout vinegar water to prevent plants from be eaten by tomato worms(moth larva) and other insects

August 9th, 2012 at 11:42 am

[Cherie](#) wrote:

#1 Vinegar and baking soda mixture for stinky socks on a small load in hot water wash.

#2 Straight vinegar/alcohol equal amount combo- on work related stains in uniforms, pour on stain and let set an hour then wash.

#3 Straight vinegar on chrome of vehicle and headlights/tailights/mirrors/glass use a cotton cloth to prevent scratches.

August 9th, 2012 at 11:45 am

[Stephen Hanley](#) wrote:

I used to vinegar to wipe down picnic tables. Flies left the area and did not return to the picnic table.

I sprayed vinegar to the exposed areas of my body such as my arms, legs and neck and did not get mosquito bites. This was especially helpful in the evening in the rural areas of the Dominican Republic.

August 9th, 2012 at 12:04 pm

[ellie49](#) wrote:

It kills weeds! (But don't get it on plants that you WANT to grow!)

August 9th, 2012 at 12:38 pm

[Joe](#) wrote:

Clean Automatic Drip Coffee Makers

Pour about 1/2 cup of Vinegar into the water recepticle and turn on the coffee maker running through the brew cycle, then follow with a cup of water.

August 9th, 2012 at 12:42 pm

[Cheryl Carroll](#) wrote:

I've used vinegar to clean my coffee maker, and to clean the shower head.

August 9th, 2012 at 12:51 pm

[Dawn](#) wrote:

Fabric softener,

August 9th, 2012 at 12:54 pm

[Jaime](#) wrote:

We use undiluted white vinegar as a laundry softener. Our clothes are softer and smell better than they did using liquid softener.

August 9th, 2012 at 12:56 pm

[Terry Watson](#) wrote:

Use 1 cup vinegar when washing full load of bath towels and dish towels. It makes them fluffy and absorbent. (do not add fabric softener either in the wash or the dryer.)

August 9th, 2012 at 12:57 pm

[Geno](#) wrote:

Awesome info, keep it coming!

August 9th, 2012 at 1:12 pm

[joe](#) wrote:

it's also good if you mix it 50/50 and drink a half cup to get rid of a head ache.

August 9th, 2012 at 1:18 pm

[VICKI](#) wrote:

A washing machine repairman once told me to use vinegar instead of fabric softener. Absolutely no smell, your clothes are soft, and is a lot cheaper. That was 3 years ago. I been using it ever since.

August 9th, 2012 at 1:24 pm

[Kamie](#) wrote:

Excellent article, thank you! Before I started looking into emergency preparedness and homesteading, I had no idea vinegar was so useful. I'd never bought it.

Seriously. Now I stock up on it. Thanks!!

August 9th, 2012 at 1:27 pm

[Cynthia Salyer](#) wrote:

I use vinegar with baking soda for cleansing agents for sinks, bathroom fixtures, ceramic top stove...it acts as a natural disinfectant and works as well as commercial scrubbing agents. Vinegar and baking soda in their own right are natural ingredients and each dismiss bad odors.

Also, use vinegar in water to mop our floors. Our tile man told us when he laid the ceramic tile to ONLY use this for cleaning the tiles...it cleans better than anything, it is natural and will not harm the ceramic tile and will not take off the sheen on the tile. The vinegar/water solution does not leave residue or streaks, and the floor dries faster.

Vinegar is also good for cleaning windows/mirrors. Spray on surface and wipe down with old newspaper. Amazing!

AND, one of the benefits I have found in addition to low cost, it helps to deodorize the house...remember that it absorbs odors? Well, there you are ... it is multi-purpose.

August 9th, 2012 at 1:30 pm

[woodee](#) wrote:

Nice!

How about a printer-friendly option?

August 9th, 2012 at 1:52 pm

[Cliff](#) wrote:

For indigestion (not acid reflux) instead of using an antacid (which dries up all the acid in your stomach causing it to generate a BUNCH all at once) I take a shot glass and fill it half full of either white vinegar or apple cider vinegar. Take my shot and indigestion is cured INSTANTLY (within a minute or so!)

