



Natural Ways to Make Your Home Healthier

ABSTRACT

A healthy home is a place that promotes wellbeing – both for people and the planet. It includes things like keeping the house clean and maintained, ventilated for air quality, contaminate-free, and a whole range of other things that benefit people and the planet.

INTRODUCTION

A healthy lifestyle starts out at home! Whether you're focused on getting cleaner air, incorporating a new housekeeping schedule, or switching to green products, having a healthy home is essential for overall wellness. These are my favorite tips and tricks for creating and keeping a healthy home for the entire family!

I. 8 elements of a green and healthy home



1 – Dry

- Prevent water from entering your home through leaks in roofing systems
- Prevent rain water from entering the home due to poor drainage around the outside of the home
- Check your interior plumbing for any leaking

What you can do

- See how mold and moisture can trigger asthma symptoms.
- Take steps to prevent mold and moisture in your home.



2 – Clean

- Control the source of dust and contaminants
- Create smooth and cleanable surfaces
- Reduce clutter
- Use effective wet-cleaning

What you can do

- Read about VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) that can come from cleaning supplies and how to keep them out of your home.
- Learn about pest control to keep pests out of your home.



3 – Safe

- Store and properly label
- Keep poisons out of the reach of children

- Secure loose rugs and keep children's play areas free from hard or sharp surfaces
- Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and keep fire extinguishers on hand

What you can do

- Learn steps to keep your children safe in the home.
- See clear steps to reduce home safety hazards such as faulty smoke detectors.

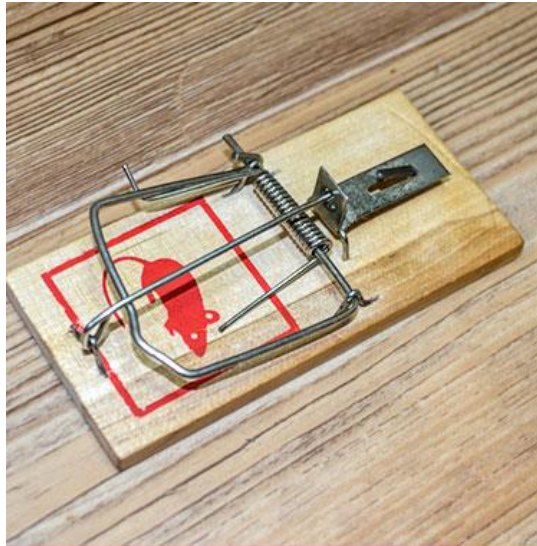


4 – Well-Ventilated

- Ventilate bathrooms and kitchens
- Use whole-house ventilation for supplying fresh air to reduce the concentration of contaminants in the home

What you can do

- Learn steps to keep your children safe in the home.
- See clear steps to reduce home safety hazards such as faulty smoke detectors.



5 – Pest Free

- If needed, use sticky-traps and baits in closed containers
- Seal cracks and openings throughout the home so pests can't get in
- Store food in pest-resistant containers

What you can do

- Check your appliances to ensure they meet ENERGY STAR® standards.
- Use efficient and programmable controls for temperature, water and electricity and install Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFLs).



6 – Contaminant-Free

- Reduce lead-related hazards in pre-1978 homes by fixing deteriorated paint
- Keep floors and window areas clean using a wet-cleaning approach
- Test your home for radon, a naturally occurring dangerous gas that enters homes through soil, crawlspaces, and foundation cracks

What you can do

- Learn about precautions to take against cockroaches; how to rid your home of dust mites and how to handle removing mice from your home.



7 – Well-Maintained

- Inspect, clean and repair your home routinely
- Take care of minor repairs and problems before they become large

What you can do

- Get tips on how to maintain your smoke detector, properly store cleaning chemicals and stay up to date on your home maintenance.
- Avoid risk of carbon-monoxide poisoning by following these steps.



8 – Energy Efficient

- Use reduced amounts of energy, water, and resource consumption

- Energy efficiency/weatherization includes: Install proper weatherization, such as: insulation, air-sealing, weather-stripping, and window efficiency
- Maintain efficient heating and cooling system; proper air flow and temperature distribution; efficient hot water / steam boiler system

II. Best Indoor Plants for Clean Air

We already know that through photosynthesis, plants help us by taking carbon dioxide from the air and releasing pure oxygen into the atmosphere. Ever since NASA investigated the potential for plants to clean the air of super-sealed space stations in the 1980s, people have been inspired to improve their environments with houseplants.

