Personal & Home Care: Green, Clean, & Cheap!

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Most Commonly Used Ingredients

1. Baking Soda: It is an effective cleaner and deodorizer for your body and your home! It is too alkaline for fungal and bacterial spores to germinate (grow). Sweat is acidic and is neutralized by the alkalinity of baking soda. For teeth, it's a very mild abrasive (less abrasive than commercial toothpastes) that dislodges plaque on teeth, breaks down stain-causing molecules, and neutralizes pH.
2. Vinegar. Yep, plain white vinegar. Kills most germs on contact. With baking soda, it can clean most everything in your home.
3. Corn Starch or Arrowroot Powder: Both powders are highly absorbent and absorb any moisture left behind by your sweat. A dry environment is much less friendly to bacteria and fungus.
4. Bentonite Clay: don't use with metal spoons, containers, etc. or the clay deactivates. The clay draws out toxins, contains calcium, and is often used to remineralize teeth.
5. Shea Butter: great moisturizer.
6. Cocoa Butter: great moisturizer.
7. Epsom Salts: Is magnesium, not really salt. Also helps plants: curling leaves indicate magnesium deficiency; fruiting plants love magnesium (blueberries, tomatoes, etc.).
8. Optional: 100% Essential Oils-- *Tea Tree Oil* is both antibacterial and antifungal according to the National Center for Biotechnology Information. Also, *Eucalyptus Oil* has been used as both an antiseptic and antifungal according to the University of Maryland Medical Center.

Body Care Products—Purchased or Homemade

Bathing Frequency

- Winter: shower or tub bath once a week to avoid dry skin;
- Rest of the year: rinse with a gallon jug, or shower or tub bath daily, but put soap only on pits, crotch, and feet.

Body Soap

- Meliora All Purpose Soap Bar (unscented)—at GreenThinker or online.
- Dead Sea Mud Bar Soap (fragrance-free)—at TPSS Co-op or online.

Exfoliator and Body Wash

Place sugar and olive oil in a citrus peel and rub on your skin. (Peel naturally contains alpha hydroxy acids that skin care companies use.) (Source: Off-Grid with Doug and Stacy)

Castile soap + Epsom salts + water (also cleans your tub and tile). (Source: Off-Grid with Doug and Stacy)

Foot Soak

(Source: Off-Grid with Doug and Stacy)

1. Place peels in container you're using to soak your feet
2. Add boiling water and steep 5 minutes
3. Add cold water for desired temp
4. Add ½ cup apple cider vinegar
5. Can add Epsom salts if you like

Dental Care

Toothpaste or Powder

Note: When done, don't spit it in your sink, or it will clog your drain. Spit in the trash.

1. Use plain baking soda. Period. Put some in your hand, moisten your toothbrush, and dunk it into the baking soda in your hand. (sold in bulk at GreenThinker, Takoma Park)
2. Tooth tablets: Un-Paste or Huppy (several types, flavors; sold in Takoma Park at GreenThinker) or The Humble Company (sold in Takoma Park at the TPSS Food Co-op)
3. Tooth Powder #1: Mix equal parts baking soda + bentonite clay or vary to taste. (No metal, which deactivates the clay.)
    a. Blend with no metal and store in a non-metal container.
    b. Place about 1/8 teaspoon of the powdery blend in the palm of your hand. Moisten your toothbrush and dunk it into the blend in your hand. Brush, dipping again as needed.
    c. If you don't like the taste, add fennel (dried and ground with mortar and pestle); 1 heaping tsp. stevia or xylitol; 1 heaping tsp. cinnamon; ½ tsp cloves; Peppermint oil

Dental Floss

My choice is Mother Earth brand floss (vegan, biodegradable) with a reusable metal or glass dispenser. I've also used Dental Lace brand's "plant-based" (non-silk) refillable floss. It's biodegradable and commercially compostable. Sold in Takoma Park at GreenThinker or online.

Toothbrushes

I use an electric because my teeth aren't straight, making non-electric cleaning uneven. But MOMs and similar stores have eco-friendly toothbrushes. Seek minimal packaging & biodegradability. Going Zero Waste recommends bamboo.

Mouthwash for Grownups Only

- Place in a jar one cup of cold water per green tea bag or 1 Tablespoon of loose green tea.
- Refrigerate or leave at room temperature for two hours. (Video: Cold Steeping Green Tea) Then rinse your mouth or gargle.
- Store in the refrigerator.
- Optional: Add a spoonful of amla powder and swish and swallow a few times a day.

Why not for kids? *Childhood Tea Drinking May Increase Fluorosis Risk*, NutritionFacts.org, June 14, 2013; the natural fluoride content of the plant may cause cosmetic spots on the teeth.