August 9th, 2012 at 1:54 pm

[Marlene Lauder](#) wrote:

I use vinegar as the rinse agent in the dishwasher. Instead of Jet Dry, I just fill the rinse agent cavity in the door with white vinegar, and you'll get sparkling clean dishes.

I also use vinegar as a fabric softener for the laundry. Just fill the fabric softener dispenser with white vinegar and set the machine to "Wash". You'll be surprised at how soft your clothes are!

August 9th, 2012 at 1:58 pm

[Mark](#) wrote:

Plain white distilled vinegar is also used to counteract the poison from a jellyfish sting.

August 9th, 2012 at 2:02 pm

[jane](#) wrote:

White vinegar is also fabulous at killing weeds. You dont have to spend a fortune on those expensive gallons of weed killer. Put straight white vinegar in a spray bottle

and spray on weeds. By the next day they will be yellow and die exactly like weed killer. A gallon is only 99 cents.how much better can you get!

August 9th, 2012 at 2:07 pm

Colleen wrote:

Just read the vinegar solutions – there is a sketch of a woman cleaning the shower –

Can vinegar be used to clean fiberglass shower stalls? Hope you say yes! The commercial stuff is awful and the shower never looks clean.

thank you -

Colleen Marie

August 9th, 2012 at 2:07 pm

B Neal wrote:

The article brought many new ideas to light and a new item to my preparedness kit. Keep the information coming.

August 9th, 2012 at 2:11 pm

Peter wrote:

Cleans out mineral deposits clogging water heater coils (in furnace). Just get a hand-drill pump from any hardware store. Use garden hoses to connect pump to coil input valve. Connect another hose to output valve and circulate straight clear vinegar through coil for 15 minute. Works great! Plumbers charge \$300 buck for an acid wash.

August 9th, 2012 at 2:29 pm

Tracey wrote:

I use a 1/2 cup vinegar mixed with water in a spray bottle to clean my laminate floors. Just a lightly spray sections, mop it, DONE!

August 9th, 2012 at 9:08 am

Linda wrote:

My grandmother used to use vinegar to clean the outside of her windows. I remember it got all the hard water off but cannot remember how she did it or what the solution recipe was. Does anyone know?

August 9th, 2012 at 9:46 am

Julian Stovall wrote:

My wife uses white distilled vinegar instead of fabric softener in the wash rinse cycle. It has been working great, leaves no residue and seems to help rinse the detergent out of the clothes. Overall clothes seem cleaner.

August 9th, 2012 at 10:27 am

Rob Dell wrote:

I always use full strength white vinegar to eliminate pesky squirrels. It's easy and effective. Pour full strength white vinegar into a 3 quart pot to about 4-5 inches depth.

Catch the squirrels with a net and hold them face-down in the vinegar until they stop twitching. After that, the treated squirrels will no longer raid your bird feeder. Try it and see for yourself.

August 9th, 2012 at 11:11 am

Arlyn wrote:

1oz of white vinegar in spray bottle fill with water then you use for iron the clothes that have hard wrinkles is great

August 9th, 2012 at 11:13 am

Dranda wrote:

With all the animal abuse going on, I don't think Rob Dell is funny. Your suggestion is cruel, and I'm sure that is how you treat the people and animals in your life. Lets keep this to the cleaning or health uses of vinegar not animal abuse.

August 9th, 2012 at 11:35 am

Thom wrote:

I mix 1 part apple cider vinegar with 7-8 parts water and soak blueberries, cherries, etc. or any other produce prone to developing fungus in the refrigerator for about 2 minutes. Usually, my blueberries will keep for a couple weeks longer. And you never taste the vinegar. Great article.