When it comes to removing toxins from the air, the bigger the plant and its leaves, the better its ability to purify the environment. How many plants do you need to achieve fresh, healthy air?

The answer lies in many factors, such as the types of furniture and carpet used and their ages, whether smoking occurs on the premises, and how well the dwelling is sealed. Start with one or two handsome specimens, and see where your quest for a healthy atmosphere takes you when you grow these air-purifying plants.

Purple Waffle Plant

According to a study in HortScience journal, *Hemigraphis alternata*, the purple waffle plant, is very efficient in removing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) like benzene, toluene, and octane. These common indoor pollutants come from everyday household items like paint, cleaners, hair spray, and even dry-cleaned clothes.



Purple waffle plant has deeply puckerred foliage, which gives it an extra-large leaf surface area to do its air cleaning job. The reverse sides of the leaves on this low-growing plant are purple, which contrast handsomely with the deep green leaves. Keep waffle plants moist, and give it bright light to maintain the vibrant purple color.

English Ivy

Hedera helix is the common ivy that tolerates most light and soil conditions, but its ability to remove VOCs from the air in your home make this houseplant extra special. Horticulturists have exploited the robust nature of ivy by developing many fancy cultivars, including 'Fluffy Ruffles' with ruffled leaves and 'Gold Baby' with golden variegation. Grow two varieties in a large hanging basket for beautiful contrast and twice the air purifying properties.

Wax Plant

Another forgiving houseplant, *Hoya carnosa* is also known as the wax plant for its perfect-looking, waxy flowers shaped like stars. Wax plants will tolerate lower light levels, but flowering is most prolific in high light conditions.

The trailing stems of wax plants are attractive in hanging baskets or used in conjunction with plant stands. The wax plant is drought tolerant, and prefers life on the dry side to prevent root rot. Grow several plants to maximize the removal of five common VOCs from your home.

Asparagus Fern

The frizzy leaves of *Asparagus densiflorus* are fantastic for adding texture to mixed houseplant containers. The fine leaves on upright stems contrast with trailing plants that appreciate the same high moisture and low light conditions of the asparagus fern. Try asparagus fern with ivy, coleus, or philodendron plants anywhere you desire the air-purifying properties of a low-care houseplant.



Purple Spiderwort

The succulent leaves of *Tradescantia pallida*, also known as wandering Jew and purple heart, are durable favorites both inside and out of the home. Although the purple spiderwort is an annual and a tropical houseplant, it can survive temperatures down to 25 degrees F, and is a thriving plant for colder rooms in the house.

Researchers found that purple spiderwort exhibited superior abilities to remove VOCs from the air, so plant several specimens in areas where you are bothered by fresh paint fumes or new furniture odors.

Nerve Plant

Fittonia argyroneura plants don't produce any noticeable flowers, but the rich pink, red, or white veining of the leaves contribute to the ornamental value of this houseplant. The nerve plant doesn't need a bright spot to thrive, but consistent moisture is necessary for plant health.

With more than a dozen varieties in cultivation, you can grow a grouping of several colors to get the maximum air-purifying results from your plants. 'Frankie' has more pink than green on its leaves, which looks striking planted in combination with the mostly white 'Titanic' variety.

Weeping Fig

Ficus benjamina, or weeping fig, is a handsome specimen to grow as a small indoor tree if you can provide the right environment to prevent it from shedding leaves. Weeping figs like bright light and consistent moisture, but not soggy water dumps. Weeping figs don't fare well near air registers, where dry conditions and temperature changes stress the plants.



Pamper your fig tree with a shovelful of compost, as you would an outdoor garden plant, and give it a bright spot in a humid area of your home, like the kitchen or bathroom, and let its leaves work their air-scrubbing magic.

III. What to Declutter Every Week, Every Month, and Every Year

Whether you live in a large home or a studio apartment, clutter can easily build up. Sometimes it's a kitchen countertop or the desk in your home office. We all leave things out and say we'll take care of it tomorrow, then end up pushing that day back again and again. As a result, messes accumulate and our homes become the sources of headaches, not peace.