"No-poo" Hair Care

Why Not Shampoos?

We don't need hair products, but the more of them you use, the more you seem to need. Here's why you don't want to use them, even the "natural" and "organic" ones: The Worst Shampoo Ingredients Explained: Parabens, Sulfates, Alcohol (also fragrances).

"No-poo" Hair Care End Goal

Zero-Poo Method-Medieval Style. (Source: Medieval Hair Care (9 mins.), by SnappyDragon.) Shampoo was invented in the 1930s. Before then, such as in the Middle Ages, contaminated water, harsh soap, and needing to use some other rather gross things to clean your laundry meant that washing hair to clean it wasn't a regular possibility. Women kept hair clean and untangled (which leads to split ends) by

- pinning it up on the head and braided or in a bun,
- covering hair with a clean cloth or cap changed at least daily,
- brushing 100 times twice a day to distribute oils from roots to ends and remove dead skin cells on the scalp.

I wash my hair every 14 to 7 days just by quickly massaging my scalp with water under the shower, but my hair and scalp have fully transitioned to "no-poo." Below are options for the transition. If you have dry hair, you might not need any transition; mine was very oily. For added shine, I sometimes add a tablespoon of apple cider vinegar in a half-cup or so of water as a rinse.

"No-poo" Transition Help

This website lists 10 common simple, DIY hairwash formulas with links to more. Another site says you can remove product buildup by soaking 3 or 4 used tea bags in warm water and pouring it over your head. Don't rinse. Pro tip: Chamomile brightens blondes and black tea adds a coppery shimmer to dark hair.

If you want to go no-poo, please contact me for more info; hundreds of recipes exist, and the one right for your hair and scalp varies. Also, the transition takes time. Below are the methods I used to transition.

1. Store-bought clay-aloe product called Terressentials (unscented/fragrance free), but I'm not sure this is necessary.
2. Baking soda and vinegar: I started with 1 tablespoon of baking soda because my hair had become oily, but reduced it over time to 1 teaspoon. Make a paste in your hand and massage it gently onto the scalp. Rinse thoroughly. Put 1 tablespoon of apple cider vinegar into one cup of water and rinse scalp. The vinegar resets your scalp to a good pH level that the baking soda has made too alkaline.
3. Epsom salt and aloe gel: Epsom salt adds volume to hair and aloe vera is moisturizing.
    - Mix about 1 teaspoon Epsom salt with 1 or 2 tablespoons aloe vera gel.
    - Add a little water to get the desired consistency (optional).
    - Massage into scalp and hair.
    - Rinse with water.
    - Optional Rinse: massage into hair 1 Tablespoon of apple cider vinegar + 1 cup water.

- Optional Conditioner: I sometimes mix 1/8 tsp. of coconut oil + 2 tsp. aloe gel, rub it onto my palms, then hand-comb it through my hair, esp. the ends.

As my scalp recovered from all the decades of shampoos, I eventually got to where even the Epsom salt was too drying and switched to water-washing and the end-goal approaches described above.

Dry Shampoo

Source and details.

- 1 Tablespoon bentonite clay (No metal spoon, which deactivates the clay.)
- 1 Tablespoon organic cornstarch or arrowroot powder
- for dark hair only, add 1 Tablespoon of cocoa powder (may stain clothes!)

Ear Care

Doctors advise against q-tips to clean your ears, but if you insist or want them for other uses, here's a reusable version. Ear wax keeps bugs from crawling in. If excess wax starts to block your hearing (probably from using q-tips, sigh), see a doctor and let them remove the excess.

Deodorant for Underarms: 5 Options!

- *Your odors are determined largely by your diet. Stinky diet, stinky pits.*
- *It's a detox process, much like going off shampoos and hair products.*

1. Rub lemon peel half on your underarms. (Source: Off-Grid with Doug and Stacy)
2. Use baking soda with or without some lavender in it – Moisten your hands, then just use a pinch, about the size of a dime on your hand, rub the hands together to spread it out and apply dampened soda to pits. (Source: Off-Grid with Doug and Stacy)
3. Mix equal parts baking soda + corn starch or arrowroot powder. Apply with your hand or a hand-crocheted powder puff, but be careful not to inhale. Store in an airtight container to keep the baking soda from absorbing room odors. The corn starch absorbs and traps moisture, while the baking soda eliminates odor. (Source: The Homemade Experiment.)
4. Mix 2 parts coconut oil + 2 parts baking soda + 1 part aloe gel. (Thanks, Bruce!)
5. Mix equal parts coconut oil + shea butter + baking soda + cornstarch or arrowroot powder + aloe gel.