August 9th, 2012 at 12:52 pm

Joseph Christopher wrote:

Instead of buying costly shampoos for lice (I know...yuck!)mix 50% vinegar w/ 50 % alcohol to kill the nasty things. Wash the affected areas; let dry; wash with your regular shampoo and comb out. No, I have never had them, but they have been a problem in some of my friends childrens schools.

August 9th, 2012 at 3:02 pm

Rich wrote:

Vinegar is also called Acetic acid.

That is why it is such a good cleaner.

August 9th, 2012 at 3:06 pm

Mary S. wrote:

In stead of taking costly medications for acid indigestion that rolls up in your throat and burns, I get up and go get the (raw) apple cider vinegar out of the fridge, put 1 tablespoon in a glass of water and drink it straight down.

Indigestion gone, no pills, no antacids pure raw apple cider vinegar, and the indigestion is gone and no side effects either. Another benefit from it, it seems not to come back for a long time but when it does back to the fridge and another 1 tablespoon and a glass of water. IT's great.

August 9th, 2012 at 4:50 pm

Ben Novick wrote:

For medical marijuana growers, soak seeds in a 8 oz glass of water with ten drops of distilled white vinegar and most will sprout within 48 hrs.

August 9th, 2012 at 7:38 pm

Kathy Abbott wrote:

I use it to clean my bird cages

August 9th, 2012 at 8:19 pm

Rose wrote:

If you have food poisoning or stomach flu drink some with water. You will most likely throw up once, but will wonderful afterwards. Rinse mouth with vinegar if you have a toothache or sore throat it will kill the pain. Kidney stones- drink vinegar and you will pass them faster and easier and it will help with some of the pain. Have tried all and it does work

August 10th, 2012 at 4:13 am

Rose wrote:

Good for getting rid of dandruff. Spray on scalp and rub in and let it set for few hours. You won't have a problem with dandruff for good while. Also good for making your hair soft, use it instead of hair conditioner. It also is also good for dissolving the nits in hair after treating hair for lice with anything oily, like mayonnaise, cooking oil, baby oil.

August 10th, 2012 at 4:26 am

Btherbs wrote:

Wipe down counters, floors, etc where ants have been. This destroys their trails and may prevent ants in the future.

Rob Dell: I hope you are joking although it is not funny. A better solution – add hot pepper flakes to your bird seed and/or sprinkle ground cinnamon around the base of the bird feeder or other areas where squirrels are a problem. This should take care of the problem without the cruelty. And, the birds don't mind.

August 10th, 2012 at 8:06 am

Molly Gordon wrote:

If you suffer from leg cramps especially at night...take a spoonful of vinegar and they will be gone!

August 10th, 2012 at 8:55 am

Patrick R. wrote:

Run a Cycle of Vinegar Diluted with Water to Clean the Build-Up, especially from Hard-Water, in a Coffee Brewer/Pot.

August 10th, 2012 at 12:49 pm

Tore wrote:

Hi!

Please keep in mind that as carbs are not carbs (but high glycemic or low glycemic).

Fats are not fats (but Omega 3, 6, or 9; trans, etc.)

So, vinegar is not vinegar.

For laundry and other cleaning purposes, use white vinegar.

For consumption, apple cider vinegar (brown) is best. Paul Bragg's vinegar with the "Mother" still present is the absolute best for medicinal or recipe applications. White vinegar is not a wise choice for consumption.

August 10th, 2012 at 1:28 pm

DAVID wrote:

For a sore throat, a couple three tbl spoons(whatever you stand) in a glass of orange juice, and sip...kills germs like a hammer kills ants, tho less violent....for emergency prep: a lot of vinegar and a lot of honey. Both can be used internally and externally to treat wounds...a dab of honey on cuts or larger cleaned wounds works better than expensive antibiotic creams. Dilute vinegar in juice also cleans your teeth.....NEVER drink vinegar straight! too pwoerful...tastes terrible too....

August 10th, 2012 at 1:41 pm

Tore wrote:

Hi! David has a great and worthy tip. But again, be aware that honey is not honey.