While diving in all at once can feel overwhelming, scheduling key areas to declutter regularly can be a more efficient way to tackle messes. So, where do you start? Here are the spaces that professional organizers recommend decluttering weekly, monthly, and yearly.

What to Declutter Every Week

Countertops, Flat Surfaces, Refrigerator

We've all been there. It's been a long day and we end up throwing a stack of mail on the kitchen countertop, leave out those empty pizza boxes we're not quite ready to break down, or pile up reusable grocery bags after unloading the groceries. Things start to look messy quickly, particularly in open-concept homes.



Jennifer Jarrett, professional organizer and founder of Jenuinely Contained, recommends decluttering countertops weekly. "Any flat surface is fair game for putting crap down on," she says. "Don't know where to put that stack of mail that built up while you were away? A flat surface. Unsure where to put all the artwork your kids bring home from school every day? Any flat surface. It can be a convenient and quick solution, but if it isn't kept in check, it's fast to get cluttered."

At the end of each week, Jarrett walks through the common areas of her home with a "put-back basket" and collects items that have landed in the wrong place. "Once I've cleared off the countertops I redistribute the items to their proper location," she explains. "Crumpled wrappers, trash. Random belt, kids' room. Lip gloss, my purse, etc."

The refrigerator should also be decluttered every week, Jarrett explains. If you go grocery shopping once a week, then ideally, you would declutter the fridge before making the trip to the store. Start by throwing away anything past its prime. Not sure? Refer to this food expiration dates guide to see if you should keep or toss those questionable items in your fridge.

Finally, make a mental note of anything that's not expired but definitely needs to be eaten in the upcoming days before it spoils. "Move those items to the front of the

fridge and work them into your upcoming meal plan," Ashley Murphy, professional organizer and co-founder of NEAT Method, says. "Sort the remaining items into categories and contain them in individual drawers, bins, or shelves. Add removable labels to each zone to keep everyone in your home on the same page. Don't forget to leave a spot for leftovers."

Monthly Pantry

Pantry items tend to last a little longer than refrigerated items, Jarrett explains, so those only need decluttered once a month. She suggests checking for expired or stale items and tossing them. "Make sure that all other items are securely closed," she says. "Chip clips are the best for this. It is also a good time to get rid of those impulse-buy items that never gained traction, such as that dill pickle popcorn that nobody liked, or those baked lentil potato chips that tasted like cardboard."

Then, Jarrett recommends grouping similar items together—chips with chips, pasta with pasta, nuts with nuts, etc.

To avoid losing track in the future as well as to prevent food waste, Murphy suggests implementing a riser for a better visual of canned goods and storing categorized condiments onto turntables. "Transparent canisters are perfect for storing staples at eye level so you can keep an eye on [what you have in] stock," Murphy says. "Lastly, corral remaining categories into labeled bins and baskets."

Yearly Closet, Paperwork, Toys

While the co-founders of NEAT Method recommend cleaning out your closet seasonally, Jarrett advises doing one big closet clean out yearly. "For this area, you want to pull everything out. Yes, everything," Jarrett says. "If you have a rolling clothes rack this is often very helpful to put all of your hanging clothes onto while you sort through them. If there are space constraints, this area can also be done in sections."

NEAT Method co-founder Marissa Hagemeyer suggests considering letting go of any items you haven't worn in the past six months. "Set them aside for donation," she says. "It's also a good time to pass on items that no longer fit, are stained, or have seen better days. Don't be afraid to send pictures to an honest friend for their opinion on pieces that you're on the fence about."

Files and other paperwork, like credit card statements—if you still get them in the mail—are also things that should be decluttered annually. "Following tax season is a

good time to give files a glance to see if there are any items you're holding onto unnecessarily," Hagemeyer says. "If you don't already have a file system in place, we suggest sorting them by category and using hanging file folders within an office drawer or modular box. Align the tabs in a straight row and alphabetize for an easy visual."