Deodorant for Feet and Shoes

Place half a citrus peel in each shoe overnight. (Source: Off-Grid with Doug & Stacy)

Sources: Holly Hammersmith and Brendid.

- Baking Soda
- Corn Starch (or Arrowroot Powder)
- Optional: 100% Tea Tree and Eucalyptus Oils

To Use: Toss a small amount into each shoe after wearing them to absorb any moisture. Tap the shoe (left, right, top and bottom) to get the powder to cover the entire shoe and not just sit in one spot. Then let the shoes sit with the powder in them until the next time you wear them. Prior to the next wear, dump the excess powder from the shoes into the trash and put them on.

Use By: No known end storage limit on the foot powder; don't keep the same batch for years, but it should last several months.

Cost: About $0.98 for 1/2 of a cup. That's about $0.08 for the baking soda, $0.40 for the corn starch and approximately $0.50 for the essential oils. A similar natural foot powder costs $14.49 for 4 ounces.

Easy Recipes for Cosmetics

First question for all cosmetics is "Do I really need to wear make-up?"

Lip Balm

Shea butter + cocoa butter. Blend ½ teaspoon of each and store in a small tin.

Lipstick

Shea butter + cocoa butter + beet powder. Blend ½ teaspoon of the butters and as much beet powder for desired color. Store in a small tin.

Eyeliner

Sources: WikiHow and DIYNatural

For black: Activated charcoal + distilled water or aloe or any oil (coconut, almond, jojoba)
Caution: do not inhale charcoal powder. This charcoal is not what you use on the grill!
For brown: Unsweetened cocoa powder + water or aloe or any oil (coconut, almond, jojoba)
For green: Spirulina powder + water or aloe or any oil (coconut, almond, jojoba)

Storage and Use

- You can mix a batch and put your eyeliner in a small jar or tin.
- Refrigerate when not in use; compost after a few weeks or so, a month at most.
- Remove only what you will use in the moment rather than re-dip your brush into the whole batch. Bacteria can develop if you use it straight from the container, much the same as mascara.
- Clean your brushes well and allow them to air dry.
- Don't use eyeliner on the inner eyelid, just on the outside of the lashes; avoid getting it in your eyes. It may not cause permanent damage, but it can be very irritating.

Eye Shadow

WikiHow—Scroll to Method 2, *Using Shea Butter + Arrowroot Powder*

The Rogue Ginger—Recipes vary by desired color, using mostly spices! You can use the same recipe as for Eyeliner (above) using just the powders with no water, aloe, or oils.

Blush, Bronzer, Mascara

GreenMatters

Hair Color – Temporary

WikiHow—Using food dyes! Or The Rogue Ginger—Using mostly spices! Eyeshadow recipes that can be used for hair color. Add beet powder for red.

Easy Recipes for Your Home

Laundry

Notes: -- Beware of greenwash; products seem eco-friendly but aren't. Always check the Environmental Working Group database (see more *Resources* below).
-- Avoid fabric softeners and dryer sheets and dryer balls. Air dry on drying racks.
-- Wash in cold water unless hot water is absolutely necessary.

Detergent: Meliora Laundry Powder, unscented, from GreenThinker. Also, Soap Nuts (MOMs).

Stains: Vinegar and Ecos brand Oxo Brite (TPSS Co-op, MOMs)

Clothes Whitener: Avoid bleach, which harms you and the water supply. Soak white clothes for 30 minutes in the washer with 1/2 cup 3% hydrogen peroxide. Launder as usual.

Toilet

Source: ZeroWasteCartel

Two ingredients: 1 cup distilled white vinegar + ½ cup baking soda

1. Add both ingredients to a large bowl and whisk together well.
2. If storing for later use, use a funnel to transfer solution into a bottle to store.
3. To use, pour into the toilet and leave to soak for about 5 minutes.
4. Scrub toilet with a toilet brush and flush.

Everything Else

Scrub with baking soda and a rag or cleaning brush, then pour or spray vinegar. Seriously.

More Resources!

#1: Free, online consumer guide to health and eco-impacts of many products: Consumer Guide Database, Environmental Working Group.

Free recipes and tips via online searches: WikiHow is amazing, or search by typing in item plus "DIY zero waste", such as "DIY Zero waste lipstick." Beware of fragrances and essential oils—these are usually unnecessary, expensive, and unhealthful, even "organic" and "natural" ones.

Going Zero Waste

Non Toxic Cleaning Products & Disinfectants, WomensVoices4theEarth.

Types of Clays (for Cosmetics, face masks, etc.)

The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry, Stacy Malkan, Aug. 24, 2017.

Campaign for Safe Cosmetics