Most major brands and generic brands of honey today are from China and are seriously diluted. In an alarming number of cases, they actually have contaminants that could infect a wound or feed the bacteria present.

Use raw honey; preferably organic. Try to obtain your honey from a local beekeeper or at a farmer's market.

Top of the line in effectiveness is Raw Manuka honey (expensive) which usually is graded for its bioactivity (usually from 15 to 35).

August 10th, 2012 at 3:01 pm

Michelle wrote:

My children would get incredibly high fevers when they were younger. Even after a dose of Motrin or Tylenol, they were still high.

My boss once told me to soak their socks in vinegar, then put them on. Yes, the house smelled funny for a while, but every single time it broke their fever.

August 10th, 2012 at 7:29 pm

sue wrote:

i dont think youre very funny mr squirrel man. matter of fact, dont think id want you in my pack....

August 10th, 2012 at 11:41 pm

Betty wrote:

I don't think your idea of getting rid of squirrels is very kind. You must be a horrible person to want to abuse innocent animals. I don't care for animal abusers in any form. Could have done without your suggestion. I will pray for you.

August 11th, 2012 at 1:45 am

margo watt wrote:

Instead of waving the vinegar soaked cloth in the air, clothes peg it to the front of a fan and turn on low.

August 11th, 2012 at 2:45 pm

margo watt wrote:

Squirrel killer.....you are not funny or acceptable to the majority of people....Why don't you take yourself off to a locked cellar somewhere and stay there.

August 11th, 2012 at 3:14 pm

rebecca wrote:

I use vinegar to clean my washer machine to rid it of the build up and it works well. My biology teacher said that vinegar has the same properties as bleach, but it does not brighten like bleach does.

August 11th, 2012 at 5:04 pm

Kathleen O'Neil wrote:

Apple cider vinegar makes an excellent hair conditioner. I would pour it on my already wet hair straight from the bottle. Work it in and after leaving it in for a couple of minutes I would rinse it out of my hair with water and let it dry. The smell goes away when it dries, and your hair is soft and silky, and wonderfully shiny.

August 12th, 2012 at 12:57 am

Shila wrote:

when "brains" took paint above him on ladder & the inevitable happened, all over his hair, & he started screaming that it was burning., I just poured a half ottle straight over his hair[& over his calling Me stupid & ignorant]& it quit burning right away[vinegar cuts effects of most acidic & burn problems]

August 13th, 2012 at 10:22 pm

Adrian wrote:

I faithfully use a brand of raw organic apple cider vinegar with raw honey three times daily(2tsps each) to very effectivly relieve joint pain and inflammation, as well as soaking fresh fruits and veggies to lengthen keep time in the fridge(2weeks for many veggies with no spoilage)

August 14th, 2012 at 12:10 am

Donna Johnston wrote:

When I get a new black tactical duty uniform I keep the color from fading over time by adding 1 cup of white vinegar to the washer and then run them through a rinse cycle to set the color.

August 14th, 2012 at 1:21 pm

Phoxy 542 wrote:

I've used white vinegar and baking soda to clear clogged drains before. Equal parts baking soda then vinegar, let it sizzle, then pour boiling water down the drain - fixed it right up. Need it as a precaution in soap making too

August 14th, 2012 at 4:46 pm

Jamie Yachad wrote:

I have heard to use it for toenail fungus , which makes sense, given that so many comments here say it is against mildew and infection, so probably fungus , too. And i also drink raw vinegar in water as a routine digestive health. Manuka honey is the best for cuts/ burns, always raw honey is a must. Never even bother to buy pasteurized regular honey; go to the health food store for it!

And if you are not a health-foodist (yet), browse around and get comfortable and start doing all your shopping there, especially all produce and eggs. (-:

August 21st, 2012 at 7:07 am

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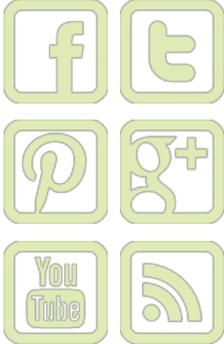
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