Last, but not least, if you have young children, toys can be a major source of clutter and frustration. So, every time a birthday comes around, it's time to get rid of some things. "Depending on your child's age, you may or may not want to include them in the process of making those decisions," Hagemeyer says. "Set aside anything that is no longer age-appropriate, as well as anything they haven't played with in the past four months. Or, consider collecting less often played-with toys in a bin and cycling them out every few months. If, when you bring the old toys back, your child still shows no interest you can safely say goodbye."

IV. 7 Ways To Get Rid Of That Awful Smell In Your Kitchen Sink

A kitchen generates different odours, and some of them are very unpleasant. One of the most common bad smells in your cooking area is the one that comes out of the sink. Most people try to eliminate the smell by using room fresheners, but that is only a temporary solution.



Moreover, such products have chemicals that worsen the indoor air quality. If you want to remove such a smell permanently, then you need to find out the source of the smell and perform thorough cleaning.

To remove the smell from the kitchen of the rental property, it is advisable to contact professionals. Select a company that offers the best end of lease cleaning Newcastle. They have expertise in cleaning different spots, including the kitchen sink.

The professionals who offer end of lease cleaning Newcastle can make your kitchen smell fresh, which can help you to clear the final inspection. With a bit of planning and elbow grease, you can also accomplish the task in a perfect manner.

Here are 7 ways to get rid of that awful smell in your kitchen sink.

1. Hot Water

One of the easiest ways to remove the bad smell is by using hot water that will break up some of the food particles in your sink. Pour a medium-sized saucepan of boiling water down your sink and can repeat the process if there is a requirement.



While pouring boiling water down the drain, you should be very careful. If you have a PVC conduit, then boiling water can make things even worse. It will damage the plastic, which may require repair in the future. A damaged PVC duct will further elevate your stress level.

2. Baking Soda

Sometimes, one spoonful of baking soda is enough to clean the drain and remove the bad smell. Simply run the faucet and pour baking soda (1 tablespoon) into the drain. Eco-friendly ingredients like baking soda is highly recommended for cleaning because it is safe, easily available and simplify your house cleaning process. If you contact a good end of lease cleaning company in Newcastle, then you will find that their professionals also use such eco-friendly products to eliminate bad smell.

3. Borax

It is a typical household cleaner used for dishwashers, clean floors and other spots and appliances. It is an excellent option to get rid of bad odours from any household surface. To remove the sink smell, fill it with water and pour four to five tablespoons of borax down the drain.

4. Half A Lemon Or Orange

Deodorising your kitchen sink with citrus fruits is an outstanding idea. Cut a couple of lemons in half and throw them down the garbage disposal.

Then, turn on the faucet. While the water is flowing, turn on the garbage disposal for a very short time. It will clean the disposal's sides, and thus your kitchen will start to smell fresh. You can also use half of a tiny orange or a quarter of a slightly bigger orange.

5. Hot Water And Dish Soap

You can also clean the sink with a mixture of dish soap and hot water. Place a stopper in the sink and pour a small amount of dish soap into it. Fill the sink halfway with hot water before removing the stopper and turn on your waste disposal.



Turn off the garbage disposal when the water level falls below a certain level. The combination of hot water and soap will flush any food waste from your garbage disposal and eradicate all bad odours. It is one of the best ideas for cleaning hard-to-reach areas.

6. Check The U-Bend

The U-bend pipe installed under the kitchen sink is a sewer gas trap. It should constantly be full of water because it serves as an obstacle for preventing sewage

gas from escaping via the plughole. If there is a sewage gas smell in the kitchen, you must check the U-bend and resolve the issue. Check the following things:

- Is there enough water in the U-bend? It can happen if you have been on vacation and haven't run any water. You need to fill up the U-bend with water.
- Is there any leakage? Look under the sink for any moist patches or drips. If you leak, fix it with the help of a professional plumber.
- Is the U-bend blocked? If the blockage persists after cleaning, use a wrench to remove the U-bend and clean it thoroughly with a wire brush.

7. Hire Professionals

Perhaps the best way to get rid of that awful smell in your kitchen sink is by hiring certified end of lease cleaners in Newcastle, NSW. They use their skills, experience and knowledge to eliminate the bad smell.



The professionals avoid hazardous chemicals to ensure that the indoor environment does not get polluted. No matter how much effort you put in, it is not possible to match the level of professional cleaners.

