

## ***WHY GREEN CLEAN?***

The use of traditional cleaning chemicals and equipment has been found to be extremely harmful to the environment, and our health. After many years of development, alternative solutions and methods exceed traditional cleaning techniques. Environmentally friendly equipment and solutions are becoming common place in the cleaning industry, with expectations in the future of serious laws pertaining to the manufacturing of chemicals.

Most of us believe we can keep toxic pollutants out of our bodies if we take care of the basics—eat healthful foods, drink clean water, breathe fresh air. But when researchers from the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Commonweal, and the Environmental Working Group tested that assumption by analyzing blood and urine from nine people—all environmental and health activists who thought they led “clean” lives—the results were shocking. The volunteers’ bodies carried traces of literally hundreds of chemicals: 76 linked to cancer, 94 toxic to the brain and nervous system, 86 that disrupt hormones, 79 associated with birth defects, 77 toxic to the reproductive system, and 77 toxic to the immune system. Among them were well-known poisons like PCBs, dioxin, organophosphates, lead, and mercury.

In extreme cases, people can develop multiple chemical sensitivity, in which even minute exposure to chemicals can trigger disabling symptoms such as seizures, loss of balance, and diarrhea. More commonly, though, people find themselves plagued by garden-variety ailments like headaches, sinus congestion, asthma, allergies, fatigue, colds, and flu.

Perhaps one of the most important things you can do to lighten your chemical load is to dispose wisely of any toxic products you’ve collected over the years. Replace those chemicals with natural products.

It’s not something most of us give a lot of thought to, but stuffy, allergen-laden indoor air can drain both your energy and your spirits. According to the EPA, indoor air can be more polluted than the air on a busy city street. In some areas, common household products such as cleaners and cosmetics are second only to automobiles as a source of air pollution. “We’re actually poisoning ourselves in our homes and our workplaces every day,” says Elliott, of planetgreen .com

Sarah Conn, director of the Cambridge-based Ecopsychology Institute at the Center for Psychology for Social Change, would agree. On a very basic level, she says, sunshine and fresh air are mood boosters.

### ***Cleaning the air***

- Throw open your windows to allow fresh air to flow through the rooms. That will help to disperse any indoor air pollutants that have built up in your home.
- Add houseplants, which can soak up toxic gases as well as please the eye.
- Find ways to bring more sunlight it into a room. Mirrors will reflect light and make a small space feel larger, adding to the feeling of comfort and ease. Move a comfy chair closer to a window to give yourself a place to bask. (Who knows, all this might even give you a brainpower boost: In an Orange County, California school, student test scores jumped 12 percent after natural light was introduced into classrooms.)
- Make use of bathroom and kitchen fans to keep air moving. If your fans are so noisy that you never use them, look into replacing them: Many inexpensive new models are whisper-quiet.
- Get those carpets and rugs cleaned professionally by a Green Floor company. Carpets emit chemicals, and trap dust/allergens.
- Upgrade your vacuum cleaner to one with a HEPA filter, which can collect mold and dust-mite droppings and won’t belch them back into the air the way other models can.

- Retrofit forced-air heating or cooling systems with an intake to pull in fresh air and a HEPA filter to trap pollutants.
- Replace the filters in any air-handling system regularly; check and promptly repair any damaged flues, chimneys, or ductwork.

Eco-Scrub.com has excellent, industry proven information on their site pertaining to the care of carpets, and a link to the carpet and rug institute for help with choosing a vacuum cleaner.

### ***Green Cleaners***

The quest for a squeaky-clean home can create more problems than it solves, since conventional cleaners tend to be loaded with chemicals and perfumes.

**Myth #1:** Green products cost more.

**Fact:** Totally False. Many can be made in your kitchen with staple items. Essential Oils, an imperative ingredient in many green products, are not watered down like traditional chemicals.

**Myth #2: Green cleaning products don't work as well.**

**Fact:** This myth is a holdover from the early nineties when green products were in their infancy and often not as effective. These days the products are just as effective and better for your health!

**Myth #3: Green living takes more time.**

**Fact:** This is a myth, plain and simple.

**Myth #4: The government protects us.**

**Fact:** Outside of "signal words" on products, there is very little regulation of the chemicals found in commercially available cleaning products. You're ultimately responsible for eliminating toxic chemicals from your home.

### ***The smell of clean***

The smell of clean is entirely perceptible on the part of the smeller. For every person the smell of clean is different. We all have certain smells that we associate with. The smell of pop-corn associated with a movie theater, the smell of grass and hot dogs, associated with the ball park. The smell of heavy chemicals associated with clean. Because of these "smell associations" we conclude that if it doesn't smell clean, it must not be clean. The fact is that traditional chemicals used in cleaning are made of mostly water, harmful toxins, and perfume. Almost all of the odors that we associate with clean are chemical toxins and perfume. I have many clients who state "I don't care what you use as long as it smells clean." We could just spray pine-sol around and call our job done!

Bleach is another smell that many associate with clean. The fact is that Bleach is extremely toxic. Many believe that bleach is the only thing that will kill mold, germs, bacteria, and virus. False. Bleach does not kill mold, it simply lightens the mold, it does not kill the spores. Bleach does not kill tuberculosis, HIV, staph, or MRSA (resistant staph). There are plenty of other natural products that are just as if not more so effective as bleach.

According to Dr. Gerba of Health Based Cleaning System, "The true smell of clean is no odor at all. The use of natural products to eliminate odor causing bacteria, dust, and grime leaves no smell at all. The sources of the odors have been eliminated."