Getting rid of that awful smell in your kitchen sink is an essential cleaning task. If you want to get the job done without any difficulty or confusion, follow the aforementioned ways. To minimise your stress and save time, you can contact a company that offers reliable end of lease cleaning in Newcastle.

V. 7 Natural Ways to Eliminate Odors and Make Your Home Smell Amazing

The right scent can instantly make a room feel fresher, cleaner, and more inviting. While there are tons of store-bought products that can help achieve this goal, commercial air fresheners and cleaners made from harsh ingredients aren't the only way to get a great-smelling home.



DIY alternatives provide a simple approach to deodorize and scent your space the natural way. Using a handful of household ingredients and fragrances from essential oils and herbs, you can create natural home scents that help eliminate odors and diffuse pleasing aromas. Try these DIY odor eliminators and home fragrance recipes for a fresh-smelling space.

1. Lemon Basil Room Spray

Freshen up rooms with the clean scent of lemon and basil. To create a DIY room spray, start by boiling $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water in a pot or tea kettle and pour it into a liquid measuring cup. Add four tablespoons of dried basil, and let it steep for a few minutes. Line a funnel with a coffee filter, and place it in the opening of a reusable spray bottle.

Carefully pour the basil and water mixture into the bottle through the filter to remove the herbs, then discard the filter. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup distilled water, one tablespoon vodka, and five drops of lemon essential oil to the bottle. Attach the spray bottle top and shake to combine the mixture. Spray the odor eliminator around the room as needed.

2. DIY Reed Diffuser

Create a simple DIY version of a reed diffuser using baby oil. Add one teaspoon of your favorite essential oil (any scent will work) to a small glass container and fill the rest with baby oil. If you're using a large vessel, you may need to add additional essential oil. Place rattan diffuser sticks inside the container and gently stir the mixture. Set your DIY reed diffuser on a countertop or table to fill the space with fragrance.

3. Essential Oil Wax Melts

You'll need a slow cooker, slow cooker liner, and silicone molds (we used a silicone tray for square ice cubes) to create your own wax melts. First, add a plastic liner to the slow cooker. Then add two cups of soy wax pellets and set the heat to low. Once melted, add one teaspoon lavender essential oil, $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon cedarwood essential oil, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vetiver essential oil.



Mix thoroughly before carefully removing the liner. Set the liner inside a liquid measuring cup, folding the excess plastic over the edge of the cup. Sprinkle dried lavender into your silicone mold and pour the wax mixture on top. Let the wax cool at room temperature until it's completely solid, then remove the wax from the molds to use in a store-bought wax warmer (\$16, Target).

4. Linen Spray

This DIY linen spray freshens towels, bedding, clothes, and fabric-covered furniture. Pour one tablespoon vodka into a liquid measuring cup, then pour into a reusable spray bottle. Add 35 drops of essential oil (you can use a combination of scents if desired), then fill the bottle the rest of the bottle with distilled water. Attach the spray bottle lid, and shake to mix well. Spray linens as needed to keep them smelling fresh.

5. Carpet Deodorizer

Try this homemade carpet deodorizer for a natural way to eliminate lingering smells from your floors. Start by mixing one cup baking soda and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cornstarch in a medium bowl. Add five drops of your favorite essential oil and stir to combine. Use a funnel to pour the mixture into a Mason jar. Create small holes in the lid using a hammer and nail, then attach the lid to the jar. Lightly sprinkle the mixture onto the carpet as needed, and let sit for at least 30 minutes before vacuuming up.

6. Simmer Pot

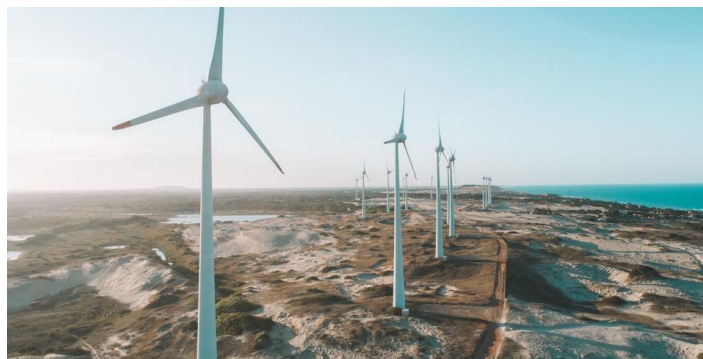
Follow this easy simmer pot recipe to quickly fill your home with warm, inviting aromas. Cut an orange into slices and add to a pot along with a small handful of cloves and cinnamon sticks. Add water to cover the ingredients and simmer on the stove for several hours to release the scent.



7. Gel Room Scent

Bring one cup water to boil in a medium pot. Add four packets of unflavored gelatin and whisk until dissolved. Add one teaspoon of any essential oil. Because this DIY fragrance will be displayed, you can add a drop of food coloring, if desired, for a hint of color. Next, mix in one cup water and one tablespoon salt and stir. Pour the mixture into small glass jars and let cool until the gel is solid. Set the jars on a table or countertop without a lid; the gelatin mixture will slowly release the scent as it dries.

VI. 8 Eco-Friendly Features To Add To Your Home



Eco-friendly, energy-saving home features aren't just good for the environment—they're also good for your wallet, and for making your listing stand out from the competition. If you're thinking about selling or renovating your home, trying to lower your energy output, or simply want to save money on your monthly bills, you've come to the right place. Here are eight popular home features that can lower your bills, reduce energy waste, and make your home more desirable to future buyers.

1. Energy-Efficient Lighting

Timers, dimmers, and smart lighting systems make it easy to adjust brightness and get only the wattage you need at any given time. Installing these systems gives a home more of a luxury feel, and it also allows the homeowner to spend less money on electricity in the long run.

Another helpful tip: LED lightbulbs use up to 90% less energy than traditional bulbs, and they also last up to 25 times longer. Consider replacing your indoor and outdoor lights with LED bulbs whenever possible.

2. LEED Certification

The Green Building Council awards Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification to buildings and homes that meet its standard for energy efficiency and environmental friendliness. In addition to sounding sexy to potential buyers, LEED-certified homes require less maintenance, cost no more to build than other homes, and save homeowners 20-30 percent on utility bills, making them a winning proposition for both buyers and sellers.

3. Sustainable, Natural Materials

Eco-minded buyers love to see homes built using sustainable materials like bamboo and salvaged wood. The same type of buyer will appreciate and look for a home designed to maximize natural lighting and outdoor views in as many rooms as possible. Finally, consider landscaping that preserves the property's original trees and plants as much as possible.

4. Garden Space

Gardens are an increasingly popular item on homebuyers' wish lists. Many people are on a mission to eat as much local, sustainable food as possible, and they love seeing properties that could make their farm-to-table fantasies come true.

5. Solar Panels

The installation (and cost of the panels themselves) isn't cheap, but rooftop solar panels can generate a *large* amount of energy—and potentially a good amount of savings over the long run, too. In addition to gaining your own renewable energy source, you may also be eligible for a residential federal tax credit, property tax exemption, or other government incentive when you install solar panels.

6. Proper Insulation

A well-constructed house with adequate insulation holds its temperature longer and requires less cooling or heat to reach the desired temperature. Make sure that all windows and doors are properly installed, and that you fix any major leaks, drafts, duct or ventilation issues before listing your home. These issues will come up during inspection and can affect the home value and the final price.

7. Smart Thermostats

These easy-to-use temperature systems make any home look instantly more modern; They also save you an average of 10-12 percent on heating and 15 percent on air conditioning, according to popular smart system Nest.

8. Energy star appliances

That blue square symbol that appears on certain washing machines, dishwashers, refrigerators, and more household appliances isn't just a marketing tool; It's an official sign that the product was verified energy-efficient by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. These appliances require less energy to operate, and therefore save you (and any future tenants or buyers) money on utility bills.

CONCLUSION

When it comes to improving our health, we tend to focus on nutrition and exercise, and we spend less time focusing on how our environment can affect our body. Our home is where we spend a lot of our time, so it's important we figure out ways to make our home more healthy.

Whether it means cleaning up more often or removing harmful toxins, paying attention to our living environment can have an affect on not only our longterm health, but even how good we feel in the moment.

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